



Edited by Martin Levin

Fur Piece

A PERSISTENT paradox appreciated heretofore by a relatively small handful of mink breeders, and perhaps one or two compulsive encyclopedia perusers, is that mink—beings consistently associated with the more tender relationships between males and females—are themselves among nature's most unlovable creatures.

Not only are they unlovable, but these foot-long varicolored rodents are unfriendly, vicious, and downright treacherous. Mink can't even stand each other except, perhaps (since they are cannibalistic), at mealtimes. Because of this charming penchant they are kept in separate cages and in short supply. In fact, they probably comprise the only commodity that enthusiastically maintains its own high market value.

There is a time, however, during March and early April when mink manage to find each other less repulsive than

usual. At this time, shyly, timorously, suspiciously they tolerate one another long enough to initiate the process for perpetuating the species. Maybe. For this purpose, they must, of course, be put in the same cage. And when they are put in the same cage they must be watched carefully. For where there were two before, there may be one and a half or less later. Many times neither mink knows it's mating time, or, in its perversity, just doesn't care. Then they just sit and sulk, eyeing each other warily, maybe thinking of a good exit line.

Even if they do mate successfully, all is not clear sailing. Mother mink sometimes run short of milk and the feeding kits are transferred to another mother with a larger supply. The new momma, out of generosity or just not knowing the difference, may nurse the new kits; on the other hand, she may eat them. For the kits it's a sort of mammalian roulette. But there is another side to the coin: the youngster, if he's big enough, may eat momma. As you might suspect, the amount of suppressed maternal resent-

Mink Stall

ment among mink tends to be unusually low.

The attitude of these miserable mammals toward human beings is no less winning. Often, while energetically wagging their tails—a sure sign of friendship with other species—they will bite the hand that is feeding them or whatever other hand happens to be within biting distance. For this reason breeders try to remember to wear their mink gloves (which are made of leather). Those who forget seldom make it as typing champs.

But with a full complement of fingers or not, mink breeding is about as miserable as the mink themselves. So if you happen to be reading the back of a match book and are taken by a vision of \$100 pelts multiplying themselves over and over again in your living room—think twice. It doesn't exactly happen that way. Rabbits, maybe; mink, no.

—HERBERT J. TEISON.

Do-It-Yourself Music Review

(Or How to Assemble a Music Review with Scissors and Paste from Criticism in Various Musical Journals)

LET us take: "Incolto," *Malamed Pietro Symphony in Four Movements* Rodomontade Orchestra, Graz Willem Rotblume, conducting.

Not since it was first performed in the Leipzig Gewandhaus in 1839 has this symphonic revolution against plushed-up music achieved such a harrowing sonority. The whole work has a broad, sunny, genial swing to it with its growls of mock fury from the basses, its mood changes of Verdian intensity, and its sudden *piano* just before the coda. The sliding chromatic harmonics are never disturbed by an alien injection of "feeling"; it is an interpretation of rustic sturdiness: a *contadina* rendered with improvisational fury.

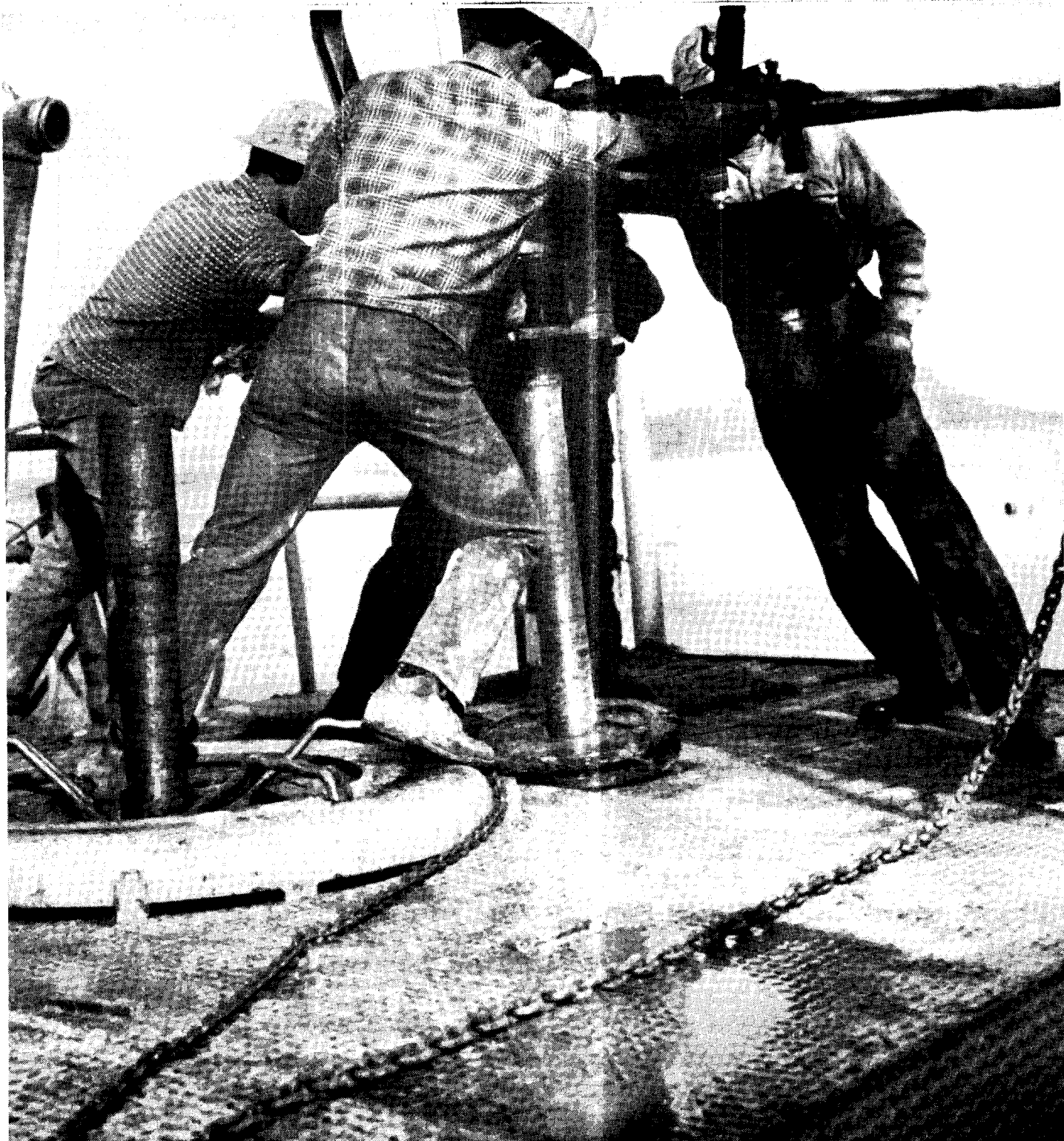
What holds together the murky and uneventful first movement is an absolutely ferocious reining in of orchestral dynamics coupled with poetic fervency and a particular form of private joy conveyed by the conversation between strings and woodwind. The almost brutal hammering into place of each potentially loose end continues the note of compassion struck by the crashing *fortissimo* chords. This composition has no *bizareries*—a circumstance which makes it easy to describe. Also of note is the unusual agility of the decidedly unsensuous double basses, concerned primarily with what we might call an emotional *legato*. Buoyantly exuberant in the *allegros*, it is at once heavier and more illusive than its predecessors through having four horns instead of the customary two.

Whimsical, a mountain of rhythm, even a bit jagged and angular, we should also not forget the earnest, loving tones



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of the cellos and the violin part which employs harmonics, *ponticello*, lyrical *cantilena* and a sparkling, humorous *moto perpetuo*, to say nothing of the repellent *staccati* in the solo violin, accomplished with the bow close to the bridge (*sul ponticello*).

Graz Willem Rotblume is probably the only conductor worthy to be classed with Mahler and Nikisch. His blithe disregard of staccato indications are quite without match. His command over the *appoggiaturas* at the very end permit them to be dovetailed with bluff interjections that bark without biting. In the great climax, there is a granitic design, a delicate texture, a merciless tunefulness that represent the composer at his most masculine. The conductor's duty is to eliminate the composer *and* the work, said Sir Thomas Beecham. Rotblume has achieved this without sacrificing the composition's melodic contour, or its bounce, vigor, and impassioned good health.

As Incolto himself remarked with impish pride when questioned about this work, "Quanta umanita!" (How much humanity!) —WILLIAM FADIMAN.

The Indian

By William Burford

SOMETIMES in a garage
Among twisting exhaust pipes
He is found, his arms plunged
In a black motor's parts
The rubberized snaking spark plug wires
Bound like veins into a neck he grips,
With grease spotted and smeared—

And which appears in a glistening braid
In the queue on back of his head
The stiff tail of hunting hair
That is dry and partly gray.
When he looks up, his eyes
Are suddenly Eskimo, yellowish,
With the seal in them, the elk

And the serpent superimposed in
their depth,
That he met with and worshipped
then.

At times in this Texas town
It is a joke or odd—when the dogs
That some scent in him draws, howl
Till he throws them the meat,
Or kicks them off so they cower.
Crouch back at a distance from his feet,
Quiet, waiting to be called.

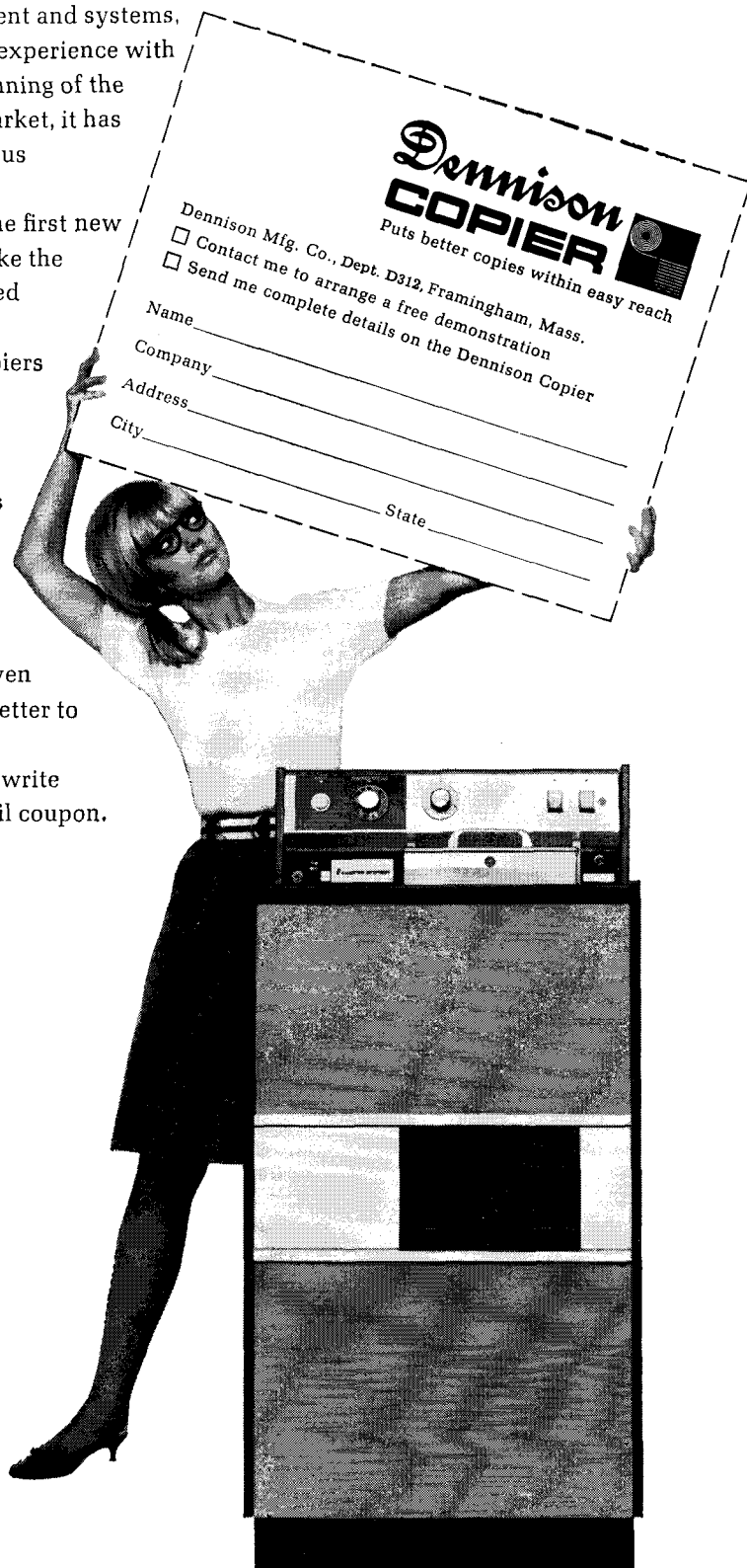
The farmers watch with a kind of awe
Their dogs sitting there at his garage,
Not too near him but not far;
Nor could a rock break
The intensity of their bodies.

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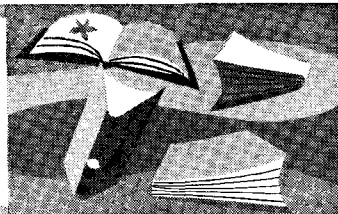
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Trade Winds



A long time ago I broke the habit of tipping hatcheck girls in New York City establishments, although I still continue to flatter them by referring to them as girls. I won't say I never leave a tip when picking up a coat or a package on my way out of a place. If someone else is



along, you look pretty cheap if you don't make some move. But generally I just smile and say thank you and walk out.

If the accepted tip were a dime the way it was fifteen years ago, I might not mind. But it's twenty-five cents now. So that you won't make a mistake, there is usually a little saucer on the counter with several quarters sitting in it. That serves to intimidate customers. It has its other uses, too. When the girl takes the check and turns to retrieve the stuff, I pick up one of the quarters and drop it back into the dish. The sound carries nicely and gives me time to get out onto the street.

It wasn't the increase in the amount of the tip that bothered me as much as that little padlocked slot where the checker puts the coins. I knew full well that a syndicate paid a lot of dough for the checking concession in the restaurant and that the big guys were certainly not going to let the attendant keep the hundreds of dollars that came in every day. Therefore, at a certain point in the past I decided to defy the syndicate and I said the heck with it.

I had no trouble at all for years—not until two weeks ago. It was at the Hotel Pierre, a Fifth Avenue hotel where at that very moment Prince Philip's duds were hanging in the closets upstairs. I attended a function in the hotel and when I was on my way out an elderly gentleman and an elderly lady were in command of the checkroom. I accepted my coat and dispatch case and I must have looked like a deadbeat, because before I could take a step she declared, "There is a charge for checking."

That stopped me. If there was a charge I figured I'd have to pay it. I asked, "How much?" They pointed to the little dish. There was one quarter in it. The scene was familiar.

"There's no charge for checking," I insisted. An elderly bellboy in uniform then joined the other two and they all nodded their heads and said in unison, "Oh, yes, there is." Then the lady put her foot in it. As I hesitated, she added, "It's for tipping."

Relieved, I laughed, "Oh, that's different," and walked out, still triumphant over the system.

It was just twenty years ago that the Supreme Court handed down a unanimous decision that was a landmark. The justices repudiated the Post Office's revocation of second-class mailing privileges for the magazine *Esquire*. You may not be very impressed, because today the Supreme Court spends a large percentage of its time on censorship. But in those days it was very big and unusual. The celebrated *Esquire* case shared newspaper space with war news.

Postmaster General Frank Walker had taken the 1943 issues of *Esquire* and decided they were too dirty to go through



the mail. Some of the ladies pictured in its pages were "inadequately clad," he said. He had an awful time in court trying to prove it. Ministers and Congressmen said restricting *Esquire's* mailing privileges would be a blow to the morale of "our boys over there." Justice Douglas read the opinion, in which he stated:

"A requirement that literature or art conform to some norm prescribed by an official smacks of an ideology foreign to our shores."

That was about the worst thing you could say in those days. The Post Office ate crow. To see what all the fuss was about, I have just gone through the 1943 issues of *Esquire*. I want to state unequivocally that there is nothing in those pages that I would hesitate to show my twelve-year-old daughter. As for the inadequately clad ladies, they are so thoroughly covered with clothing that it is embarrassing. Shades of Annette Kellerman!

Sharps and Flats: In discussing William Faulkner's poetry, *Time* magazine's book reviewer wrote, "Here and there