

# The warped piano affair



By ALLEN BRAGGART

No case of pseudo-parapsychological extra-terrestrial (or ET, as we in the know refer to it) interpersonal interaction has ever been more fully substantiated by prime first-hand eye-witness evidence than the astounding affair of the warped piano.

I myself have seen an unretouched crayon drawing of the piano in question, which removes all doubt as to its authenticity.

In the spring of 1483 (an exceptionally damp spring, if memory serves), a young concert musician purchased a grand piano which had once belonged to the great Mantovan.

He paid premium prices for the

acquisition of this historic instrument, but as it was being moved to his home a strange passion overtook him. He bade the movers stop in the street, and began to play.

For 15 hours he performed the most astonishingly beautiful music the world had ever heard, oblivious to the heavy rainfall that soaked

both he and the piano. And then, as if all the spirit had suddenly departed from him, he died.

In that instant, the keyboard of the piano warped into a fantastic bow, and remains mute to this day.

Did the spirit of the great departed Mantovan take possession of the musician's soul to give his last, his greatest performance?

Or was it merely the supernatural revenge of a man obsessed with being the only owner of his instrument?

These will probably remain for all time among... The Unexplained.

## Venice is for the birds

(CP) Flocks of white pigeons, which have in past years almost eroded the marble statues of Venice with the lime content of their droppings, have recently been trying another tack in their efforts to sink the canal city.

The birds have taken to jumping

feet first off St. Mark's Cathedral and landing with a thud on the piazza. This repeated pressure, say world scientists who have been studying the phenomenon, is driving the piazza into the sea at a rate of six inches per year, enough to put the square underwater by the year 2005.

## PAUL RIMSHOT



I feel like a turkey.

If you wade through this tripe regularly, you probably noticed that my column hasn't appeared for the last two weeks.

No, I haven't been fired. The Scum doesn't do that to you unless you start writing intelligent stuff, and nobody on this paper has to kill themselves worrying about that.

What happened to me is that I swallowed one of my drumsticks while I was beating the old bongos at the Ruby Red Light tavern, where Bert, Sleepy, Dozey and I regularly bore the customers to death with our impersonation of a band.

But first things first.

I walked through the door to the club just after polishing off a Big Mac at a local eatery, and handed my coat to a uniformed guard at the door.

"Stuff it, Rimshot," he said, throwing my coat into a bowl of vichyssoise on a nearby table.

I realized the guard was actually a cop.

"How about giving me back my coat you son of a jackal?" I said. I glanced casually around the nightclub and saw that the joint was full of other cops.

A banner across the stage said, "Welcome, Brotherhood of Policemen local 191."

"Ha, ha," I murmured to the cop. "Just joking."

By the time I picked my teeth off the floor, the patron at the neighbouring table had finished his bowl of soup and accidentally eaten my coat with it.

What a lousy way to spend a night, I thought as I crawled to the stage.

One of the cops at a stage-side table handed me his jacket on the way.

"Wear this, friend," he said with a smile.

I was touched — my grocer friend Peter Philasky had always told me cops were tops, and at this point I was close to believing him.

For about two minutes.

That's how long it took for the cop who had pounded me out at the door to leap onstage and charge me with impersonating an officer.

Because I was wearing the jacket.

(Is anyone still reading this?)

"There's been some mistake," I began.

Every cop in the place laughed.

Two of them jumped onstage and forced one of my drumsticks down my throat.

And that's why I feel like a turkey.

Because turkeys have drumsticks too.

Ha ha ha.

Get it?

Well it's not easy churning out an interesting column every day. Not that I'd know, since I've never tried.

## Another smoky gobbler story

PEJOR, Atif — (CP) An eight-alarm blaze in this small Mediterranean country turned out to be a false alarm last week.

Firemen startled from their sleep

by what sounded like alarm bells discovered it was just a gaggle of turkeys running amok in a neighbouring carillon tower.

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