

IS THERE A LIFE AFTER BREAKFAST?

or

PHILOSOPHICAL GAS

Number 67 February 1985

On a day in December 1977 in Adelaide a young lady in the Unemployment Benefits Section of the Department of Social Security asked me what I was writing. 'The story of my life,' I said. 'It's called "Is There A Life After Breakfast?"' 'I'm sure I've seen a book with that title,' she said. The story of my life, I thought.

PHILOSOPHICAL GAS

(you will be disgusted to learn) is despite all entreaties still published, or at least mainly written and generally flung together in some eventually reproducible form, by John Bangsund, PO Box 80, West Brunswick, Victoria 3055 Australia, invariably with the hope that ANZAPA and FAPA might see it in time... time... the last frontier, the final enemy, the um the oh my goodness is it really Wednesday already? one was just beginning to enjoy Monday so much you know — but what ever happened to that day one used to get between, whatchacallit, Tuesday? Band, did you say? Under the Star Wars and Expendable Terran Colonies Act? Never heard of them. For whom do they make their no doubt execrable recordings? Mister Reagan? Mister Ronal Reagan? Do pull the other one, dear chap or chapess as the case may be, one cannot believe that our beloved old-time friend and star of wireless and talkies, even if still alive, which one doubts, Ronal Reagan, would be capable in his dotage of running a band. Especially one with such an unspeakably outlandish name. You must be mistaken. If Tuesdays have really disappeared from the economy, it must be the dastardly work of the International Kohlrabi Kartel. One never knows, you know, where they will strike next, and this will be their undoing, mark my words, for one has learnt to suspect their involvement in the unexpected, which by definition thereby becomes the expected, and leaves them high and dry, as it were, in the ocean of ordinariness that is the world as we know it today. Let them have their cheerless Tuesdays, I say, and good riddance to them and it. We've lived happily without Foofoodays since Rupert Murdoch cornered the market in 1973: why should we miss Tuesdays? And do stop all this talk of Ronal Reagan, of all people, being responsible. One despairs of such cultish nonsense.

One suspects this may be the sixty-seventh issue of *Philosophical Gas*. 'But we know not what we may not in the ongoing overall perspective of temporal probability become,' as the Good Book reminds one. All one may say with some certitude is that it's after midnight, and therefore Wednesday 30 January 1985, and I've drunk just enough to want to type stencils, but either too much or not enough to recall exactly why.

Sally and I were talking about Canberra again tonight. Partly because today I talked to three good friends in Canberra — ANZAPA's very own OBE, Jean Weber, the Australian Government Publishing Circus's equally very own Mike Greenane, and a bloke at Parliament House named Kevin Shearwood who said he recalled my name but couldn't place the shape, or something, and I said frankly me neither likewise, and he went on to say that my old job at Hansard was up for grabs at this moment and instantly became my old friend Kevin. Because lately Sally and I have been talking about the jobs we should never have left, and I nominated two: Head Librarian at the Victorian Railways Institute, and Sub-Editor (Journalist, A Grade) with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Reporting Staff. I loathed both jobs, most of the time, at the time. But distance lendeth enchantment and so on, and suddenly Canberra is the loveliest spot on Earth. Those autumn days, the leaves so fulsomely spreading their loveliness in cartloads over the capital's elegant carriageways and back streets alike, symbol of drooping democracy, harbinger of: those bracing winter days (not to mention nights), starting about March and often hanging on long into November, taking time off only for unseasonal springs in June and July, then bursting into: those ghastly, unbearable summers.

Gentle readers who have not spent five days in Melbourne — let alone the forty years I have endured in the place — may wonder at my encomium to Canberra's weather. The thing about Canberra's weather is that you know pretty well at any given time of the year what you are in for. (Adelaide's, too: every summer you get one stinking-hot week, every winter a day when it rains so hard and long that the River Torrens momentarily floods, and you know that from June to August, more or less, but not much more or less, you're a fool if you go out walking in shorts and thongs.) In Melbourne you never know from one day to the next, one year to the next, what to expect. So far this summer — and we're bloody-well two months into it, dammit! — we've had two hot days, and one stinker. On the latter, the entire state of Victoria caught fire — and the day after, it rained. We don't get unseasonal days in Melbourne: we get unseasonal years, every year. And they don't just come 365 days at a time: they come and go in hours. 'Bit nippy for 2:35 am on a Wednesday in January,' you might hear someone say, and within seconds there's a heatwave — which lasts until five minutes after you've had a cold shower and flung your perspiring body onto the warm sheets, at which point it starts snowing outside. We're a hardy race, we Melbourne-dwellers, those of us that survive. To prove it, we go to Queensland when we die. It's true: Queensland is largely populated by dead Victorians. This is the only reason why Sir Johannes Bjelke-Petersen's government survives: it is propped up by countless thousands of deceased Victorians who have moved to Queensland and think they are in Paradise; naturally they don't want to change things. Victorians have done for Queensland what Melbourne's weather did for them: they grin and enjoy it while it lasts. Given half a chance, I'd join them.

But I was talking about Canberra, which for lack of a better turn of phrase may be called Australia's answer to Australia.

You've probably heard of the Australian Outback. So have most Australians. Most Australians have never seen the Outback, except on television. This is a good thing, because the Outback would be utterly spoilt if Australians started infesting it in large numbers. The Outback is Australia's answer to the Queensland that Victorians go to when they die. Its location, luckily, is a secret. All we know is that it's out there somewhere, beyond the most intrepid TV camera and Land-Rover's range — over the next ridge, maybe, where Giles or Leichhardt may have camped, where still some undiscovered Aborigines may drone their whirling flight. But at times, paradoxically, it creeps up on you — even to that sea by which (we are told in our National Anthem, the words of which I refuse to read, let alone learn) it is *girl*. It has crept over me at Barham, on the Murray River; at Peterborough, on Victoria's south-west coast; at Swift's Creek, deep in Gippsland; around Hay, in New South Wales's Riverina country; on top of that mountain behind Townsville in Queensland; at Cape Leeuwin and deep in the jarrah forests of south-west Western Australia; at Cremorne in Tasmania. It's still out there, the great Outback, and of course it doesn't creep (as I've suggested), let alone brood (as some of our lesser poets have claimed): it's just there.

And nowhere is it more accessible to Australian big-city dwellers than in Canberra. This is Canberra's secret, and so jealously guarded that most people in Canberra don't understand what it is that they have. It's the Canberra I began to appreciate when I left it, the Canberra Sally and I would like to go back to and enjoy. Miles Franklin country. Still there.

Mind you, on a calm night, such as tonight, there's not much wrong with West Brunswick. The forecast for tomorrow is 38°C. And a cool change later in the day. Good old Melbourne: the cool-change capital of the universe.

During the Christmas-New Year break (which in these parts can easily last for eight weeks), while I was sitting around idly twiddling my thumbs, listening to Bach and Mahler, reading histories of New Zealand, rearranging my work-room (again), reinventing the quadratic equation, getting in Sally's way a fair bit, and discussing some of these things with Damien Broderick, it occurred to me that I had never — unlike Bruce Gillespie and some other people whose work I admire — actually got quite down to writing something approaching an autobiography. It did not escape my ratiocinative faculties, on the other hand, that I have rarely written anything other than autobiography. Undeterred by this distressing thought (the like of which must often have occurred to Harry Warner Jr, Michael O'Brien, Eric Lindsay, Alexander Solzhenitsyn and other favourite writers of ours), I set about writing my autobiography.

I was not, I decided, quite in the mood to attempt a comprehensive work of this kind. (Besides, there was always the chance that some publisher might have some forgotten manuscript lying about the place that I could get down to work on before I had quite reached 'My Place in Rommel's Victory / Blamey's Ignominy / McArthur's Return' or whatever the fourteenth chapter turned out to be about. And in fact, this happened: I was given Robin Bromby's *Eyewitness History of New Zealand* to edit. My gain, your loss. Sorry) But in the time available to me, in between mastering the secret universal mysteries of Beethoven's late string quartets and explaining to Bruce Gillespie how Tattsлото systems entries work, I wrote a short autobiography. It's dead serious: if you want more jokes you'll have to look elsewhere, I'm afraid. Also it's woefully incomplete, as it stands, because I thought of it as a piece to introduce a collection of my writing, which someone might some day compile and call:

IS THERE A LIFE AFTER BREAKFAST?

A Short History of My Discovery and Exploration

1. *The Coming of the Aborigines*

Well, only one, that I know of. One of the first family friends to view the new baby was Doug Nicholls, who played football for Fitzroy. He didn't try to sign me up, never inflicted his views on sport on me at all (I don't think I ever told him that I have been an Essendon supporter since my first day at school), but he influenced me in other ways. Later, whenever he called in, I would play the piano for him, and he always said he enjoyed it and urged me to keep it up (I didn't). Later still I taught his daughter at Sunday School. And much later he became Governor of South Australia. For one who knew me at such a primitive stage of my existence, Sir Douglas went a long way.

Whatever place may be assigned to Sir Douglas Nicholls in the history books (and I note that he gets a guernsey in the 1963 Australian Encyclopedia), his place in my heart is secure. My father and mother loved him, and he them. 'They used to hang about on street corners,' my mother told me recently (and I thought, yes, we were all like that, larrikins, even though we were church kids), 'preaching the gospel' (and I swallowed my thought, because I was never game enough to do that).

I never went to visit Doug at Government House in Adelaide. I should have. He is so old now, but he has never changed: he is still everyone's friend, a simple, honourable man, full and overflowing with faith and love and unbounded cheerfulness. A man very much like my father.

2. *The Chinese in Australia, and Other Minorities*

When my father went off to the war he left his car with another family friend, a Chinese tailor named Grenville Hing. My father and Doug and Grenville were members of the Northcote Church of Christ, a remarkably democratic sort of organization that seemed to accept and value people for what they were, no matter what the colour of their skin might be, or shape of their body or intellectual inclination. So I grew up with the misapprehension that Aborigines, Chinese, Norwegians, Queenslanders, women, accountants, plumbers and people on crutches were normal people — not just theoretically equal in the sight of God, but truly equal in church and out of it, on Sunday and every other day. We even prayed for the Communists and Catholics, while deploring their misguided activities. There were even one or two people in the church who *smoked*, but no drinkers or gamblers that I ever heard of, and as for people with worse vices, well, we prayed for them too and held no grudge against them.

This background gave me problems later in life — first as I painfully learnt that separateness, the status of being different, the 'holier than thou' or 'Come ye out from among them' attitude to life and your fellow humans, is more generally encouraged in society than togetherness — and then as the various liberation groups got going and I realized to my dismay that I was lumped in with the enemy.

I think it was St Augustine who spoke of drawing circles. He probably said that you can draw a circle to exclude God, but God's circle includes you; I always applied it to people, and believed that the Christian's circle includes everyone, no matter how many circles the Christian may be excluded from. This belief leads you to the brink of the most awful smugness, and often enough I have in all innocence toppled over it.

Even now I do not fully appreciate that most Australians grow up without the tolerance and sense of equality and belonging that I enjoyed, without the understanding that the only liberation to be fought for is self-liberation. But not just your own self-liberation: right or wrong, the sort of Christianity I absorbed included what used to be called 'the social gospel', which more or less meant that somehow Christians must change society so that everyone has the chance to achieve self-liberation — or as we put it then, to 'work out your own salvation'. The rest of the quotation is no doubt familiar to you.

3. *A Nation of Immigrants*

Leif Bangsund was born in Denmark in 1909, his mother Danish, his father Norwegian; the Bangsunds settled in South Melbourne in 1913. Ivy Holyoak was born at Italian Gully, near Ballarat, in 1913, her mother French-Irish, her father English; the Holyoaks moved to South Melbourne in 1923. Leif and Ivy were married by W. W. Saunders at the Northcote Church of Christ in 1935. They survived the Depression, barely, and survived the war that followed, too. In the year I was born A. D. Hope wrote a poem about Australia and its people — 'whose boast is not "we live" but "we survive", a type who will inhabit the dying earth'. A superb poem, but my parents never read it, and never boasted about surviving that dreadful decade. Whether they ever thought about the difference between living and surviving, I do not know. It seems probable that my father's preoccupation with the matter

of eternal life gave way at times to some such speculation, perhaps in the heat and mud and constant danger and boredom of war, perhaps in the unchanged peace he returned to. All the time I knew him he was trying to learn Norwegian and wanted to go back to Norway to see Tromsø, ancestral home of the Bangsunds. The closest he got to it was the north coast of New Guinea. He died on Good Friday 1965. In 1984 the Department of Veterans' Affairs determined that he died of war-caused disabilities.

4. *Being and Becoming*

I was born at Maristowe, a private hospital in Station Street, Fairfield, during the third and last week of Sir Earle Christmas Grafton Page's only term of office as Prime Minister of Australia, or to be more precise, on 21 April 1939, the second Friday after Easter. In Germany, where it was still 20 April, Adolf Hitler was celebrating his fiftieth birthday. Some time later, when 21 April in its relentless westward march had annexed first Germany and then the British Isles, Princess Elizabeth Alexandra Mary awoke and began celebrating her thirteenth birthday. During the day she was photographed, looking demure yet unmistakably royal, with a horse. Deep in Poland, who knows, some priest perhaps who would not live to ring in 1940 pondered the fact that this day marked the 797th anniversary of the death of Peter Abelard; in Paris, no doubt, flowers were placed at his tomb (and Heloise's) at Pere Lachaise. But Abelard died in 1142, four centuries before the Gregorian Calendar was introduced, so did he really die on 21 April? And considering the curvature of the earth and the complexity of regulating times and dates, was I really born on Her Majesty's birthday? You see the sorts of problems that beset me from the moment of my arrival in this country.

There is a photograph of my classmates and me at Helen Street State School, Northcote, taken in 1943. I am the little chap in the front row far left who is obviously worrying about something. It is unlikely that I am worried about the difficulties, arithmetical and philosophical, inherent in the recomputation of the date of Abelard's death, though this will cause me grave concern in a very few years, because I am a precocious child and easily caught up in such matters. It is possible that we had just come back from or were due to go to trench drill: the vacant lot opposite the school was a maze of deep, slippery trenches, excavated by thoughtful citizens to preserve us and anyone else who could make them in time from Japanese air raids. But it is much more likely, considering the tender age at which my schooling has begun, the fact that the bigger children pick on me and hit me because I am younger and mostly smarter than they are, and the fact that wearing underpants was not common among little boys in Northcote in those days, that what I am worried about — though I may not be articulating the problem in so many words — is whether there is a life after breakfast. Certainly I look like a child with something like that on his mind.

Equally certainly it is basically this problem that eleven years later distracts me from my studies at Northcote High School and takes me in quest of an answer first, in 1954, to the Advertising Department of the Myer Emporium, Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, and subsequently (not having found an answer in the big world of commerce) in 1957 to the College of the Bible of Churches of Christ in Australia, Elm Road, Glen Iris. Here I am understood to be in training for the ministry, and indeed am exactly that, and enjoying the practical work in the churches to which I am assigned. But I am enjoying just as much the study of theology and church history and New Testament Greek and the like. This life, the closest I will ever come to an academic career, suits me. But I despair as I learn and listen and talk and think and

try to pray, for the beliefs I have grown up with are slipping away from me, and as well as the problem of life after breakfast I am grappling with the problems of the existence of God, of J, E, P and D and the Third Aorist Pluperfect, and of motorbikes and women.

In my second year I leave college, because I no longer believe the sorts of things I think a minister of religion should believe. I leave thinking there is a God, and knowing fairly well the history and attributes of the God that Jesus and his successors believed in, that those who would be Christians must believe in, but somehow I can't bring the two together. Years later I begin to understand that this essential doubt is fundamental to the Christian life, but by then it is too late, for even that which I have not has been taken from me. Besides, I have become involved in the selling and making of books, and writing, and music, and science fiction fandom. And marriage. My first wife does not understand me: Why, she asks, don't you eat breakfast? I cannot encompass two thousand years of hard, earnest, prayerful, tormented thought in response to that question, and so we are divorced. My second wife does not understand me either, but she knows, indeed insists, that if I ever want breakfast I can get it myself.

5. *Sic et Non*

The question remains: Is there a life after? The answer: Yes and no. Of this I am sure. Each year the flowers appear at the tomb of Heloise and Abelard. The flowers say yes, but not to themselves; and Heloise and Abelard say yes, but only to us. And Beethoven's Seventh says yes, and yes, but not I think to him.

1 February 1985 Retyping that (the first draft was done on 20 December)
I realized all over again why I prefer composing on stencil. Time and again I was tempted to elaborate, go into needless detail: five stencils died that way (one of them, which introduced a completely new section, entitled 'Beethoven', I'll keep for future reference), and still this version is longer than the original. When I compose on stencil I'm basically embroidering whatever comes into my head; when I retype a draft I want to embroider the embroidery. Maybe this is the truth behind *Finnegans Wake*, that Joyce actually got this terrific title for an apazine, and sat down to write something to justify it, and embroidered himself into the greatest poem ever written, still unfinished decades after he'd been thrown out of the Trieste apa. (That's the sort of thing I mean. I had no intention of writing about James Joyce, let alone inventing an apa for him, and the thought that *Finnegans Wake* might actually be regarded as a poem surprises even me.)

I had a letter of comment today from Les Murray, my favourite Australian poet after Alec Hope (by which I mean chronologically after: Alec will be 78 this year, Les is a year or so older than me). Mainly it was comment on his *Oxford Book of Australian Verse*, which I have the honour to be working on in a modest way. An absolutely superb anthology. In his words (though he attributes the sentiment to me, and rightly), it is 'outrageously readable'. There has been a rash of Australian anthologies break out lately, but this one, believe me, is the one to save your pennies for. In a tipsy moment I sent Les my Ode to 1984, 'Coming Up For Blair'. Business out of the way, he commented: 'Thanks most warmly too for your parody of Old Possum. "That tint of sky that Prussians call their blue" — delightful! You realise

the N. Europeans only discovered the sky was blue in a rare epiphany just before the Industrial Revolution. They've had no further direct evidence of it.' Frankly, no: I'd never thought of such a thing. Working with people like Les Murray and Bernard Smith makes me realize that I've spent far too much of my life either pondering the Ontological Argument or trying to apply it to Tattsлото, and it's about time I thought about things like colour and form and movement.

George Turner, I think, would agree, perhaps adding 'and character and motivation'. (And perhaps wondering whether I've deliberately lost weight to discredit his powers of observation. In his not-an-autobiography, *In the Heart or In the Head* — probably the best book yet written about one man's involvement with science fiction and fandom, among other things — George describes me as a man only slightly taller than he is broad. That was never more true than at the time the book went to press, but at 150 pounds I am now only a little more substantial than George himself, if still somewhat broader than him in places.) George has lately been taking much interest in my gradual awakening to the joys of opera. I've told him not to get too excited: my interest is still mainly in the music, not in the theatrical proceedings that it accompanies. What intrigues me, after talking to George about such things, is that the operas that most appeal to me as music are those that he says best convey intended character in music.

At this point I can either write twenty pages about opera (as Harry Warner has in FAPA 189, only my twenty pages would be drivel: I am lost in awe at Harry's, and will pass that issue of *Horizons* on to George for his delight) or talk briefly around the subject and then list the operas we have recordings of in this house. The latter, I know, will draw more response than Harry's article — can I count on you, Leanne, to say you didn't know there were so many operas? — and I'll feel a bit mean doing it, but somehow I have to get over to Harry that I haven't entirely wasted my miserable life and that there may yet be hope for me.

Quite recently, at least as FAPA considers recentness, possibly less than four years ago, I listed my favourite composers in these pages. Leanne Frahm, who is such a lovely person in every way that we sometimes forget her gorgeously wicked sense of humour, said she didn't know there were so many. Harry said my list was interesting in that it included so few composers of vocal music. (I may have that wrong, but there was the suggestion, well founded as it happens, that my main interest is in instrumental music.) At the time I thought Harry was a bit off target, since I'd noted Bach, Beethoven and Mozart as my top three composers — but he obviously went through the whole ranking and noticed the low order or complete absence of composers noted mainly or only for their music for voice and/or stage works.

The two big cultural trends in Australia in the last year or so have been opera and chardonnay. (This year's look like being compact discs, no matter what's on them, and fume blanc.) If it comes to the point, I'll stick with string quartets and semillon, but these fashions do have their usefulness. I am appalled at a recent survey that claims most Australians would prefer more government money spent on opera and less on social welfare. That's a different subject entirely, and it mainly shows what humbug these 'surveys' are — but it is interesting in its reflection of Australians' growing awareness of opera and interest in it. That blight on society known as the 'marketing' profession got onto opera almost as quickly as it learnt what chardonnay is, and I have to thank it for putting my way simulcast TV/FM opera. In fact, from only a few long nights' absorbing viewing/listening, I have gained the

astounding (however basic) insight that to appreciate opera you must see it first. For example, I have struggled with Britten's *Death in Venice*, and had relegated it to the 'perhaps, some day' class — but after seeing it on television I know I will be listening to it again and again. Of course I knew the story, I knew about the juxtaposition of Aschenbach's thoughts (accompanied only by piano) with the general action — but the music by itself, for all that I admired it and wanted to understand, didn't convey what Britten wanted to convey to me; only the whole of Britten's music-drama, composed for eye and ear, could do that.

From the sublime to the equally wonderful enjoyable: I have always liked Offenbach's music, but I never knew what it was about until I saw *Orpheus in the Underworld*. 'It's Gilbert and Sullivan for grown-ups!' I said to George. With only the slightest pause to wonder at my innocence, George said that if I liked that I should see *La Belle Helene*. I'll make a point of it, the very next time the chardonnay interest arranges its performance either on stage or television.

The dreadful thing about all this is that for the first time I feel the need for a videocassette player. I must resist. If I can resist a CD player until I can buy one for about \$200, I can resist a VCR, can't I? Please say I can. Tell me I need a computer before either of those. I know I can't afford a computer. That would help, if I could get some reinforcement of priorities. My landlord would be grateful, too.

Now, about that list. I should take the time to make it alphabetical. I could pretend that the tyranny of the alphabet imposes unintended value judgements. Yes, I'll do that. In no particular order, Harry, to show you my impartiality, here is a list of the operas we have in this house at the moment. (And if you'll forgive me, I won't put all the bloody accents on the titles.)

WAGNER	Das Rheingold
	Die Walkure
	Siegfried
	Gotterdammerung
	Tannhauser
	Lohengrin
	Parsifal
	Die Meistersinger
	Der Fliegende Hollander
	Tristan und Isolde
VERDI	Macbeth
	Nabucco
	Il Trovatore
	La Traviata
	La Forza del Destino
	Otello
	Simon Boccanegra
	I Vespri Siciliani
DONIZETTI	Lucia di Lammermoor
	Lucrezia Borgia
BRITTEN	Peter Grimes
	Death in Venice
	Owen Wingrave
	Noye's Fludde
	The Little Sweep
	Albert Herring

At this point my impartiality becomes absolute, because the list I carefully compiled a few weeks ago has disappeared, so I'll go back to the book I list my tapes in, then the cassettes, and eventually the records.

MOZART	The Magic Flute	
	The Marriage of Figaro	
	Don Giovanni	
BEETHOVEN	Fidelio	
HONEGGER	King David	(Opera? Not sure now. I'll list anything that looks like an opera from here on.)
MARTINU	The Greek Passion	
PENDERECKI	The Devils of Loudun	
JANACEK	The Cunning Little Vixen	
	From the House of the Dead	
	Jenufa	
VECCHI	L'Amfiparnaso	
GLUCK	Orfeo ed Euridice	
	Alceste	
MOZART	Die Entfuhrung aus dem Serail	
DVORAK	The Devil and Kate	
HONEGGER	Joan of Arc at the Stake	
BERLIOZ	La Damnation de Faust	
ELGAR	The Starlight Express	
RAVEL	The Spanish Hour	
PURCELL	Dido and Aeneas	
EGK	Peer Gynt	
ROSSINI	The Barber of Seville	
MOZART	Così fan tutte	
FAURE	Penelope	
SITSKY	Lenz	
SZYMANOWSKI	King Roger	
BERLIOZ	Beatrice and Benedict	
PERGOLES	La Serva Padrona	
MONTEVERDI	L'Orfeo	
HOLST	At the Boar's Head	
COPLAND	The Tender Land	
MASCAGNI	Cavalleria Rusticana	
LEONCAVALLO	I Pagliacci	
BIZET	Carmen	
	The Pearl Fishers	
STRAVINSKY	Oedipus Rex	
	The Rake's Progress	
BERG	Wozzeck	
SCHOENBERG	Moses and Aaron	
MUSSORGSKY	Boris Godunov	
	Sorochinsky Fair	
STRAVINSKY	Le Rissignol	
CHARPENTIER	Acteon	
HOLST	The Tale of the Wandering Scholar	
VAUGHAN WILLIAMS	Riders to the Sea	
	Sir John in Love	
	The Pilgrim's Progress	
WOLF-FERRARI	The Secret of Susanna	

('Le Rissignol' is such a nice Australian-looking typo I think I'll leave it. If I'd diligently translated all the titles it would have read 'The Nightingale'. But what am I to do with all the bits and pieces of Rameau and Purcell?) (Having typed which, I find two genuine Rameau operas...)

RAMEAU	Les Boreades
	Dardanus
WEBER	Oberon
CIMAROSA	Il Maestro di Capella
	Il Matrimonio Segreto
MOZART	Der Schauspieldirektor
	Lo Sposo Deluso
FALLA	La Vida Breve

I suspect there are others. I also suspect that some I have listed are not operas. I'm sure you'll let me know. The most regrettable omission from the list is Richard Strauss: I love his music, but at the moment all I have from his many operas is Act 3 from *Der Rosenkavalier*. Perhaps I should mention that I have not listed recordings of 'highlights'. They would have nicely filled this page — but they aren't the real thing, are they?

Momentarily overlooked, because they are on 10½-inch reels, which I can't play at present, were:

TIPPETT	King Priam
BRITTEN	A Midsummer Night's Dream
MONTEVERDI	The Coronation of Poppaea
and	
RIMSKY-KORSAKOV	Mozart and Salieri

I do get tired of lists.

It should not go without saying that I continue to enjoy ANZAPA and FAPA, however little I contribute to the continuing discussion. I was particularly pleased to see FAPA's reaction to Bruce Gillespie's *Dreams and False Alarms*. He's everything you say he is. We've kept him to ourselves too long. It's good to see him writing for such an appreciative audience as FAPA.

In FAPA 189 I was particularly interested to read Sam Moskowitz's account of his visit to Norway. His description of Tromsø gave me a new perspective on the place. It sounds a bit like Mildura or Townsville, only surrounded for hundreds of miles by ice and snow. Sam reports finding no science fiction of any kind on sale in Tromsø, but somehow neglects to mention whether he ran into any Bangsunds. In 1978, Sam, my great-uncle Erling Bangsund was still the patriarch of Tromsø, and the man who somehow convinced the government that Norway's second university should be established in his town. He owned half the place, had personally seen to it that the buildings of old Tromsø were not destroyed but dismantled and re-erected for the delight of future generations on land he'd acquired for the purpose, and I would guess that he regarded that university as his finest achievement. I doubt that he's still alive — he'd be close to 100 if he is — but in that 'lost race' environment you describe they breed them pretty tough, so he may still be enjoying his stamp collection, uncountable family and personal empire at this very moment.

Finally, thank you, Shay, for your truly fannish kindness, which allowed me to remain in FAPA. Your phone call cheered me up no end, at a time when I was feeling particularly miserable.

And that's all for this time.