

Chamber Group Given Wild Applause at CC

By JOHN FETLER

Music Critic

The best reward of a critic is that musicians perform well. That was the case once again when the players of the Colorado Springs Chamber Music Society gave a concert, Tuesday evening, at Colorado College's Armstrong auditorium, sponsored by the college's music department.

The word had spread that these young musicians, all of whom contribute their time and skills free, are something special. And the audience which packed Armstrong had its expectations fully rewarded. It was an evening of gratifying musical skill, as well as a lot of musical fun.

The conductor is Michael Gibson. "Composer in residence" is Rolf Johnson, who also took his turns as conductor, in addition to having a composition of his, and a number of his arrangements, performed.

In his introductions, Gibson modestly called the concert a "show," and a "show" it was, with all kinds of humorous cut-ups by the musicians, who staged the whole thing in an entirely informal dress and atmosphere.

However, that did not hide the expertise of these players, most of them from the Air Academy and NORAD, although others were included, too, such as a few members of the Symphony.

The program was cleverly designed, leading from one thing to another logically, yet with contrast to keep the whole evening interesting. The "encore"

was done first, then the program opened with a Copland fanfare, after which a youthful serenade by Richard Strauss followed, perhaps the only work which was miscast, because it has almost nothing to offer.

However, a scherzo by Ralph Vaughn Williams rescued the mood, and showed the precision of these musicians, after which the P.D.Q. Bach Schlepptet brought down the house with wild hilarity.

The talent of Rolf Johnson as arranger was shown in a beautiful score of Lennon-McCartney's "Yesterday," after which came a prelude and fugue by Bach, in which arranger Johnson kept clear lines, but in the playing it might have used a bit more incisiveness and firmer tempo.

A Movement for Brass Quartet showed off Rolf Johnson as composer. It is an intricate work, but with fine strength, which the quartet performed with precision and relish.

The Octet for Wind Instruments by Stravinsky brought the program to a close. While Stravinsky is not one of our favorites, the work was done with crisp precision, with lyricism, too, which made it a very listenable number.

The mostly college audience (although community was represented, too) gave the musicians great, sometimes even wild, applause, and it is gratifying to see that these musicians are winning for themselves a faithful audience in this community.