

Pianist at Staid Carlyle Spoofs Politics

George Feyer Mixes Barbs and Chopin

By FRED POWLEDGE

The Carlyle Hotel, long the home of Presidents, prime ministers, and princes has become the home of some good-natured political lampooning.

George Feyer, who has been in charge of the baby grand piano in the hotel's Cafe Carlyle for the last nine years, interrupts his arrangements of standard melodies nightly to quiet his audience with an announcement.

"You may have heard about the two political conventions this summer," he starts out. "You may have thought you heard President Johnson's speech accepting the nomination. The correct version of what he said, however, is this:"

Then Mr. Feyer sings "This job is wonderful/The second time around." The audience, which is made up of sophisticated-looking and well-dressed people, laughs, and Mr. Feyer continues his brief departure from cocktail music.

The theme songs of the convention, he says, is "Happy Talk." President Johnson said, in finding Hubert H. Humphrey as a running mate, "Just in time/I found you just in time."

Robert F. Kennedy, he says, croons, "When I was just a little boy/I asked my father what can I be/Can I be Senator or can I not . . .?"

And when Mayor Wagner endorsed Mr. Kennedy for the Democratic Senate nomination, sings Mr. Feyer, he said: "They



George Feyer

made me love you/I didn't want to do it."

Then Mr. Feyer runs quickly through the remainder of his political repertory. Senator Barry Goldwater tells Kenneth B. Keating: "Love me or leave me," and Senator Keating replies, "I'll walk alone." Gov. William W. Scranton moans "I left my heart — in San Francisco," and Richard M. Nixon sings, "I guess I'll have to change my plans." For Governor Rockefeller, there is a welcome: "Hello, Rocky, well, hello, Rocky/It's so nice to have you home where you belong."

The light comments of Mr.

'Hotel for Presidents' Takes It Lightly

Feyer would be tame in a Greenwich Village coffeehouse, but in the Carlyle, which rises 40 stories above Madison Avenue at 76th Street, the result is hearty laughter.

It is entirely likely that a politician will be in the crowd. Among those who have made the hotel their homes for periods of time have been former President Harry S. Truman and his wife, President Kennedy and Mrs. Kennedy (who is now staying at the Carlyle), President and Mrs. Johnson, Robert F. Kennedy, and a number of heads of state.

Mr. Feyer, who came to the United States from Hungary in 1951, started making lyrical comments on current events a few years ago, when Congress cut the entertainment tax. He omits the wry comments when he feels a particular politician in the audience might be embarrassed. He is also aware of what people want to hear. For Mr. Truman, who plays the piano himself, Mr. Feyer plays a little Chopin.

"The trick," Mr. Feyer explained one night this week, "is to take a song that everybody knows and work out a little patter that will fit it."

"When it's all written down, it doesn't look like much, but when you sing it, and the audience is all warmed up, it's nice. This is a cozy, intelligent, and somewhat distinguished clientele, and they like it. So I play it."