MAY 1964

JR

If I don't break a hip on a late March snow, this is likely to become volume 25, number 3, FAPA number 92, and whole number 98 of Horizons. Fans who keep their files tidy had better hurry and settle the dispute about the numbering of this publication, Horizons, before it hits the century mark with the wrong issue. This is the May, 1964, issue, written by Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland, 21740. Richard H. Eney has done everything else after the stencils were cut, with artistic assistance by Jean Rose.

In the Beginning

The Fantasy Amateur: Discrimination against artists seems to be in order. Jean Rose is listed as owing eight pages, despite her every-issue pattern of covers for Horizons of late. '' Now that we're rid of the FA acknowledgment rule, I wonder if we could throw overboard another heritage from SAPS in the form of this point system of voting in the egoboo poll. Without checking back, I have the impression that there has been less participation than under the old system of listing favorites in order of preference. The old way takes less decision-making and may have encouraged votes. '' I see no reason why the membership need be asked to vote Martin back into membership. Whether this special rule proposal succeeds or fails, it is an evasion of the common decency that Martin deserves: reinstatement by the officers with profuse apologies for the arbitrary expulsion and its implications of plagiarism. Celephais: There is justification for my use of boilerplate and complaint about Tanrydoon. A look at an unabridged dictionary will explain to anyone the sense of boilerplate as I used it; I know of no reference source that could have enlightened me about Tanrydoon except perhaps some obscure and highly specialized listing of children's books, a genre that wasn't implied in Juffus' reference. '' Don't forget dime novels as a contributor to the total of fantasy pulp issues. Quite a few series were published weekly for many years with much emphasis on science and adventure. '' Those johns that don't get touched by human hands: are they the type known as frostproof? We've had a small war in Hagerstown for years over the health department's efforts to get them prohibited. Cac: A map would have assisted with the main article's message. Salud: Funny thing about those pre-operative enemas. I wondered as to their purpose during my first long hospital stay, forgot to ask about it when I got well, and this was one of the first matters that occurred to me the night I began my second hospitalization. I had developed at least four contradictory theories about them, none of which was as simple and practical as the true one. Vandy: Somehow I doubt that any opera calls for ladies nude to the waist to prance up and down a wide staircase in an elderly French palace. I can't imagine anything they might be singing except perhaps "O Say Can You See?" Kim Chi: Undoubtedly there is a simple explanation for the typographical error on page three: "werei n the". But I have the nagging suspicion that the Ellingtons are actually millionaires who have gone to untold expense to construct letterpress apparatus that will resemble mimeography, and have betrayed themselves with this typical blunder. '' I feel that way about the poor taste and unimaginative approach of the networks for the three days after the president's assassination. Those frequent reruns of movies taken during his lifetime and replays of the telecasts during the climactic events were more like an orgy in necrophilia than a wake. Proxyboo: Another ambiguous sign is the one found frequently around here: "Left turn only from this lane." Does it mean that you mustn't make a left turn from any other lane, or that you must make a left turn if you are in that lane? Sometimes you can figure it out by

studying the road and traffic distribution beyond the intersection, but this is risky because you can't be certain about the program of the signal lights at a strange intersection. '' About Hugos, I have found a reliable source of confimation for my theory that the secrecy results from absurdly few votes. A fan who has been close to the Hugo awards at two of the past half-dozen conventions refuses to tell exact details, but he does admit: "Give me 12 members of a club as a bloc and I'll get a Hugo for anything you name." '' I own both La Finta Giardiniera and Il Re Pastore in their truncated recordings and I find that Rossini opera much better. I'll grant that my opinion could be swayed by the better singing and inclusion of the recitatives in the Rossini work. '' A youth named Squirrel was a basketball star for the Westminster, Md., High School team this winter. '' I don't think that any of the wise people you list had famous parents, and there is the considerable danger that too lavish use of birth control materials might have prevented us from lamenting that these elite aren't breeding fast enough. '' Hagerstown's city charter prohibits use of gas for street lights. Ankus: I know that this is awfully late to bring up the matter, but I've read twice the account of the wedding preparations, and I'll be blessed if I can find any reason to believe that Bruce and Dian took care of the little matter of getting a license. Outside of that, I can say only two things: that I'm glad that two such good people got married and that I'm shocked to learn that Dian's maiden name was the one she used in fandom. I've come to expect everyone in California to have a special name for fanac. Sercon's Bane: Most of the arguments you advance to minimize the drunken driving problem could be applied equally to breaking and entering. The majority of these events cause little or no damage, result in the loss of nothing that is not protected by insurance, and cause no penalty for the principal because he isn't caught. But the occasional forced entry that ends up with someone getting shot dead is enough to make it better to try to prevent all such petty crime. '' Some of the mailing comments in this issue sound strangely like Dan McPahil. Declining interest, anxiety to please publishers, or why? Horizons: I'll be anxious to see how many spot the wrong date on the cover. I noticed it right off, but didn't ask Jean to change it, because once Spaceways came out with a typo on the cover and fandom seemed unharmed. Godot: Mike has set some sort of new fannish record for change of policy, violating his fifth item at the bottom of the same page and resisting the urge to destroy the sixth only as long as the first seven pages. '' The calm and frank way in which Mike revises his previous outlook on Germany is rare in fandom and fine to read. I don't know who is worse: the fan who sticks to an opinion he held ten years ago because he doesn't want to be inconsistent, or the fan who finds it in the ten-year-old fanzine and tries to hold him to it. White Stencil: Tentatively, I've discovered why I send out Christmas cards despite all the reasonable objections to the practice. It soothes my conscience. I realized this December that with every card I wrote my name on, I was discharging a small amount of conscience pressure. This fan I'd meant to write a letter to months ago to tell how much I'd enjoyed his article in a fanzine that never saw another issue, and that relative had been urging me to pay a visit for a long while, and I really didn't mean to cut short my street corner conversation the last time I saw this business acquaintance in Hagerstown. I should add that nobody should increase the load on his own conscience when he doesn't get around to sending me a card. I don't keep a record of those that come in, and several times I've not wondered about the lack of a card from someone who later turned out to have become incapacitated over the Thanksgiving turkey. '' My principal trouble with

snow is when it falls during a night that is one of my late nights on the job. I am not apt to get to bed until around 3 a.m., at best. Promptly at 7:30 a.m. the small fry of the neighborhood begins to pound on the door and ring the bell, hoping to strike a bargain on walk-shoveling. I drop back to sleep after the first couple of volleys, then get up and do the shoveling myself. Sleep would be unbroken if I shoveled on getting home from work. But I remember how Cyril Kornbluth dropped dead after shoveling snow and if that should be my fate, I want it to happen in the daylight when it'll cause less trouble all around. Fan Poll Ballot: I doubt that I'll do anything about the open question section. It is one thing to think up the right procedure when the circumstances are presented in this clear and specific manner. But if these conditions arose in reality, I'm sure that my decision wouldn't be as cleancut. I'm willing to take a stand if I know what has happened involving whom. Spinnaker Reach: Russell does me two unforgivable injuries in this issue. He compares my fiction style unfavorably with that of Tolkien, and I wouldn't mind coming off on the wrong side of the comparison with almost any other stylist. And he claims I complained about the slimness of the mailings, at a time when I'm murmuring semi-mute prayers each morning that the mailman won't bring too much fanzine reading to hold up fan history operations. I have said that the Martin affair may be the cause of the smaller mailings, but I haven't complained about their size, and in fact I think I've said some place that 300 pages is just about right for an apa mailing. '' A few years back, I would have reacted to the page on God, man, and love in convulsive manner, considering it the start of the collapse of a once-mightyintellect. But I'm learning the truth of that old rule of thumb, the one that says that we know everything when we're young, we doubt everything when we're mature, and we believe everything when we start to grow old. Bete Noire: Quick calculations prove that the amount of wordage published about Tendril Towers has just exceeded the total written on My Old Kentucky Home. Now, won't someone please try to find some authentic photographs showing the structure in its significant years, and publish them? '' Edith Ogutsch has obviously never watched a real policeman on duty in a cruiser. Cops don't "half hope that they will meet a small diversion"; they'll do anything to avoid one. Damballa: The cover is remarkably fine. I assumed without question that this was an enlargement of one of those fine little Japanese sketches, until I read the text. Esdacyos: I wonder if Ed Cox knows the full story about Russ Woodman's gafiation? It was the one logical, satisfying reason for gafiation that I've ever heard, and it makes his early death all the more poignant. '' Heathkit has a color television set available that makes it reasonably inexpensive for anyone who can handle a soldering iron and can trust his nerves to get that color tube in place without a mishap. I think that 90% of the things now televised would be just as satisfactory if presented on radio without the video, but travel films are among the few reasons for television's existence and I might be tempted to invest if I could get a guarantee of one color movie about Austria per month. Curiously, it was almost impossible to buy a color television set in Hagerstown until just the past year or two. Dealers kept one or two sets in stock but did their best to talk customers out of investing in them. The official explanation was that reception was borderline at this distance from the station and a lot of sets receiving poor color reception might damage the big sales pitch a few years later. But I suspect that the truth was a desire to be saved from servicing the sets. '' It's late in the day to start up the atom bomb argument again. But there may be enough newcomers to FAPA to justify one more brief rehash of my stand. I think

there were only two sane courses of action, once the nation had the bomb in a several-copy edition: drop one at the spot in Japan where the least damage would result, to demonstrate what could be done to the cities, or drop one on Tokyo where it would provide the greatest amount of military effectiveness and the most awful example. The difference between a fire raid and an atom bombing is obvious: the chance that the atom bomb would cause an immediate surrender could be foreseen. Elmurmurings: This contains the first real inducement for moving to Los Angeles that I've ever encountered. I'm tempted to inquire into the availability of houses on South Bonnie Brae, after learning that there is such a paragon of a cleaning woman in that city. People tell me that I have one of the best of the breed in Hagerstown. All that she has done lately is: leave a wet spot three blankets deep on my bed, discovered in harrowing manner by myself at 2:30 a.m. with the room temperature 14° above zero; break two Sir Harry Lauder records; toss the heavy Electrolux atop a basket full of old and fairly valuable packed-away dishes in the pantry despite the clear label as to its contents; leave the sink filled with an alarming charred mass, the obvious result of some near-catastrophe; hide away beyond all hope of recovery the sponges that I use to wash the car; gouge several ounces of wood out of a windowsill, trying to open a stuck sash; and walk off with the only plant surviving from the batch of growing things that I got during my last hospital stay. Naturally, the things that she does on every visit don't count, such as pulling out every electric plug in the house, pushing a heavy chair in front of each door, and using up five towels and four washcloths for purposes that I dassn't even guess. Vandy: I forgot there were two of these this time. Not many pianists would agree that C is the easiest key on that instrument, assuming that you refer to major keys. The black keys get in the way and restrict natural hand position in C major. Something with about four sharps or flats is much more practical, and I understand that some teachers start pupils on the scale exercises with the most accidentals, because they're the easiest. Catch Trap: One more reason why fanzines shouldn't be considered solely as a training area for budding pros: it does something to fandom as a hobby. It is no blot on character if the new fan wants to become a pro. But I dislike the attitude that it's good to combine business with pleasure by using fanzines solely for practice purposes. Day*-Star: I have no singing voice, so it's hard to guess how I'd react to participation in a choir. But I am dubious about my theoretical reaction. I've played in an assortment of orchestras and I wasn't nearly as happy making music there as when I was in a chamber music group or doing solo work. I felt impatient to express my individuality when I was contributing my proper share to the harmony of the whole. But such tastes differ and I can't understand why Marion should hesitate to join in a church choir, whatever her beliefs. I see no worse deed in singing for a creed in which one does not believe than in singing professionally to make money for various managers and stagehands and ticket takers in whom you have no interest. '' I was hoping that Marion would dig into the matter of secrecy when she was dissecting APEX. There must be some sort of significant relation between the studied avoidance of rules and the equally vigorous shunning of any communication or publicity outside the circle. This might be added, too: that the group run by tradition rather than by rules is more likely to be static and prematurely moribund. The only mechanism for revising tradition is the existence of an exceptionally strong and influential person, while the constitutional group can adapt to emergency or changed environment quite readily. Under the publishing circumstances, I'll overlook some of the inaccuracies in this article.

But it would be a shame if it perpetuated a false tradition that the tickets got Myers thrown out of FAPA. He was not permitted to renew membership because a page with which he wanted to complete his activity quota was a direct quote from the New Testament and nothing more. Kteic Magazine: It's not at all improbable that the time will come when all possible names for everything have been used. One man incorporated in preparation for opening an electronics factory here and decided to name it the Heiskell Manufacturing Company, because of a celebrated weathervane on city hall bearing that name. (It was fashioned by an early settler, became his namesake, and got punctured during the Civil War by a Confederate who is supposed to have been shooting mark but was probably drunk and thought it was a sniper aiming at him.) Nobody in Hagerstown has ever heard the name anywhere else, it seems to have died out as completely as Lovecraft as a proper name, and so the man went driving the following week in Pennsylvania and saw a huge sign somewhere in the mountains, Heiskell Manufacturing Company. It really made no difference, because his new venture went bankrupt within a few weeks. Null-F: Ted puts pretty well a matter that has distressed me recently. Fans have grown entirely too prone to take as personal dislike any criticism of their ideas and anything resembling an argument becomes the signal for everyone to choose up sides or be counted as a wishywashy neutral not worth having as friend or foe. '' I can't see any essential difference between the artist who draws a picture with a photograph as its basis and the one who draws with someone or something posing before him in real life. If you argue that the artist should depend on his imagination and memory, you condemn the practices of most painters over a span of several centuries. If anything, use of a photograph instead of the real thing as model should make things harder for the artist, because he's working without the help of the third dimension, just as he must do when he makes sketches on the scene and then does the final painting in his studio with them as help. '' Halfway through the article by Abraham H. Maslow, I was almost certain that I was either hoaxed or kidded: that E. Everett Evans did not die or that this is a skillful parody on The Time-Binder. But I suppose that the writer was serious, inasmuch as it's wise to expect anything from a college teacher. I'm pretty sure that I could do an equally convincing article in much less space on nausea as a key common experience that makes the entire race of mankind kin in moments "not communicable by rational, logical, abstract, verbal, analytic, sensible language". Puke-experience, anyone? Helen's Fantasia: For fine service on the British Penguins that are theoretically not available in the United States, write to Ken Slater, Fantast (Medway) Limited, 75 Norfolk Street, Wisbech, Cambs., England. Don't send him money, for he will tell you about his American go-between. He charges only the American equivalent of the British cover price, plus postage, unlike Stark and some other American dealers who simply buy the things retail and then tack on a generous profit over the cover price that they paid. Anything in print in paperback is available from Slater, much fine fantasy in hardbound editions, and I assume that he will also get non-fantasy between boards if ordered. '' With the greatest selfcontrol, I restrain myself from the obvious remarks on what's in a name, and shall content myself with wondering idly if boggart is a corruption of Bogert or vice versa. Rats in My Room: Over hundreds of miles, a common lament finds an echo. My first tape recorder is sick, Bill Danner tells me that it will be easy to fix as soon as I get it open because it is a mechanical fault that should be easily spotted, and he can give directions by using his identical machine as a pattern. But the screws that hold the cover in place are

hanging on grimly, and I can't afford to keep on buying new screwdrivers. Phantasy Press: Please accept this as a strong pepping-up attempt regarding the recapitulation of the year's FAPA output. If severe criticism stopped us all from publishing things, FAPA bundles would be totally empty. The McPhail summaries are such a valuable thing that they have a sort of semi-official status: presumably the official organ would run a roundup like this if Dan didn't do it, and it would be a shame to interrupt the string of appearances. They Laughed: The corner drugstore gave me a copy of St. Joseph's calendar as a reward for eating my Christmas dinner there. But I find it a pallid and insufficient substitute for the Old Farmer's Almanac, which also came free, without even the necessity to eat a meal. The notes on what happened on each day in the past have a laconic sweep and grandeur that combines the best features of Handel's oratorios and the poetry of Eliot. Some samples from the current volume: Feb. 4, Eb. Adams saw three angels, Medford, Mass., 1761. Mar. 11, skunks are mating; Romeo and Juliet married, 1302. Mar. 18, Cicero's interview with Cleopatra. Apr. 15, Israelites arrive in wilderness, 1491 B.C. May 11, three chilly saints (11-13). No, I don't know the meaning of that last one, but it sounds impressive. The same issue also has such delights as a reprint of an illustrated 1750 pamphlet on The Trial and Execution of the Sparrow for Killing Cock Robin, instructions on how to manufacture hardtack, Longfellow's first poem, accurate information on the earliest age at which it is advisable to mate a she-buffalo, and the Hogarth drawings for Hudibras. '' I claim credit for preventing a hasty renaming of a new street after the late president. My journalistic efforts succeeded, principally because I was the only person in Hagerstown who kept calm enough under the stress of the time to point out that there is already a Kennedy Street in Hagerstown only a quarter-mile from the thoroughfare that they intended to rename. '' I can tell what happened to all the mysteriously vanished material about Kennedy as far as the Hagerstown Morning Herald is concerned. I personally stood over the composing room men and forced them to proof up every galley of unpublished type, and supervised the melting down of every slug that had become in bad taste as a result of the assassination. I believe that every syndicated columnist and news service advance intended for that Saturday's newspaper had contained some sort of insulting or satirical references to the president or his family. I can still hear the wails of the foreman, as he watched the many manhours of typesetting join the library at Alexandria in limbo. But a local dime store had copies of The First Family on prominent display for a week after the assassination. Synapse: Any lens begins to lose sharpness if it is stopped down too far. The lenses on 8 mm cameras rarely go below f/16 or f/22 because this lack of definition would be particularly obvious under the huge magnifications that home movies undergo. Larger negative handheld cameras can usually be stopped down to f/32 because they aren't apt to have their negatives enlarged more than ten or twelve linear times. The only place you find the extremely small stops is on big view cameras, whose negatives are normally contact printed and the deterioration of the image is counteracted by an improvement in the slender depth of field associated with these large cameras. '' I too would like to know why it is so impossible for television stations to show the old 16-frame movies at the proper speed. I can understand that their regular projecting equipment is designed to operate at just the one 24-frame speed. But you'd think they could borrow a variable speed non-sound projector when they had occasion to run a silent. There must be some mighty obstacle, because they go to all sorts of trouble to double-print every third frame in a copying process in order to show some old movies at a natural rate of action. This

is expensive and produces a flashing effect if not done just right. '' I can produce my file of The Alchemist and show the complete disappearance of the hekto image from what was once a Roy Hunt cover. '' Speer continues to define obvious words like bisexual and toss out matters that are baffling, like Mattachine and One. I finally remembered the nature of those publications, but it took some thinking. I am suspicious of those who go homo-hunting in literature. The sonnets are the only evidence known to me that Shakespeare was possessed of homosexual tendencies and they represent an unsolved puzzle, compounded by the possibility that we're looking with today's eyes on extravagance of language that was sycophantic rather than sexual in origin. It's much simpler to explain the woman-man disguises in the comedies by the fact that males played the women's roles and could do this sort of thing in particularly convincing manner. I imagine that I could prove that all great writers were celibate bachelors, on the basis of their many attacks on women in general and in particular in their writings, just as easily as anyone else can prove that this or that writer was homosexual because of the way he writes about young men. '' The long story held my attention throughout and I didn't get lost in the complex detail as I sometimes do in a Speer yarn. I keep wondering if Don Bratton didn't supply the germ of this theme. I thought that the ending was lame until some cogitation convinced me that it's as it should be. '' Would it be too late to invent a new means of signifying quasi-quotes? I'm sure they would sweep the world if they were easier to make on the typewriter and didn't require new matrices on the linotype. I think that the use of two commas without spacing between before and after the quasi-quote would solve all the problems in English-language publications. They could cause confusion in some languages in which standard quotations utilize bottom-of-line quotation marks.

'' '' '' '' '' '' '' '' '' '' '' '' '' '' '' '' '' ''

No postmailings are at hand as yet, so there's room for a long-intended statement of policy about the non-FAPA copies of Horizons. There aren't many. I send them to people for a variety of reasons: old friendship, particular favors, nearness to the top of the waiting list, and impulse. I wish that recipients of non-FAPA copies would not mention too frequently to others that you get it. It's flattering to find Horizons sometimes listed in general fanzine popularity polls but it causes me much trouble in the form of requests for copies, and I'd prefer the title to be obscure instead of famous. Horizons is not for sale to anyone at any price. I don't consider it a trading fanzine, although it goes to a few fans for other reasons who send me their own publications free. I'd like very much to send Horizons to everyone outside FAPA who asks for it, but this would ruin its whole reason for existence: careful control over circulation, a minimum amount of wrapping and addressing, and the smallest possible amount of extra labor for publisher Eney. Horizons has now completed 20 years of every-mailing appearance in FAPA, this record must end someday, this would be a good time to break it deliberately instead of falling victim to fate in some future quarter. If I do continue regular publication, I intend to be a bit more strict about the non-FAPA recipients. I don't expect every-issue acknowledgment or comments, but there are some people on my mailing list who have not displayed any evidence of receiving Horizons for periods of two or three years and I am inclined to try to find more appreciative fans. If Horizons should stop, I'll be converting immediately to a new title and new policy, a different type of material, either in or out of FAPA.

Hoping You Are the Same

Loafing in the lobby, I was complaining about the review copy of Philip Wylie's Triumph. "It's not really fair to expect someone tired of science fiction to review a book that isn't even new. I can get more interested in writing about a story that hasn't been between covers before."

"There wasn't much about it in the fanzines when it was a hardcover," someone whose identity I forget pointed out. "Maybe Wylie is out now. Maybe nobody is in but Heinlein."

John Jacobs hadn't stopped talking very frequently since he arrived at the con. "What's Wylie got that the prozine writers don't have?" he wanted to know. "Everything in Triumph has been in the prozines, time after time. Now it's printed again under Wylie's name and it goes through how many editions?"

I looked at the copyright page in my review copy. "Six printings as a hardcover. It hasn't been a paperback before." I stopped, because I still feel self-conscious at a con, fearing I'm talking too much when in a group. But nobody else said anything. Vernon Kellett was in the crowd and he always inhibited chatter. He was the kind of guy you always feel like introducing to Alderson Fry. So I kept talking, trying to think out aloud my possible review gimmick. "I think the trouble with the Wylie books is just about the same thing as what was wrong with Little Rollo stories. Each of them is based on some painfully obvious truism and the writing is so bad that most readers get rebellious and want to take the other viewpoint. Triumph, for instance. It takes a couple of hundred pages to say that a war between Russia and us could kill off almost everyone on a couple of continents. Instead of using that as a point of departure for his story, Wylie makes it his whole point. Then he shows us all his weaknesses as a writer." I looked around to make sure that a certain pro wasn't in earshot. "I'm getting sick and tired of authors who try to characterize by making the casts of characters a league of nations. If every prominent character is a Jap and a Jew and a Pole and an Egyptian, the writer doesn't go to the trouble of characterizing. He just depends on emphasizing either a national characteristic or its opposite if this would seem like prejudice. And Little Rollo was more worldly than Wylie, if he expects readers to swallow this bomb shelter financed by one millionaire. There isn't anyone in the country wealthy enough to swing that kind of a construction project alone. And the way all those millions of moving parts work without mechanical failure is something straight out of space opera."

"The thing that I always think about these novels," John said, "is that the characters always do the natural thing in these futures. That is the last thing you'd expect. I think science fiction should always take that matter into consideration. Whatever things are like next century, they won't be logical extensions of what we have now or what we assume happens between now and then. Just think what results you'd get if you could go back to 1864 and poll people about what life would be like today. Where would you find anyone who could guess that the Negro's status would still be the biggest thing in the news in 1964? Or that men would still be wearing clothing almost exactly the same in 1964 as they were in 1864? Or that we wouldn't think oftener than once a year about the immigration problem in 1964?"

"Wylie doesn't work very hard on that," I said. "Look at the way he assumes that we'll automatically try to fight back and the Russians will automatically work toward completing the job, after the first holocaust.

He doesn't even think about the Thunder and Roses uncertainty. He never hints that maybe some of these fighting men will feel like hiding instead of fighting or thinking it over."

"Well, I've finally learned something at a convention." Vernon's voice was an unmistakable slow rumble. "You fans not only put on an act at these things. Sometimes you even decide why a good writer isn't worth a darn."

"You're the only one around here putting on an act," John said. "You hang around the sidelines of fandom all year long and then show up at the cons pretending that you're just here for the kicks of watching fans make fools of themselves. You're more of a fan than lots of the people around you."

Susie Wells plucked ineffectually at John's sleeve. I knew why. Vernon mixed a small amount of truth into a large quantity of bluntness and occasionally he could say something biting mixed in with the stupidities. But John didn't halt for the stop signal. "You're turning into a fixture at these cons. Other fans come and go. You show up for all of them."

"Maybe the fans change their faces," Vernon said in that agonizing slow way. "But they all act the same. They come to these cons to act the way they're scared to act all the rest of the year."

"I'm no expert on cons from being there," I said. "But I think fans act at cons like any other group at a convention. Do you expect them to get temporary jobs so they can work eight hours each day they're at the con?"

"Morality." Vernon made the word stretch out over five seconds. "I'll bet you fans don't even look at your neighbors' wives back home. Here at a con you never go to bed to sleep, just to fornicate." John instantly acquired a mighty frown. I wasn't sure what was going on between him and Susie. But he let Vernon talk: "All these girls at this con, who are they? You never see them mentioned in the fanzines, they don't know anyone when the con starts, they're just here for one purpose."

"You read too many con reports," Susie said firmly. A couple of fans in the crowd snickered, because we'd long suspected this to be Vernon's secret vice. "Take out the false rumors and the boasting and the exaggeration and the duplication, and I don't think there's anyone left to misbehave, is there, honey?" She smiled sweetly at John, who immediately suggested a search for some place that sold coffee for less than a quarter a cup. I stayed right smack where I was in the green plastic-covered sofa, watching Vernon walk off in the opposite direction from the rest of the fans. He walked as slowly as he talked, for an obvious reason. His heart was in dubious condition, he couldn't do anything that approached exertion, and he was going through life at a different timerate from most of us. I wished that I could be among the minority of fans who assumed that his attitude to fandom was the result of the physical condition. I could believe that an aching back or migraine could make a person mean and unsociable, but I couldn't see why the same effect should result from a painless defect in the heart. I leafed again through the copy of Triumph, which I'd received for review in Horizons just before the con and had read on the way. I decided that I didn't want to write a review of it, and went in search of a huckster's table where I could leave it. There might be a neofan who would pay a good price for it because it wasn't on the stands yet.

The next day, I was fussing myself for my inability to break at cons the habit of dawdling over such things as shaving and facewashing. Using up too much time for such matters in the bathroom is among the

unpublicized occupational hazards of bachelordom. I should be hurrying so I could have a better choice of breakfast partners. But I kept forgetting the importance of getting back among fans, for wondering about the conversation last night. I kept trying to imagine ways in which a nation that hadn't been completely wiped out by nuclear warfare would spend their days. I was sure that the answer wouldn't be found by recalling all the theories in science fiction stories. Orbital flights had killed their precognition qualities. Where can you find science fiction stories that told how these first steps toward outer space would be so completely controlled by weather conditions at the launch site and recovery area? Some daily activities could survive nuclear war as unchanged as the windshield wiper has outlasted every other mechanical change in automobiles. But there's the excellent probability that a breakthrough or two in science will occur very soon, before this assumed atomic war. Whatever form the breakthrough might take, it can be expected to have its effect on the future, as radically as television has altered political campaigning tactics.

I didn't find John and Susie in time for breakfast but ran into them later as I was emerging from a dull morning program feature. I gave them the benefit of the doubt and assumed that they were coming back from eating at some place other than those I'd looked in.

"I hate to give the devil his due, but old Vernon could have the germ of a good fanzine article," John told me as we walked aimlessly around the lobby. "Just think what a Tucker or a Grennell could do with an article on these femmefans who turn up at cons. There must be a lot of funny anecdotes about them just itching to be printed. Nothing suggestive or in bad taste, you understand."

"Well, there do seem to be more strangers here than usual," Susie said. "See that little one over there, the pale one with Blackie? I don't think they've been more than five inches apart for the past two days and I know they didn't know each other before this con. I introduced them."

"I remember watching her in the art room," I said. "Vernon was there, too, and I think she's one reason he took off like that last night. She's one of these gushing kids. She was picking up everything that was loose and getting within about three inches of everything fastened down. Not just the art work, but that funny little lamp right inside the door and the fake cane on the back of the chairs and when someone offered her a candy bar you'd have thought that it was something we'd snatched out of the far distant future specially for the con. A lot of girls go through that stage without meaning to do it because they really are interested in shapes and textures and new eating experiences. But Vernon naturally started to mutter about affectation and how he hoped that she'd get a couple of square meals out of Blackie because she didn't look very well fed."

"She came with a couple of other girls," Susie told me. "They must be from out of town. If you think she's childish in here, you should have seen them outside the building the other time I was talking about, when I got acquainted with them and introduced this one to Blackie. Taking deep breaths like they'd never had a chance to inhale monoxide before, staring at everyone walking down the sidewalk, talking to the pigeons, all that carrying on. But they didn't take long to get acquainted."

"When you've been to as many cons as I have, you'll be used to that sort of thing," John said. We were back in the con hall now, where the talk had ended and the auction was delayed while they hunted the auctioneer. "This is as good a place as any for the kids to get started, if they're going to start sometime. And the married ones might as well get

it out of their systems away from home. I think it teaches a few lessons, too. Mind you, I know things aren't as bad as Vernon says. But one of these neos came up to me the first thing this morning, asking a confidential question. Things had gone faster than he'd expected them too, because it was his first time, and he was afraid that they hadn't arranged the precautions and he was kind of uncertain about whether there might be precautions without the boy knowing anything about it."

"Hi, Sally," Susie said. Another strange girl had hesitated, going past us. This one was pale, too. "Sit down and talk a while. Do you know these people?" She didn't. She was another neo, that was evident in a minute or two, and she seemed like a nice girl except that she bothered me by staring at me in a sort of calculating manner. By accident, I mentioned my need to get started home by afternoon and she stopped staring. This made me feel safe enough to ask her if she was going to buy anything. The auction had just started up front, but it wasn't attracting much attention.

"No, I wouldn't dare take any of that stuff home with me," Sally smiled. I tried to place her accent. It sounded like someone trying to get out of the Brooklyn brogue. "Are you a small town girl?" I asked. No, she said, she was from Philly. I commented that that city isn't what it used to be back in the days when you could see a major league baseball game there every afternoon, and woman-fashion, she didn't even catch on to my reference to the wanderings of the A's. She just said that that wasn't the only change.

I tried to think of something to say about the Mercurians, assuming that they'd unearthed her, and failed. But it didn't matter because she and Susie were suddenly rattling on at a great rate about a few fans and from the tone of Sally's questions, I gathered that she was mostly interested in the healthiest and liveliest young male fans, hardly an unnatural interest. "Of course, the bad thing about it is, these fellows and I will never see each other again," Sally was saying.

"You don't expect the bombs to fall before the next con?" John asked. "They'll mostly be back next year." Sally shook her head. "But I probably won't get there. It's too much trouble." I thought again about my pet notion of three worldcons each year to avoid these transportation problems for the young and penniless fans and started to explain it for the umpteenth time but the others didn't give me an opportunity to tell all the details. Somehow, I suspect that this is one Warner project that will require quite a while to materialize. John's reference to bombs had interested them in the future, and I could see that even with my limited experience of cons, this was an odd one, for the talk kept veering toward science fictional matters. Susie wondered if there was any significance in the way that someone always seemed to swing the conversation around to nuclear war. She had gone in for some psi theories a few years back and retained some belief in the one that credits major coming events with the ability to guide people's thoughts and talk even though there is no specific precog in evidence. She was talking lightly but I could see that she was genuinely worried that all these references to bombs and future changes in society might be proof that the war was at hand.

"What's the use in talking about it?" John wanted to know. "The few of us couldn't change the future even if we knew what was coming. I don't think we could change the past even if we could travel back into it and could affect some happenings. When the world gains momentum in the direction of a war, it's too much entropy for a few persons to handle."

"But wouldn't it be natural for even one person to try?" I argued.

"The survival instinct is the most basic one of all. You take the most intelligent man in the world and hang him and his feet will kick trying to find the support that isn't there any more. Tell me that Russia was ready to push the button and give me a time machine and I'd go back and make a completely useless effort to change the course of history."

"That's the most powerful instinct. But there are different ways to express it." We all looked at Sally. It was startling to find her interested in something besides the romantic susceptibilities of this and that fan. "I mean, isn't it possible that the instinct would turn the energies into race survival efforts?"

"She's right," Susie said. "Remember how partridges or pheasants or something pretend to be hurt and risk their lives so their chicks can get out of danger." John snickered. "I'll bet that a war's coming close, judging by what's been going on at night in this hotel this weekend." He made the statement unduly loud and I understood why in a minute. Vernon had sauntered up and was standing behind me, taking it all in. Vernon-baiting was a popular convention sport and I feared we were in for it. Sally was now staring at him, and this was my means of realizing that he'd come up quietly.

"Are you fans talking over a semen-bank for our degenerated grandchildren?" Vernon was talking even more slowly than usual, to make himself heard over the increasing auction hubbub. "What a wonderful gift to give the 21st century! You could put it into a time capsule and after the last man on earth had died the last woman on earth would find it, and we'd have a population of undiluted fandom for all time to come."

"It's nothing to joke about, Mr., uh," Sally said somberly. This time I performed the necessary introduction. "Do you joke about what's going on in the bodies of the people who died last week? Then why do you joke about what might happen after a war?"

"Because there's nothing left if there's a war and joking about nothing can't hurt anyone," Vernon reasoned and looked triumphant.

"You sound like Wylie." Now I wished I hadn't gotten rid of that copy of Triumph. "Whatever follows the war isn't going to be all black or all white. We won't have a completely dead planet and we won't have a world like today's except for the craters. Maybe the problems won't be big, grandiose ones, but nagging and bothersome ones like the need to spend two hours working on a glass of water to make it fit to drink."

Sally got up and walked up to Vernon. She stuck her nose two inches from his nametag, as if she were nearsighted, backed away perhaps one inch, and said: "I've heard about you. They say your ideas are good ones to know, because you don't think in the same old tracks as most fans." Vernon backed up a little and looked uncomfortable when he discovered a wall immediately behind him. I wished that I could figure out a way to signal the girl that this was the most imperviously monogamous person that could be found at a convention, then realized that she would find this out soon enough. Besides, there was always the chance that the rumors about his health's effect on his sex life were right.

"My dear young lady, would you kindly inform me if I am right when I think you can't keep your eyes off my wristwatch?" I realized suddenly that Vernon had been standing with arms folded and the watch was close to the name tag that I'd assumed was the target of Sally's eyes. A trace of color came into those pale cheeks and she grinned but said nothing. "You find this watch different somehow from those you've seen before?" He had his back tight against the wall now. It was the first time I'd ever seen him lose self-command around fans. Then just as I was wondering if fandom had turned up a unique fetish, Sally tore away her eyes and the tension broke somehow with her little laugh. "No, silly, I just wanted

to see the time. These fans are so bohemian that I wouldn't trust their watches. You look as if you'd always keep yours accurate."

"Is your pumpkin coach coming for you at the stroke of the hour?" John wanted to know. "The con's young yet." She shot him a strange look. "No," she said. "I suppose it's just a reflex. I said something about race survival and then I must know exactly what time it is. You see the connection, don't you? Doomsday, drawing nearer and nearer, all the clocks approaching it, and so on."

"Sally, don't lie to me," Susie said commandingly. "You're one of these new prozine writers, aren't you? You don't talk like a neofan and we've never heard of you and what else could you be?"

"No, I don't write," Sally said. "I've thought about it. But you know, there is less and less a market for science fiction all the time. I just like to read the stuff and to think about the stories that I could write if I tried to."

"A common delusion." Vernon had recovered his aplomb and felt well enough to look straight at the girl. "Just like the great symphony that anyone who can't read or write music is sure he could compose if he knew the notes and the staff."

"But I've got stories all plotted out," Sally said. She was looking up at him and seemed as if she weren't talking to the rest of us. "Just think what could be done with a good story on race survival after a nuclear war. Imagine the world capable of supporting life but too full of radiation for any normal children to be born. And too much destruction and loss of facilities for men to spend their time devising a way to keep enough couples in radiation-proof shelters to propagate the race. Everyone's too busy raising enough food and making it edible. So the only way the race can survive is through some women going back in time machines and getting pregant from healthy men before the bombs. And time travel is so difficult and takes so much energy that the women can't stay in the past more than just the time they need to do their job. Think of the story told from the viewpoint of the women, who get just a brief glimpse of a wonderful radiation-free world and then must leave it and return to a dreary bombed-out future."

"Full of holes," John snapped. "If the war comes, it'll come before time travel. The women would try to hide in the past, unless they could be yanked back somehow."

"You overlook the biggest flaw of all," Vernon proclaimed. "Even the most charming women in the world of the future would find it impossible to achieve their goal in such a short time. Where would they try to work their wiles? They'd be complete strangers in the past, they'd act differently, they wouldn't want to take back the seed of the bums and clods where they'd find instant cooperation. Where would these women of the future possibly find a headquarters for their project in the past?"

Nobody said anything. Vernon walked away triumphantly. It was time for me to go up and pack. A couple of hours later, after I'd brought my bags down and was making the goodbye-saying rounds, I was startled to see Vernon and Sally slipping into an elevator together. They would have been unobserved if it hadn't been for the excellence of my peripheral vision.

But we never did find out if Sally was a prozine writer. She and her pals aren't on the Pacificon II membership list. Of course, there is no point in trying to find out from Vernon, because of that unfortunate heart attack he suffered on the last day of the con and his subsequent decision to drop out of fandom altogether. He hasn't even ordered any conreports from fanzine publishers recently.

Notes on Notes

Playing right straight through all the Mahler records that he owns can have various effects on a person. There are those who would assert that this is the best way to stop wasting money buying records and squaundering time listening to music. There is the danger that the listener will go into catalepsy in reaction to the sheer impossibility of solving the mystery that such exposure to Mahler reveals: why this music has won so little public favor in this country while Tschaikovsky is so popular. One composer was about as neurotic as the other, they spoke in quite similar ways, and I can only guess that the popularity will come for Mahler when he has been dead long enough to escape identification with everyone's grandfather. By accident, such a Mahler binge always reminds me of yet another matter. I rarely play a record without at least a quick glance at the notes on the jacket, thrice-familiar though it has become from frequent reference. My Mahler collection has notes that neatly personify and embody most of the faults of current writing about music. The six symphonies and assortment of vocal works that I possess in recorded form of Mahler's music thus repeatedly notify me that I really should get around soon to writing that long-planned article about what is wrong with the state of musical criticism and other current prose about music. I hope to prevent this essay from too much preoccupation with words related to recordings, for a great deal more is written about non-recorded music, but the immediate future may betray this excellent resolve for the simple reason that record review magazines, record jackets, and advertisements are more conveniently near to hand than clippings of concert reviews and learned discourses on abstruse subjects in the specialized books.

Let's see how far we can get with cataloging the principal sins of writings on music before leaving these Mahler record jackets. Paul Hume, best known for his nasty remark about Margaret Truman's voice, did the notes that accompany the Urania recording of the Seventh Symphony. This text for my sermon is principally useful as a sample of the kind of music writing that never is willing to consider the matter at hand. Hume quotes Arnold Schönberg extensively in his remarks on the Sixth and Eighth Symphonies, and is two-thirds of the way through his notes before he gets around to Schönberg on the Seventh. Later, Hume lists the number of minutes he recommends for the performance of each movement of that Sixth Symphony. Nicholas Milroy is not known to me, other than as the name appended to the liner notes on the Vox release of Mahler's Ninth. (I own it in the original two-record release, and these notes may not have lived through the recording's reappearance as part of a Voxbox.) Nick is the epitome of the individual who writes about music what Cabell used to call high-sounding nonsense. He is fairly coherent in his efforts to describe the music of the first three movements with a minimum of technical terms. But he falls apart completely when he comes to the final adagio. "All the suffering, all the confusion, all the anxiety is dissolved in this last movement, which seems to float away into eternal light. It is a farewell of someone who is already far removed from here... It starts with an adagio, a sigh out of deepest suffering, a wish to leave this world, a yearning for another life, another existence, without fight, without willpower, for the great absolution... In the tremendous swell, worlds unite in the sight of the Eternal. This world and the great Beyond are no longer separate from each other. The consciousness of the individual, of pain, of happiness fades. Man melts into all-creative, powerfully alive, indestructible Nature. Everything earthly begins to dissolve.

It falls slowly as dust, the voices rise higher and higher, until entirely without weight, they disappear into infinite heights...." Obviously, this is consoling language to someone attending a lecture on spiritualism, but it is difficult to see how this type of bad prose can hope to compete with the impact of the great music it strives to describe. Anoriginal Vox issue of Das Lied von der Erde provides two useful and edifying examples of types of bad writing inspired by music. One is the propensity to make totally inaccurate statements so positively that the person unacquainted with the music will doubt his ability to hear what is resounding in his ears. We are told that the "leading motive" in the second movement consists of three notes. Tovey should have removed for all time the necessity to explain that music is not built up from a tiny group of notes but can be broken down into those notes by unscrupulous writers like Dr. Henry W. Levinger. We also are told that Der Abschied "is accompanied by an orchestra of a few instruments", total nonsense. On the opposite side of the jacket we find the German texts of the songs and English versions "based on that of A. H. Meyer". If I may rate translations as writing about music, I can use these as samples of bad habits with the pen or typewriter. I'm unacquainted with Meyer's translation, but I suspect that the Vox translations consist of revision into fairly literal English of a singing translation. An occasional line fits the German meter in this translation but there's usually a discrepancy in the next line. But the revision didn't go far enough and the translation is beset with little fussy details that don't exist in the German that Mahler set to music. "I weep and weep in all my solitude" is clumsy compared with "Ich weine viel in meinen Einsamkeiten". "I call mine own" is a literal translation of "nenn' ich mein" but the English is archaic and stilted, the German colloquial and natural. "Weary humanity is homeward bound" is not at all in the spirit of the German whose simple words would transmit their flavor if translated "Tired men go home."

There's a character in one of Saroyan's early plays who mutters almost incessantly, "No foundation. No foundation, anywhere down the line." This might be the judgment on the kind of writing about music that consists of unprovable assumptions and totally unwarranted inferences. Kurt List's notes for the Westminster recording of the Fifth Symphony goes on something fierce with this sort of thing. "The Fifth Symphony consists of five movements which, however, form essentially three sections. The central section around which the work is anchored is the third movement, a very extensive Scherzo, which might best be described as a study in various Ländler-rhythms. Among these the opening one in D major forms the central thought.... Just as this D major Ländler is the central thought of this movement, so the entire third movement is the pivot around which the symphony revolves. In this manner the larger structure of the total work is imitated by the smaller design of the individual movement." Maybe List has some mystic insight that contradicts the plain evidence of the score. The gross evidence of most people would be that this is nothing but a kind of automatic writing created out of sheer habit because of the reams of similar things written about 20th century German music that actually does contain the "bow-form", a symmetry of one kind or another leading toward and away from some central event. This is fine and good when applied to something like the passage in Berg's Lulu in which he writes music leading to a climax, then repeats everything note for note in the opposite order as if the tape were being replayed through the backside.

Unfortunately, my Mahler records aren't numerous enough to demonstrate some other things that afflict writing about music. Some of

these troubles are too generalized to be cited conveniently in a brief quotation. One of them is an ancient evil of music criticism that is no less deadly today for the fact that it is cleverly disguised. This is the scrupulous adherence to the old tradition that most writers about music are unable to keep up with the times. It is true that you get the impression that today's critics are marching in the front line with the serialists and musique concrete mixers and the rest of the advance guard. But if you read carefully, you discover that most of the writers pay allegiance only to a microscopically small minority of the contemporary and recently departed composers: usually their good will is limited to one tape recorder composer, Stravinsky, Webern, possibly one or two others. They make up for this by going wild over quite inferior music written in the improbably distant past. There is no difference between today's prose raving about Vivaldi and that of the last century lamenting that things aren't like they used to be in Beethoven's day. Few of today's critics have gotten much beyond 1850 in their enjoyment of music's mainstream. Wagner is still beyond their ability to enjoy, for instance, and Charpentier might still be the wild-ideaed Bohemian in his 30's for all the bravery today's writers show in dealing with his musical equivalent of freethinking.

There is also the difficulty that the old breed of musician-writer is dying out. It's hard to think of modern equivalents of Schumann, Berlioz and Wagner who were equally adept whether writing words or music. Today's typical writer about music is an aborted musician or an unfulfilled composer. I think that the difference is evidenced in the attitude of so many of these writers. They sound jealous most of the time, they are more willing to hate than to love, and their paragraphs give off the strangest impression that they could do much better themselves if they were really to try. This element of hatred is the most disturbing of all to me. I think there is something unhealthy in the implication we read so often that this performance should not have been permitted to come into existence, or that such a composition did not deserve translation into actual sound. There is the unspoken assumption that there is some kind of war in progress in the concert hall where Mozart is threatened with some awful fate if Clementi is performed. Of course, there is the obvious fact that there is a limited amount of concert time in a symphony orchestra's season and that inclusion of one symphony will mean the exclusion of others. But there are so many orchestras today and the permanence of great music has been so assured by the existence of records that it is hardly sensible to grow frantic at a performance of a work of inferior stature. There are the writers who have positive phobias concerned with certain composers or compositions. Joseph Kerman is the most obvious recent example of prominence. His "Opera as Drama" would be an impressive book if the reader could keep a straight face at the mechanical way in which Kerman interrupts his progression of thought every ten pages or so to utter another tremendous anathema against Tosca.

A less serious problem is that we must try to remember that the entertaining writer about music is not necessarily a dependable one. George Bernard Shaw is the obvious case of a music critic whose writings are wonderful reading and almost completely wrong about everything. I pride myself on ability to enjoy inspired writing of a lively nature that is disrespectful to music that I admire very much. Thus, I chuckle whenever I run across the bright things that were said about Strauss' Domestic Symphony, like: "If all the sacred elephants of India were driven into the Ganges at the same moment, they could not make half the noise of that one little Bavarian baby in its bath." A double-level

stroke of genius was one critic's review of Wolf-Ferrari's once sensational opera, The Jewels of the Madonna. "Paste!" It is vulgar to explain a joke, but this work is unknown today except to someone who happened to discover a copy of the score in his local library. So I'd better spell out the fact that the remark refers to a certain characteristic of the less valuable type of jewelry and to the way a writer utilizes a similar substance in conjunction with scissors when in a hurry. In other words, whatever the merits of this opera, I doubt that even its composer would have claimed sincerity and originality as two of them.

More bothersome is the acceptance that has grown up of the customary form of record criticism. This consists of a few paragraphs per record, published either before or immediately after release of the new disc, through cooperation of manufacturers in the form of advance pressings. Reviews of this type quite often contain some comparisons with other recordings of the same work and some remarks on the quality of sound that the engineering has provided. This entire procedure seems to me totally wrong. I doubt that even the most gifted critic can say anything of real importance in the small space at his command, particularly if he must neglect the musical aspects of the recordings in order to do his duty by other recordings and the microphone placement. Even if we assume a genius who can condense his impressions in such a small space, it is unlikely that he will accomplish this task in the short time provided by the current necessity for reviews to be timely. And finally, a recording is utterly different from a live performance in one obvious but neglected manner. It will be heard more frequently after it is familiar to the listener. It will be lived with and repeated at intervals over long spans of time. The currency of most recordings is so brief that it's hardly safe to delay reviews until the critic has lived with the discs for a couple of years. But I feel that he should have time to play a record intended for review over at least a period of a month, including a minimum of two weeks' fallow time during which he does not play it. Recordings have a remarkable ability to improve or deteriorate after the novelty of this particular interpretation of a work has been absorbed. It's dubious if the critic's reactions to the quality of the sound reproduction have any real validity. Playback equipment and room acoustics vary for critics and for listeners. So do ears. It is safe to believe a reviewer when he says that in a lieder recital the piano is too prominent or too demure, provided that you are accustomed to this critic's preferences in this respect and that you aren't hopelessly prejudiced in favor of either participant. But to waste review space by stating this record causes the flutes to sound too shrill at the climax of the scherzo and that one causes a French orchestra to sound like a German orchestra—there are too many variables at work for trustworthy communication.

Unfortunately, most record reviews cope with all these obstacles by simply giving up. Reviewer after reviewer acquires a small collection of useless generalities and resorts to them indiscriminately. Here is Nat Hentoff in a two-paragraph review of an Odetta release, making utterly meaningless statements that convey to the reader no information about the performance: "Most of the time Odetta's singing is burdened with a self-consciousness that puts a distance between the singer and her songs." "Her attempt on Woody Guthrie's Why, Oh, Why—a dialogue with a child—is labored." "Odetta is also diffuse on such current folk-like songs as Blowin' in the Wind." "On the Negro material, there is insufficient depth of interpretation." "The voice and the personality fail to fuse into a seizing individuality." All this ink could be

saved if Hentoff were to be honest and write: "I didn't like this singing but I lack the ability to say what specifically is wrong with it." Of course, this inadequacy of writing is not confined to light music. "Maazel is more concerned with its coloristic Ravelian orchestral elements than he is with Moussorgsky's nationalistic preoccupations." "There is no other composer in our century whose work so resourcefully eludes the standards by which we customarily measure musical quality." "At first, the tempos seem unduly deliberate, but the logic and proportion of these interpretations establish the justice of such an approach." I took those examples of pointless literary doodlings from the current issue of a record review magazine. I'm not sure if they are worse than the reviews in which the critics belabor some particular obsession. One writer can't treat of piano playing without telling us that the soloist brings out an inner voice. (I saw a reference to this recently in respect to the finale of Chopin's B flat minor sonata, played in bare octaves throughout until the final line.) Another writer has the same standard for judging anything written before 1750, the reverence or paganism of the interpreter in respect to double-dotting. The cult of the harpsichord has full possession of record reviews, and it is curious that those who judge the authenticity of the sound by the presence of this instrument in older music never seem concerned about the brilliance of the modern sound created by modern violin strings or the distinctive difference in the sound of the modern French horn in music written for the waldhorn.

I realize that economics play a part in the low standard of record reviewing. If five dollars a review is the going rate, the writer can hardly be expected to play a 50-minute record frequently, then labor at length over his paragraphs. But I think he should at least be required to check the performance against a score, so he can advise the reader about cuts and rearrangements. I once read a review of a then new release of Fidelio whose writer, through either ignorance or a nap, complained incorrectly that the quarter-hour Leonora No. Three overture was not played.

The ancient struggle over popularized writing about music, the use of technical language in musical prose, the value of analyses of form and vertical structures, and similar points is not likely to lose vitality as we move into the future. If I read the current issue of The Musical Quarterly correctly, one contributor proposes that all writing about music should be aimed at the university faculty level henceforth, on the grounds that efforts to say anything significant in a simplified form aren't appreciated and fail. On the whole, I think that writers about music are less guilty than specialists in most other fields with respect to obscurity for obscurity's sake. Some verbalizations about music simply cannot be altered for the sake of simplicity: it might be possible to find plain words to define a 6-4 chord but the reader will still not be any the wiser unless he knows the musical effect of the matter in question. But I believe that there can be considerable value in writing about music that contains no more technicalities than those that are likely to be understandable to the individual who has taken piano lessons for a year or played clarinet in the high school band. I am quite happy when I can find one of the currently in disgrace blow-by-blow descriptions of an unfamiliar work, the kind that goes: "This theme is gradually taken up by the strings in canon and in thirds, but its serene climax is shattered by forceful chords on the brass. The strings, in answer, recall the opening motto notes enforcing the augmented fourth by a leap of an octave, but their sudden climax is suc-

ceeded by a tranquil tremolando, over which an echoed horn call is heard." It is well and good to complain that anyone can write this sort of description after hearing the work a couple of times himself, and that keeping the description before his eyes while listening can cause wandering of thoughts or forestall the surprise element. But I like to resort to this assistance in the case of complex music or music in unfamiliar idioms for much the same reason that I prefer to utilize a map when driving in a strange countryside or walking through an unfamiliar city. I could dispense with the map but it saves time and there is a great deal of music in which a special kind of time-saving is useful, for you can't really like it fully until you've discovered its outlines and general details. Strangely, in this era of more and more pictures and decorations in every sort of printed matter, the pleasant old custom of using musical quotations in books about music is almost forgotten. I believe that the bulk of the people who read books about music can make at least partial sense out of musical illustrations, and they can provide information in ways that words unaided cannot achieve.

But it is possible to get so far advanced in the direction of analysis that the discoveries cease to possess any real relevance to the issues at hand. The vast amount of musicological research into extremely old music impresses me as pointless. Most music written before about 1700 bores me to distraction, and I think there are reasons for this. We do not know how it was supposed to sound, and I am certain that most of our deductions and guesses are wrong. Almost all of this music was intended either for the amusement of the performers or for the spiritual good of the listeners, and little of it strikes me as useful as music for sheer listening delight. I don't mean to sound superior by reason of existing in the 20th century, but I feel that music written before there were independent movement of polyphonic parts, chromatic tones, and any but the most rudimentary harmonies is as deprived of all the good musical things as the most advanced compositions that go just as far away from the resources of many centuries of musical developments because of this or that compositional theory. So I can't share the dizzy rapture of the scholar who writes a treatise because he has discovered carefully concealed in someone's motet a previously unsuspected phrase of plainsong. The music sounds the same as it did before I was told about this little trick by the composer. It is something like the performance analyzer that someone or other constructed out of four turntables and a Goldbergian assemblage of tonearms and specially constructed new devices. It permitted him to compare bar-by-bar as many as four recordings of the same work, even though the performances moved at different speeds. He had long believed that the mind is not capable of retaining its impressions of music for more than a few seconds, because the impressions get mostly erased by the impact of new ones as the performance proceeds. He did indeed discover through lots of use of this contraption many stylistic facts, by comparing how various men played or conducted works, two or three notes at a time. But this seems to me like a radio receiver capable of picking up wavelengths that nobody transmits on. It does not improve the human capacity for remembering the finer details of performances long enough for complete comparison, there can be no possible way to enjoy music itself when broken up into these fragments, and we are better off if we use our sorely limited critical capacities without cluttering up the house with such a large and ugly machine.

It's a tossup, which is worse, domination by money or by advertisers in writing about musical matters in periodicals. When we read of the terrible errors of judgment that critics made in newspapers and magazines regarding great composers of the past, we must realize the fine old Euro-

pean traditions of a corrupt press. I assume that the problem over there has subsided pretty far by now, and it never seems to have been extremely severe in the United States. But it might be well to give critics and reviewers in the old days the benefit of the doubt: when we find some outrageously prejudiced or reactionary opinion, it's quite possibly the result of the side income that the writer needed to keep body and soul alive in a trade that paid very poorly as far as salary was concerned. Today the problem of slanted writing is not as easy to blame on the individual, because it is almost impossible to separate the influence of the advertisers and the influence of the mass circulation philosophy. There is nothing too dishonest about following the party line of the newspaper or magazine for which you are writing but your output will inevitably be colored by the necessity to devote your articles to the matters most calculated to interest the mass audience or to soothe the biggest space purchasers. This sort of subject matter control is just part of the usual pyramiding effect: the Boston Symphony is one of the nation's best-known, it hires Leinsdorf, immediately the Sunday newspaper music sections and the record review magazines and the FM stations burst forth with a flaming interest in a conductor who was formerly just part of the mob, the Boston Symphony acquires more boxoffice appeal, RCA Victor arranges for Leinsdorf to record everything from minuets to oratorios, and so it goes for an interminable period. The only difference between Leinsdorf and the Beatles, in the publicity sense, is that the latter can't stay in the public eye nearly as long. We saw it happen with the symphonies of Sibelius, the hands of Stokowski, the speed of Toscanini, and the high notes of Lily Pons. Meanwhile, I believe that the writers are perfectly capable of writing interestingly about subjects that are not quite as useful for bandwagon purposes. Too few of them do it the hard way and spend their energies attempting to find publishers for manuscripts on subjects of genuine interest, written the best way they know how.

After all, I believe that the criteria for good writing about music are quite similar to those for non-fiction on almost any major topic. It should be writing that is specific instead of vague, understandable to anyone with patience to use a dictionary and a rudimentary knowledge of the subject matter, accurate, and with no more plagiarism than is inevitable in a world that has seen someone writing about almost everything already. I see no reason why anyone should write a book that contains nothing unpublished previously, unless he is one of the rare souls who can theorize and philosophize about musical matters without descending into a private language understandable only to him and perhaps his closest friends. I see no reason why any writing about music should devote most of its space and substance to comparing unfavorably other composers or performers to the subject under consideration. The world of music is not a geographical territory that can be ruled only by a limited number of monarchs and great compositions do not find their place in the art by killing other great compositions. I'd like to see the more specialized writings about music contain more actual citations from references instead of footnote references to the title and page where the material may be found, but this is partly my own fault, for living two hours from the nearest comprehensive library. There should be fewer elementary volumes on music published in this country, and more translations of the advanced works translated from other languages.

And finally, it would be nice if the prices came down a little. You can buy about two dozen first-rate books about music in paperback format for not more than a couple of bucks apiece. When you go to hardcovers, it starts to get expensive. Maybe musically inclined fans could introduce the publishers of music books to the merits of the mimeograph.

Schadenfreudian Symbolism

When President Kennedy was assassinated, and the story of Oswald came to knowledge, I felt that the sequence of events somehow fell into place in a chain of occurrences that had been troubling me. The magnitude of this event made it hard for me to acknowledge this quality of it, until other, lesser happenings of the previous magnitude had sent me back into a former attitude toward the matter.

The Germans have a word that has no precise English equivalent, a situation that is habitual with the longer German words. This one is schadenfreude. The dictionary that I consulted moments ago lists it as meaning "malicious pleasure", a definition that misses the mark by considerable. Literally, it might be called harm-gladness, less elegant but a little closer to the original. It's the senseless, unmotivated pleasurable reaction that some people get from the accomplishment of some type of damage or injury. Curiously, the German people who use the word most frequently seem fairly immune from this occupation. When the Germans do cut loose, schadenfreude is entirely too mild a term to describe the result. But it is a curious accident that the German-speaking Sigmund Freud should have promulgated theories that may have some relevance to the nature of the manifestation of the mind whose nickname so resembles his.

I'm sure that I don't know where I first encountered the German word. For a considerable spell, I thought it was nothing but an amusing way tospeak of an insignificant little trait and I tucked it away into the same corner of my memory that held the other perfect German term, zimmerrein. But there have been times more recently when I have begun to imagine that schadenfreude is some sort of elemental force, as unavoidable and considerably more bothersome than static electricity in cold, dry weather.

I think that I can pinpoint the first event that gave me concern. It was during my latest sentence to the Washington County Hospital. I was up on crutches at last, alarmingly wobbly but able to make slow progress untouched by human hand. The only place to walk in this hospital on crutches is in the corridors, for there are too many objects in the rooms to provide safe constitutionals and the one large empty space in front of the nurses' station is too risky for the opposite reason, the lack of anything to grab at for support in case of lost balance. On this day, I was tottering painfully down the corridor, trying to stay in the exact middle between the two walls so there would be no risk of a crutch brushing against the woodwork. A visitor loomed up, coming in the opposite direction, on collision course. I couldn't have gotten out of the way if I'd seen the Queen Mary approaching. The visitor looked shocked at my hoggishness in monopolizing the hallway. He frowned, finally stepped aside at the last possible moment, and gave one crutch a nudge with his hip that I feel certain was deliberate as he passed. An ordely generally stayed within jumping distance during my hikes, but I'd regained my equilibrium by the time he was reaching out to catch me. I was both scared stiff and furious. The nature of my busted hip was such as could have caused the whole works to go out of the socket if I'd been knocked flat, and I still retained a sufficiently black eye to prove that I was not faking uncertainty on the crutches. On the way back to my room, I looked over the people sitting on the chairs for this or that purpose, mostly because there were too many other persons in the room of the patient they'd come to see. I could sense them clucking tongues over my battered face, unshaven jaws, out-of-fashion cut of pajamas, and the lack of any interesting tubes or

bloodstains that might provide conversational material. I thought of the man who had almost knocked me down and of these gaping visitors and I thought, my golly, these are my fellow Americans, and I don't like them a bit. That was the start of my intensified impatience with American manners and customs, an emotion that has grown so strong that now I'm afraid to take that projected vacation in Europe, for fear I won't come back. I may expatriate myself, but I want to get ready for this process in leisurely manner. Of course I brooded too much over the incident because I could engage in few normal activities in the days of invalidism that followed. But I even found my resentment extending to some persons who undoubtedly paid visits to my room with the best intentions in the world. When someone came to see me whom I knew in only the most casual manner, and carefully explained that he hadn't made a special trip on my account but was out here to see a sister or a nephew. I began to suspect that he was secretly satisfying a pleasure-craving part of his makeup by staring at me in this as-is condition, and nursing the slight hope that I might go into convulsions or throw up before his visit ended. All this was probably just the neurotic imagination of a person who was too weak to do anything that would occupy his mind properly. But I have become permanently suspicious of the individuals who seek a place on the sick committee of churches and lodges, linking them mentally with those morbid souls who attend every funeral within reach.

Since returning to normal life, I haven't imagined myself the singled-out victim of schadenfreudian manifestations. But I have become more aware of their existence, or they are on the increase, beyond all doubt. Wrongdoing with evil intent I can understand and I can imagine myself committing these evils, under such circumstances as poverty or jealousy or extreme ambitiousness. My ability to keep out of serious trouble may result from my lack of contact with these causes, rather than from any particular goodness in me. But I can't imagine myself under any circumstances engaging in the senseless mischief that seems to threaten to take over the universe. At the office, we get examples of it almost every day. Several little league stars come in to report on their latest game, one goes to the bathroom, and dumps an entire packet of toilet tissues into the john. Someone, identity unknown, makes off with half of the coathangers on the news room's clothes rack, about every tenth day. It must be caused by sheer nastiness, for I know of nobody who doesn't have a pile of the things in each closet at home, but coats must lie on desks and over the backs of chairs until someone remembers to bring another batch of the hangers from home. I came to work one afternoon and found that someone had cut two small squares through all the remaining sheets in the small calendar on my desk. If someone asks permission to look through the bound volumes of old newspapers, he must be watched like a hawk that has just invented the atomic bomb, or he will tear from one of those old and irreplaceable newspapers an advertisement or headline that has struck his fancy.

At the lunch counter, it is much the same thing. Several eating places in Hagerstown have retired permanently the sugar containers. Too many customers were in the habit of unscrewing the lids almost the whole way, so that the next user would find the entire contents falling into his coffee. A little old man who claims he hasn't missed Sunday school in a half-century frightens to death each newly hired waitress in the place where he eats nightly, by imagining that she has not served him properly and complaining to the manager with much pomp and circumstance. (This might not qualify as schadenfreude for the manager ignores the gripes but the new girls still get frightened.) There are the women who

never eat lunch, so they spend the entire noon hour occupying an entire booth or table, nursing one cup of coffee and smoking an entire pack of cigarettes while busy persons with only a half-hour off stand waiting for a free seat.

Maybe I've degenerated into the civic improvement type. In recent years, I've become markedly anti-litter, and it irks me beyond all proportion when someone goes down the street tossing away candy bar wrappings that he could have easily stuffed into a pocket until he found himself at a convenient distance from a wastebasket. I'm particularly involved in this practice because there is a drugstore just one-third of the block down the street from 423 Summit Avenue. In cold weather when people walk fast, they get their purchase out of its bag or wrappings as they walk past my house and the litter goes onto my lawn; in the summer when they walk slowly, they are finished the soft drink in the paper cup or the cardboard container of ice cream and once again, I must do the cleaning up. Occasionally, there are more deliberate and premeditated invasions of my property. At the end of the backyard is a small fenced-in area, purpose unknown, which has grown into a small wilderness because I can't climb the fence to attend to the land from the back yard side and the alley on the other side is ten feet higher than the grade of the yard. So someone tossed the family Christmas tree down there on New Year's Day and I'll eventually be forced to pay someone to extract it and haul it away. A couple of years ago, I woke one Sunday morning to find one of the rubber stair treads vanished from the front porch. Nothing was left but a couple of tiny fragments under the tacks that held it down. Dogs would have left it somewhere in the neighborhood. Someone who stumbled coming up the steps and tore it loose with his foot would not have had any reason to remove the torn part. It isn't that I'm the target for a war of nerves by some neighbor, for these things are never repeated and they don't occur frequently enough to be a campaign against me. I imagine that I could interview the other people in the block and find that I get only the statistical average number of troubles inflicted on the neighborhood.

Occasionally, such things become serious enough to cause the local police to do something about them, a state of affairs that would alarm you much more if you were aware of the amount of stimulus needed to inspire any perceptible reaction in the local constabulary. They hauled a batch of teenagers into juvenile court a few weeks ago. After a basketball game, they'd piled into an auto, armed with their air rifles, and had gone out in search of automobile windshields and streetlights. They freely admitted when picked up to activities that totaled up to more than ten thousand bucks' worth of damage. None had been in trouble before or seemed to be disturbed personalities and they came from one of the most prosperous areas in the city. A little before that, a firebug was finally picked up. He indignantly denied getting any sexual satisfaction from watching the results of his labors and in fact does not seem to have wasted his time observing the outcome of his arson. He had no grudge against the owners or occupants of the radio station, barns, lumber yard, and other establishments he'd tried to burn down or up, as you prefer. He just wanted to set fires. Slightly different is the way the thing expresses itself among inmates at the prison for youths about six miles south of Hagerstown. Every few weeks, an inmate runs away from a work detail, is picked up a few hours or days later, and hauled into circuit court. Almost always these inmates insist on their constitutional rights to have a court-appointed lawyer for their defense, then plead guilty and get the sentence that is virtually automat-

ic tacked on to whatever term they are already serving. It means a smidgin of work for some of the less popular lawyers but a great deal of court costs that must come out of tax money, and all to no purpose.

If schadenfreude is a sort of poltergeist element in humanity, it might be expected to emerge from younger children with particular frequency and strength. I'll accept on faith that children don't know better, when they are below some given age, but I will not believe the accompanying platitude, that they don't know what they're doing, when they run along lawns in residential areas, diligently kicking as much snow as possible onto freshly shoveled pavements. I no longer dare to look at the dear little children accompanying their parents on excursions through local stores, because almost always when I do take a peek, I see the small one doing his utmost to break something or to pull down a pile of merchandise. I had contemplated the inclusion of pulling wings off flies in this category. But there is always the bare chance that the Russians are right, and if there is a certain amount of inheritance of acquired characteristics, the nasty little boys and girls will eventually make it much easier for us to swat the distant descendants of the insects whom they torment.

In a good many years of fanning, I have found very little evidence that this nasty behavior motivates fans to any great extent. There is too much backyard gossiping in fandom, but this doesn't count, for character assassination is another problem altogether. Goodness knows there have been ample opportunities to do senseless harm in fandom but the usual troubles in our microcosm are obviously motivated by other considerations: laziness, greed, or personal hate, as a rule. The only possible fannish example of the subject under consideration is so monstrous that I hesitate to spread the word. Rod Frye, a gafiated Virginia fan, confided to me recently that he and another fan published a fairly large fanzine in a 100-copy edition, put one copy into his files, and burned the other 99. Fanzine collectors can now forget about becoming completists.

All these things sound petty and the griping of an aging First Fandomite, beside the assassination of a president. But I can't help sensing at least partial schadenfreude motivation in the shooting of Kennedy. If we assume that Oswald did it, we can accept the fact that he was a mixed-up person who either wanted to attract attention to himself or do a damaging blow to an authority-symbol, or maybe both. But the very nature of a presidential assassination puts it into line in peculiar manner for those schadenfreude impulses. It really does no lasting benefit to evil emotion or reasoning, to kill a president of all people: future generations always indulge in so much controversy about the identity, motivation, and nature of the assassin that his spirit can't rest secure in the knowledge that his place in history is settled and secure; and the elaborate mechanism for keeping the national government in operation means that a president's death can be handled in one sense with less difficulty than the murder of a mayor or a priest. Obviously, Oswald changed the course of history and the future of the world, but any sanity that he possessed must have told him that the nature of the change would be unpredictable and that his bullet could conceivably do as much good as harm to the authorities' ideals that he hated. No, I think that this was in part at least a particularly spectacular example of the sheer delight in spoiling things.

There are all sorts of birds around here, because the big city park is only a block away. They fight, chase each other, get excited over one crumb while other crumbs are ignored, and in general display every irrational human attribute except schadenfreude. Maybe that was the whole point of the Hitchcock movie about birds: nobody could explain their acts.