

# Weird Tales

REGISTERED IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE



A MAGAZINE of the

BIZARRE and UNUSUAL

VOLUME XII

NUMBER 1

Published monthly by the Popular Fiction Publishing Company, 2457 E. Washington Street, Indianapolis, Ind. Entered as second-class matter March 20, 1923, at the post office at Indianapolis, Ind., under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies, 25 cents. Subscription, \$2.50 a year in the United States; \$3.00 a year in Canada. English office: Charles Lavell, 13, Serjeant's Inn, Fleet Street, E. C. 4, London. The publishers are not responsible for the loss of unsolicited manuscripts, although every care will be taken of such material while in their possession. The contents of this magazine are fully protected by copyright and must not be reproduced either wholly or in part without permission from the publishers.

NOTE—All manuscripts and communications should be addressed to the publishers' Chicago office at 460 East Ohio Street, Chicago, Ill. FARNSWORTH WRIGHT, Editor.

Copyright, 1928, by the Popular Fiction Publishing Company

## Contents for July, 1928

- Cover Design.....C. C. Senf  
*Illustrating a scene in "The Witches' Sabbath"*
- The Eyrie ..... 4  
*A chat with the readers*
- The Witches' Sabbath (Part 1).....Stephen Bagby 6  
*A startling two-part serial tale of devil-worship, witchcraft, and the Black Mass*
- The Green Monster.....Arthur Macom 33  
*Out of the shuddering dark of the university cloisters leapt the Green Monster, to turn at last on its creator*
- Tony the Faithful.....W. K. Mashburn, Jr. 43  
*An appealing little ghost-story of the South, in which a dog is the hero*
- The Three-Storyed House.....August W. Derleth 46  
*Strangely depressing was the effect of certain houses on Johnson, but there was a valid reason for this*
- Folks Used to Believe:  
Weird Recipes.....Alvin F. Harlow 48  
*Some of the strange beliefs of our ancestors*

[CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE]

<b>The Space-Eaters</b> .....	<b>Frank Belknap Long, Jr.</b>	<b>49</b>
<i>A tremendous menace closed in upon the earth from outside the solar system—a powerful story of uncanny horror</i>		
<b>Sonnets of the Midnight Hours:</b>		
<b>4. The Eye</b> .....	<b>Donald Wandrei</b>	<b>69</b>
<i>Verse</i>		
<b>On a Far World</b> .....	<b>Wilford Allen</b>	<b>70</b>
<i>An invasion by a race of giants from a far world rocked civilization and obliterated the works of man</i>		
<b>The Gates of Nineveh</b> .....	<b>Robert E. Howard</b>	<b>84</b>
<i>Verse</i>		
<b>The Bat-Men of Thorium (Conclusion)</b> ....	<b>Bertram Russell</b>	<b>85</b>
<i>A three-part serial story about a giant submarine and a weird land underneath the ocean</i>		
<b>Under the Moon</b> .....	<b>Eugene C. Dolson</b>	<b>96</b>
<i>Verse</i>		
<b>The Man Who Remembered</b> .....	<b>Willis Knapp Jones</b>	<b>97</b>
<i>A tale of the Incas, and the Peruvian jungles, and the wrath of the Sun-god</i>		
<b>The Grappling Ghost</b> .....	<b>Capwell Wyckoff</b>	<b>105</b>
<i>Weird was the scene in that old house, as the Grappling Ghost clanked down the broad stairs in its suit of armor</i>		
<b>The Statue of Anuta</b> .....	<b>Arthur W. Davenport</b>	<b>115</b>
<i>Ismail Pasha's abode was haunted by a ghulah, and the cery howling of the apparition drove him almost to distraction</i>		
<b>The Little Husbands</b> .....	<b>David H. Keller</b>	<b>126</b>
<i>A fantastic little story about a race of giant Amazons who went hunting to get husbands for themselves</i>		
<b>Symphonic Death</b> .....	<b>Fred R. Farrow, Jr.</b>	<b>131</b>
<i>From beyond the grave Hans Scheel achieved an eldritch vengeance upon the critic who had scoffed at his genius</i>		
<b>Weird Story Reprint:</b>		
<b>The Bowmen</b> .....	<b>Arthur Machen</b>	<b>134</b>
<i>This is the story, first published early in the World War, that started the legend of the phantom archers at Mons</i>		

---

For Advertising Rates in WEIRD TALES Apply Direct to

**WEIRD TALES**

**Western Advertising Office:**  
**YOUNG & WARD, Mgrs.**  
 360 N. Michigan Ave.  
 Chicago, Ill.  
 Phone, Central 6269

**Eastern Advertising Office:**  
**GEORGE W. STEARNS, Mgr.**  
 Flatiron Building  
 New York, N. Y.  
 Phone, Ashland 7389

# Symphonic Death

By FRED R. FARROW, JR.

**T**HE four great kettle-drums stood shrouded in their soiled covers. Bass viols stood and leaned at queer angles against the back wall. Cellos and tubas sprawled upon the floor. The conductor's desk, littered with manuscript, seemed a gaunt sign-post in the midst of a wilderness of chairs and orchestra trap-pings.

Most of the lights had been turned off, and in the feeble light that remained the theater looked dingy and forbidding. Great, ugly carvings frowned down upon the stage. The faded drapes swayed silently in the draft, seeming to wave at an invisible audience.

Philip Schmitt, the youthful conductor, and Hanforth, his concertmaster, walked up the center aisle, their footsteps echoing hollowly on the marble floor back of the parquet circle.

Schmitt was nervously talking, ". . . and according to his will, we must play the fourth movement of the *Fate Symphony* at sight. Not one of us, not even I, the conductor, has seen the score. I tell you, Hanforth, it seems uncanny.

"Think of the last thirty-two bars of the *Marche Exotique*. God, what awful harmony! Terrible ninths for double-basses and bassoons and those infernally shrieking chromatics for first fiddles! There's more than power behind that music. I seem to feel old Scheel right back of me when I conduct it."

Hans Scheel was the former conductor of the orchestra. He had taken

the organization, then only a group of fair amateurs, and by his unflagging energy and genius had built it into the artistic ensemble of a perfect symphony orchestra of one hundred and ten men. He loved it with all the fervor of a genius for his brain child, and resented the slightest criticism of its playing, or of his own compositions.

Belonging to the modern school of composition, Scheel had many critics who attacked him and his works. The chief one of these was Emil Brandenburg. Like Scheel he was arrogant to the nth degree, and although they had never come to blows, many hard battles had been fought verbally.

One night after the concert, Brandenburg had knocked at Scheel's dressing-room, and after being admitted he began, as was his custom, to pick apart, piece by piece, one of the conductor's favorite numbers.

Said he, "It's a lot of claptrap—so much orchestral bookkeeping. Twenty years from now no one will remember any of it. Modern harmony—bah! Modern discord, I call it!"

Scheel had stood looking at him with his burning eyes. He pronounced; almost like a curse, these words: "You fool! Dare you mock me and my works? In life I can defend my art, but after death it must, for the world, stand alone. However, if you continue, I will crush you, even from the grave, along with any other unworthy upstart who attempts to fill my position when I am gone."

This had silenced Brandenburg for the time, and one week later Scheel

died, leaving the *Fate Symphony* and specifying in his will that the final movement was to be played without rehearsal. It was significant, too, that the score for this number, the *Scherzo Fantastique*, was written in red ink.

HANFORTH and young Schmitt walked silently across the street to a tiny restaurant. They sat down at their favorite table in the back, and Schmitt nervously lighted a cigarette.

He had been concertmaster of the orchestra for five years, and had distinguished himself at this post. Now that he was conductor his youthful shoulders seemed to bend under the responsibility of leading one hundred and ten men through symphonic mazes. He lacked the self-confidence which time alone could give him.

"I don't know whether you will believe it or not, Hanforth, but whenever I conduct I seem to feel his sneering, domineering personality, just as he was in life."

"Well, I don't take any stock in that, but I wish we didn't have to play that scherzo at sight. The rest of the symphony is difficult enough, even after rehearsal."

Schmitt pushed his blond hair back from his brow and said, "Well, it's just got to go all right, or if it doesn't I'm afraid to think. There's something uncanny about it all. I keep remembering what Scheel told Brandenburg just before he died. Furthermore, Hanforth, you never read the program of the *Fate Symphony*."

He shivered and went on: "The story is that of a young man who knows that there is hereditary madness in his family. In time he goes quite mad himself. The *Marche Exotique* depicts him being taken to the asylum, and the finale paints his ravings in a padded cell."

"What a horrible subject to write a symphony upon!" exclaimed Hanforth.

"Yes, and Scheel could write. He was like these artists who draw im-

pressionistic sketches—all lines and queer distorted angles. I would rather take a sound thrashing than go through with tonight's program. The men themselves are uneasy. They have scented something, and it wouldn't take much to make them walk out."

"You can't really blame them for not liking to play such difficult stuff by sight, without having rehearsed it at all."

"No, but everything must go right; it's just got to."

The two men sipped their coffee in silence. Schmitt called for the check, paid it, and climbing into a taxicab, went to his hotel to dress for the evening.

EIGHT o'clock. Fifteen minutes more and the concert would be under way.

Expensive limousines carrying bejeweled women and men in top-hats drove up to the front entrance.

The musicians themselves began to arrive. Already quite a number were tuning up on the stage, each individual adding his bit to the dissonance of an orchestra before playing.

Eight-ten. Philip Schmitt arrived at the stage door. He looked pale but determined. The doorman took his coat and hat, and Schmitt nervously adjusted his tie in front of a small mirror back-stage. Precisely at 8:15 he opened the door at the left wing, and walked to the conductor's desk. A storm of applause greeted him.

There was the score of the accursed symphony under that of Moussorgsky's *Night on Bald Mountain*, the opening number on the program. There in the right balcony box sat Brandenburg, smug, sneering and complacent as ever. Schmitt tapped his stand for order, and the players ceased their tuning.

Turning slightly to the left, to the first violins, he began to conduct the eery triplets of the first bars of Moussorgsky's composition. At the

fifth bar he turned to the flutes, which shrieked the approach of the spirits.

All well. The spirits gathered, danced, and were dispersed by the tolling of the bell at midnight, and the number was brought to a close amidst whole-hearted applause from the audience.

Schmitt waited a minute or so to enable the men to tune and get their breath. Then they began with a grumble from double-basses that shook the floor. This was answered by a plaintive strain for oboes and clarinets; then an upward sweep for cellos, and a harp cadenza. He gave the violas their cue after the harp, and the symphony was under way. First violins announced the terror motif of the young man doubting his own sanity. This was answered by the bassoons, which seemed to mock. Again the terror motif, this time more pronounced. The movement ended with a sad strain for English horn and viola.

The second movement was much similar to the first, the terror and doubt motives being developed with awful certainty. Schmitt then began to feel it. He had tried to concentrate on his reading and to be oblivious to all other influences. Now, however, he knew absolutely that he was not alone on the conductor's platform. Another presence was there, invisible and malevolent.

He glanced toward Brandenburg in the box. His sneering look had been replaced by one of awe not unmixed with fear.

They began the *Marche Exotique*. The great orchestra groaned in horrible dissonance. Silvery glissades from the celesta were crushed by the ominous rhythm of double-basses.

Schmitt seemed in the grip of something intangible yet all-powerful. This, then, was to test his worthiness. Well, he would give them all he had. The number concluded with the cellos and the bass viols seeming to descend a giant staircase into the infernal re-

gions accompanied by the terrible despair motif from first and second violins.

Brandenburg's face now bore a look of fear. He, too, had sensed it, remembering the fateful words of Scheel, "I will crush you even from the grave."

Hard-headed and stubborn though he was, he began to be afraid. He wondered what the concluding movement would bring forth. He nervously hitched his chair around in the box where he sat alone, and fearfully looked behind the faded draperies. The sneer gradually replaced itself on his face. He was a fool to take any stock in dead men's curses! He swore softly under his breath, as a child talks to itself in the dark for comfort.

The scherzo was under way.

Philip Schmitt was pale. His knees trembled. He glanced at the horrid array of red notes on the score before him. Red! The color of madness! He felt like shouting, but continued to beat time as though in the grip of some invisible power. He seemed to feel old Scheel's eyes burning into his back.

Violins laughed horribly. Flutes and clarinets shrieked in awful glee. The orchestra seemed to be running away, yet under it all the hand of the master had bound them together in perfect counterpoint.

The audience looked on and listened, spellbound with the awful miracle that was being wrought.

Suddenly, after a loud cymbal crash, the lights went out; the whole house was in darkness save for the small lights on the music stands.

Some few detected a bluish glow around the conductor's desk. Brandenburg was one, and he observed it with stark terror clutching at his heart. He seemed to see the words written in letters of fire: "I will crush you even from the grave." His eyes bulged. His reason seemed to totter. The orchestra was groaning

like a giant in pain. Through it all crept the madness motif—seven shrill little notes for oboe. Above the grumble of double-basses, above the moaning of the violins, the madness theme stood out and seemed to triumph in the downfall of a human soul.

The blue glow around the conductor's desk grew more intense. Brandenburg, his face horribly contorted with fear, saw Schmitt reel and fall. He attempted to rise, but in his place was a shadowy form, beating time. The form grew in distinctness, and the features became those of Hans Scheel. There he stood, his eyes flashing fire, his huge forehead bulging under his scant locks. No, there could be no doubt.

A shriek tore through the air from

the balcony box, followed by another and another, and the sound of people wildly stampeding toward the exits.

The lights went on. Ushers ran upon the stage to quiet the crowd. Over the rail of the balcony box there hung something that had been human but which now leered, with bulging eyes and distorted features. From its mouth came strange, meaningless sounds. Suddenly it recovered itself, climbed over the rail and fell to the stage below.

The orchestra stopped playing. Schmitt sat on the edge of his platform, head in hands, shaken but sane.

At the side of the stage, physicians were doing all they could to ease the last moments of a thing that gibbered horribly and glared with the light of madness in its protruding eyes.