

One year's work to be worth \$4,500

Music class builds harpsichord

by Liz Skillen
Feature Writer

Most musicians make music, but few go to the length of Dr. Rudolph Kremer and his Music 27 class. Kremer's class has just finished gluing the Belly Rails in an 18th century French harpsichord.

"It will take about a year to complete," Kremer said. "Right now we're about one-fifteenth of the way through." The harpsichord will be worth \$4500 when it is finished.

The instrument is being pieced together from a \$1400 kit designed by Frank Hubbard. Kremer called Hubbard "the greatest harpsichord builder alive."

Kremer, associate Professor in the Department of Music, originated the idea. "The reasons for building the harpsichord were pragmatic," he said. "We needed a small harpsichord for concerts. The appropriation of the money looked impossible, so we did it a little deviously and purchased the kit."

For most of the students this is a new experience. "I'm just taking this course for fun," senior Kathy Lewallen said. She plays the harpsichord and in the future, hopes to build one herself.

John Desmond, graduate student and harpsichordist, feels the course is teaching

him more about the instrument. "The more you know, the better you can play," he said. "I think this course is a challenge to the whole class." Steve Davis, senior anthropology major, built a small harpsichord by himself four years ago. "It took me five months to build it, but this one is much more complex."

Every step presents a problem. "We usually measure carefully three or four times before we cut," Kremer said. "A 64th of an inch off comes out as a quarter of an inch mistake." Aligning the frame, fitting joints together and keeping the angles as near perfect as possible have been difficult tasks.

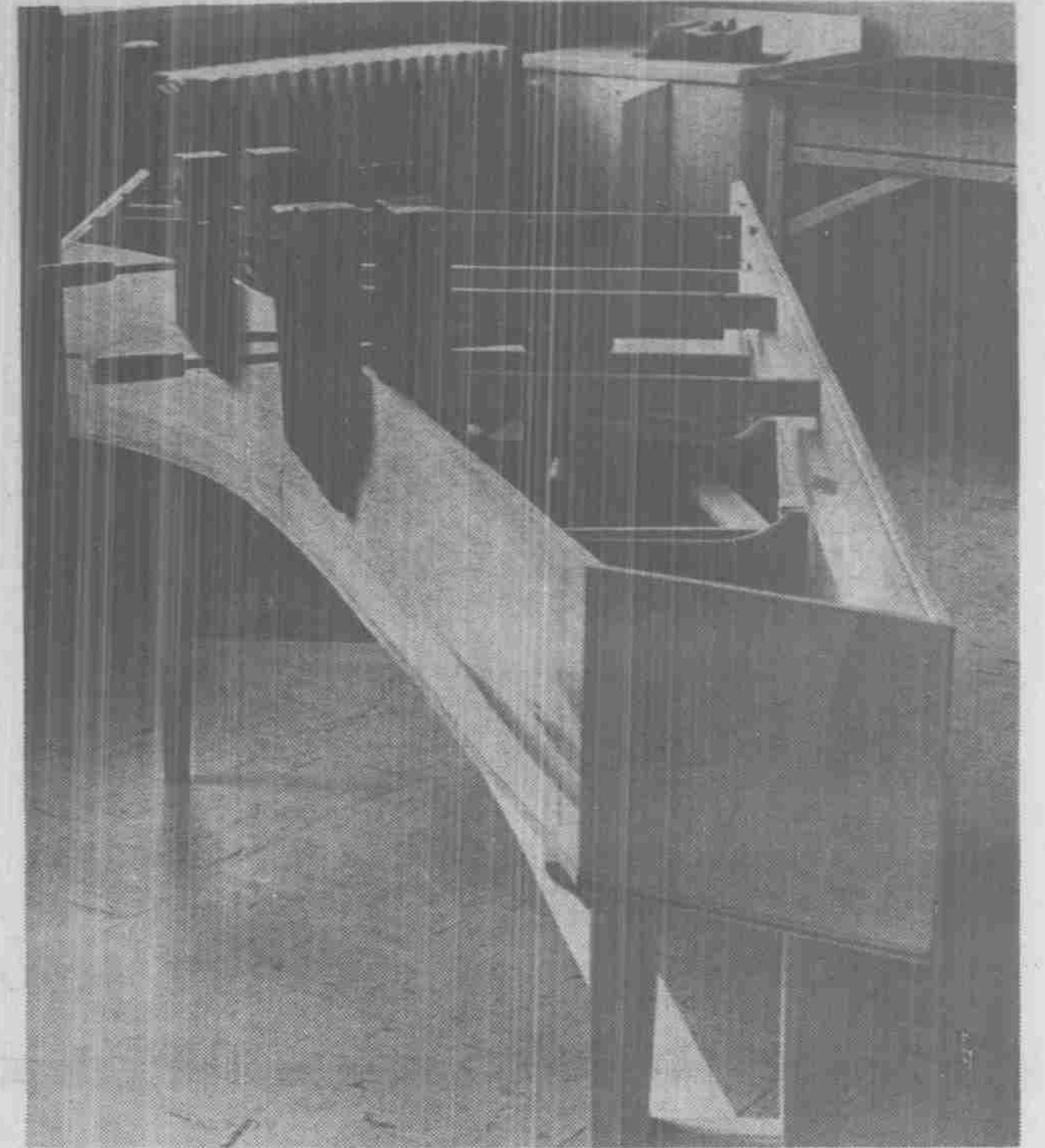
But the hardest part, Kremer explained, and the last thing to be done is the voicing.

Three sets of strings must be delicately tuned. "I think the students are beginning to realize that this doesn't move as rapidly as they once had thought," he said.

The 25 graduate and undergraduate students are exposed to much more than the insides of a harpsichord. They are required to study various composers and the technology of the instrument and the music.

The course does present a problem, Kremer noted. "After we build all the music department can use, what will we do with the extra harpsichords?"

"Perhaps we could set up a beer keg on my front lawn and hold a harpsichord auction," he mused.



Homemade harpsichord

'The Sting' exciting con game

by Peter Hardy
Film Critic

The Sting is pure confection—there is not an inch of depth in the entire story and when we get to the end of it we realize that we understand even less about the two main characters than we thought. Lots of movies with these qualities come out every year and most of them are confusing, boring wastes of time.

But *The Sting*, while perhaps a little confusing, is not boring and not a waste of time. In fact, it is one of the most enjoyable movies to come out this year. Like last summer's *The Last of Sheila* it is clever and humorous enough to do without depth or characterization.

David Ward's original screenplay has a big collection of con men getting together for revenge on an Irish gangster who had one of

their friends killed. As fledgling grifter Johnny Hooker (Robert Redford) says "I don't know enough about killing to kill him." So he teams up with master con man Henry Gondorf (Paul Newman) and friends to set up an improbable, elaborate con game which I couldn't explain clearly even if I wanted to ruin it for you.

During the first viewing, things go by so fast that it is sometimes hard to keep up with what's going on, and the second time, I noticed various weaknesses in the logic of the script, such as the failure of the gangster to have Hooker followed, which would have blown the whole con. But this is easy to forgive, particularly when so many serious, acclaimed films make even less sense than *The Sting* does.

Director George Roy Hill proves that he is perfectly adept when working with professional entertainment material. (You

never really believe that the characters are living in the depression 30s, but what the heck). It's when he tries to become an artist, as in the abominable *Slaughterhouse Five*, that he falls on his face.

Sharp and colorful performances are given by a supporting cast of character actors, including Eileen Brennan, Harold Gould, Ray Walston and Charles Durning. Robert Shaw keeps his gangster character from ever being merely a cliched menace, and Redford and Newman give entertaining star performances. One casting weakness—Redford is really too old to portray a young con-man and Newman is too young for an aging master. There isn't enough apparent difference in their ages to justify Newman calling Redford "kid."

There has been a lot of talk about the continued "love affair" of Redford and Newman and the frequent depiction of male

friendships in movies lately. I won't say any more on the silly topic than this: The two leading characters in *The Sting* aren't as interesting as Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, but they're better than Maxie and Lion in *Scarecrow*. And isn't it nice to have a bunch of guys fool the mobsters and the police and everybody and be so loyal and fair as well?

Scott Joplin piano rags have been adapted to make a highly enjoyable musical score and the costumes and sets are all detailed and effective. All in all it's a good, big (though perhaps a little too big) entertainment package, though hardly deserving of its 10 Oscar nominations.

It's particularly a shame that Redford was nominated as best actor for this, in which he's engaging but little else, and not for his fine work in *The Way We Were*.

A final note for nostalgia buffs: If you think Peter Bogdanovich's movies have good old-fashioned credit sequences, wait till you see what Hill has done. The opening credits are on the turning pages of a book, which Bogdanovich already revived in *What's Up Doc*, but Hill goes one better by having the characters introduced with shots of them from the film with titles over them such as "Paul Newman as Henry Gondorf." He even has the old Universal studios logo in the beginning, which you may have seen in the original *Frankenstein* film. I'll bet Peter's drooling because he didn't think of that one first!

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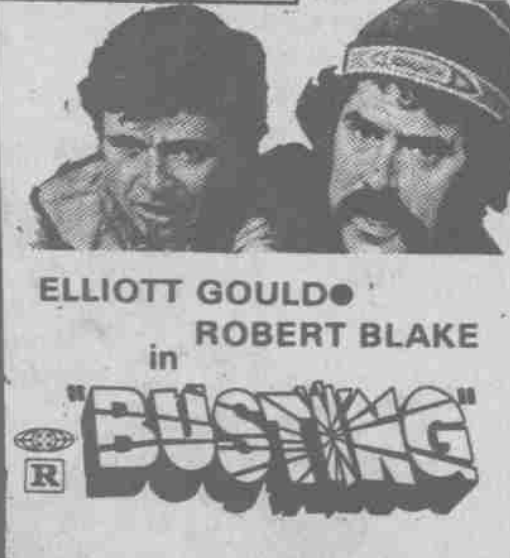
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