

# Young Authors' Club

FLORITA GOOD, Editor

## JUNIOR DAY

By PHILIP DICK

The Portland Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra looked a pianist, The conductor, Maynard Fowler, paced back and forth in the podium. The musicians glomously stared at their instruments and wondered how they were going to give a performance of Glinka's Piano Concerto without a soloist. Suddenly a smile appeared on the face of Johnny Fish, the first violinist. He laid his violin in its case and made his way to the conductor.

"See," he said, "I know a pianist." The conductor turned to him and said, "How well can he play?" What's his name?"

"His name is Bill Chandler. He's been years since I've seen him, but the last time we were together he did as well as the best as I did on the concert. No reason why wouldn't help us; we've always been good friends," answered Johnny.

"Well, by all means get hold of him as soon as you can. We're scheduled to give a performance in a few days, you know."

So Johnny picked up the telephone book and looked in the CA. After a few moments he looked up and said, "There's a bunch of Bill Chanders. I'll have to call each one."

The first two calls brought no results. But on the third call Johnny heard, "Yeah, this is the residence of the Bill Chandler who plays the piano, but he ain't here at this time. If you want him real bad he's down at 3808 10th Street playing right now." Johnny thanked his boss and started out.

No. 3808 10th Street was a night club called the "Four O'Clock Club." The young violinist slipped inside, and hearing the sound of music made his way into a back room. This room was thick with cigarette smoke, and the smell of liquor was on everything. At one corner was a piano, and a thin, disheveled young man sat at it, playing. Despite him several other musicians were practicing. The young man at the piano looked up, and Johnny saw with a shock bloodshot eyes and swollen skin.

The young man said, "Well, look who's here! If it isn't old Johnny Fish! How are you Johnny?" He displayed nicotine stained teeth. Johnny said hello.

"What do you do for a living these days, still play the violin?" Bitte sounds angry, and watch his practice for the show tonight." "What say?" continued Chandler. He whistled a few bars of "Pomp and Circumstance" as he waited for an answer. Johnny declined. "I have to get back to my own orchestra soon. I haven't much time," he explained.

"Who you with?" asked Chandler. "The Portland Philharmonic, at present." He noted that the other man's expression was one of disgust.

Chandler sneered, "Highbrow stuff, eh? I don't think you would do much good with those longhairs." He helped himself to the contents of a small-necked bottle. The attitude in the room had changed from one of friendly interest to that of intolerance.

Johnny coughed and said, "How Bill, I hoped . . . that is, we hoped that maybe you would help us a little. You see, we haven't got a pianist, and we need one for a performance we have to make soon, and I thought of you. What do you say, Bill? Will you be our pianist?"

"You've come to the wrong place, Fish." Chandler said. "You ought to know that none of us real musicians would leave our native orchestra. What are you going to play, Beethoven's 12th Symphony?" He sneered again.

Johnny flushed, turned, and started out. Just as he was about to close the door he said, "That said you wouldn't be able to play anything as difficult as a Glinka Concerto?"

"What was that? Who says? Why, I can play any piano piece written by any composer you like. You're easy to say, but I'll be playing boogie-woogie so long you couldn't hold a candle to a real pianist," sneered Johnny as he started to close the door.

Chandler jumped to his feet and started after him. In an angry voice he shouted, "This one says that and get away with it!" "That isn't you, you bunch he said Johnny. Chandler hastened then said, "All right! Lead me to your place."

of music), and I'll show them what a real musician one do. Lead the way," Johnny, with a feeling of exultation did so.

"So this is Bill Chandler, I'd like to meet you, Bill," said Fowler when he met him an hour later. He extended his hand, and Chandler shook it.

Fowler whispered to Johnny when he led him inside, "Who's this guy? I think I've seen him before." Johnny explained. The conductor coughed in affront attention and the said, "Gentlemen of the orchestra, we are very fortunate to have Mr. Chandler with us to play the Piano Concerto. We will start rehearsals as soon as Mr. Chandler feels acquainted with the score."

He handed Chandler a number of sheets of paper and said to him, "There's the piano score. You'd better go look over the score till you're ready."

"I don't need to practice. I'm ready to rehearse with you now," Chandler replied. The conductor smiled, then rapped on the podium for attention. Inside the piano he walked over to his piano. Then Fowler raised his hand and the orchestra began to play the first notes of the Concerto. At first the piano was silent. The conductor turned in this direction, and looked quizzically at Chandler who was pointing over his score. "Are you ready, Mr. Chandler?" he asked.

Chandler replied, "Yeah . . . I'm ready now. This stuff is harder than I thought." "I'm ready now." Again the conductor raised his baton, and this time the piano played, although slowly and with a number of mistakes.

When they had finished playing Chandler asked, "How was that?" "You're right, Mr. Chandler," he answered.

The conductor replied, "That was all right. Soon you'll be getting up with us."

Later, as the men were gathering up their instruments to go home, Chandler walked up to Johnny and with his hands on his hips said, "Now let's hear you say I can't play as well as you nightbores. A few players can play circles around any lawyer but just wait'll you see me opening tonight!"

When opening night came he stepped onto the stage with his hand held high and announced advanced to the piano and seated himself. Frowns spread his eyes, and the music began.

After the performance, amid the frantic applause of the audience, Fowler announced, "Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Chandler has just informed me that he will be with us for the rest of the season, so we can expect to hear more of his wonderful playing."

In the orchestra, Johnny watched Chandler with pride. He had discovered a musician.

(I think we will all agree that this story does not ring at any point. In fact, the dialogue carries the incidents along almost throughout the entire tale. Even the introductory paragraph of explanation comes instantly into being, and gives us the plot dilemma clearly and in simple language. Believing this author however, makes constructive criticism, not only the following suggestion, and invite the members to add to them: Since the author wants to name names to give us a reader's idea of the derelict pianist, and succeeded in convincing that the pianist had certainly retrograded, the mentioning events would have been much truer to life had Bill fallen from naturally being ill all of his rehearsal—or in the concert itself. I think if such a miracle as the one related could happen. Furthermore, the story would have been stronger if Bill was first a complete failure; then feeling the challenge and practicing night and day, and, upon a second chance, satisfied his friend's belief in him. As it stands, his bohemian manner complicates the reader, who is very likely not to be at all pleased by his effective scene. He reads like folk to earn their laurels! Would it be any wonder if he were a 50? "Who's this guy?" Maybe, I would have named the story, "The Player Who Took Forward to Seeing more of your work, Dick.")

CREDIT LINE

Five credits for Philip Dick, October 26, 1941.

139 Hesper Ave., Piedmont, Calif.

Account Flo