

# A TALE OF IVORY KEYS

by Christie Tito

At one time or another, everyone likes to sit down to a piano, if only to play Chopsticks. Sitting down to the piano in the game room of the Commons one day, I felt the mood to entertain myself in just such a way. After about five minutes, however, I gave it up as hopeless. The keys were untuned and some made no sound at all.

I was about to walk away when I heard a strange sound the resembled a deflating bale

oon. I looked around but could see nothing unusual. Thinking I was hearing things, I started to walk away when I heard the noise again. This time it sounded more like a "Psssst." By the time I heard a "Hey you!" I realized that the noises were coming from inside of the piano. I edged toward it cautiously.

"Did I hear you say something to me?"

"Of course. Do you think I just sit here and talk to myself like some idiot?"

"No, sir."

"Well...."

"Did you want to say something in particular to me?"

"Yes. I want to complain about the rotten treatment I receive from everyone around here. I thought it was time I spoke up about it to somebody."

"And you just had to pick me."

"Did you say something?"

"No, sir."

"As I was saying, I am subject to the most indecent neglect. For example...come here."

"Here?"

"No, closer. That's better. Now, strike my middle C...Go ahead, don't be afraid."

"How was that?"

"What do you think I am, some kind of invalid or something? Harder!"

"I'm sorry, sir. I'm just not in the habit of striking strange pianos on their middle C's."

"Don't be embarrassed. I don't mind. And stop calling me sir!"

"Well, if you're sure."

"Of course. Now try again."

"How was that?"

"Still a little weak, but otherwise, fine. Now tell me what you heard."

"Er--what I heard?"

"That's what I said. Tell me exactly what you heard."

"Well, to tell you the truth...I...er..."

"You didn't hear anything."

"I didn't hear anything... Please don't cry. It can't be that bad. Besides, your metal will rust."

"All of these years of devoted service, and what do I get? Stuck in a corner, ne-

glected, unwanted. Nobody comes to see me or play with me."

"I come to play with you."

"Yes, you do...sometimes, when you're not too busy. But what about all the other students? It seems that nobody has the time for an old tired piano anymore."

"You can't be that old, and actually, with a little work done on you...."

"Impossible!"

"Oh, nothing's impossible these days. You know, they perform some unbelievably fantastic surgeries."

"I'd probably need a complete internal transplant. With my luck, I might even have Cancer of the Keys."

"I keep telling you that you can't be that old."

"As I was saying before, nobody comes to play with me anymore, and you know why, too. I'm flat, that's why."

"You don't look flat to me. Actually, I thought you were pretty sharp."

"Don't flatter me. You're just trying to make me feel good. Well, it won't work."

"I'm not trying to flatter you."

"I still don't believe you."

"Well, it's been nice talking to you, but I really must be going."

"So soon?"

"Yes, I have this paper I have to write...."

"Please stop by to visit me more often, and bring some friends. I heard a few of you singing by me once and you hit a mean high B flat."

"Thanks, you're not so bad yourself."

"Well, I'll be seeing you."

"Bye now."

I walked away, but I could have sworn that when I turned to look back, I saw the piano smiling to itself.

Our new look on the front page is due solely to the efforts of Frances Gramscovich, who designed our new masthead. Other illustrations in this issue were done by Donald R. Serfass.

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