

# 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.

# Excellent Performance By Chamber Orchestra

By JOHN FETLER  
Music Critic

It was gratifying to see the Colorado Springs Chamber Music Society give a Sunday afternoon concert at the Colorado College's Armstrong auditorium featuring professional musicians and a challenging program of contemporary music.

This group of musicians is, mainly from the NORAD and Air Academy establishments. It has been in existence two years, under the direction of Michael Gibson. Such a group gives a creative community outlet for some of these excellent musicians, drawn from all over the nation.

Although in a previous concert we have heard this group play Baroque music with finesse, the concert at Armstrong Sunday was devoted to more or less contemporary works; but while often a "modern" concert can be a trial for listeners, this one, with the pieces chosen judiciously, proven entertaining

and enlightening, played by brasses, woodwinds, piano and string bass in various combinations, smaller groups, and a large ensemble which filled the stage.

A William Walton Fanfare opened the program, followed by a Brass Suite (also opening with a Fanfare) by Nicolai Berzowsky, known to professional musicians for his association with the Columbia Broadcasting System. The Russian influence is unmistakable, since he is a Russian by birth, and although written in a lighter mood, does have some greater depth into which to sink the musical teeth.

After a Fanfare Heroic by Bozza, the ensemble played a nicely credible Scherzo, subtitled "Over the Pavements," by the American insurance executive Charles Ives, who also happened to be one of the most important American composers of this century. The difficult Ives music was done with skill and was quite amusing.

This was followed, with good musical logic, by the Circus Polka by Stravinsky, which

Stravinsky dedicated to Bessie, the Ringling Brothers elephant. And here it might be appropriate to say that the Chamber Music Ensemble played this, and the other works of the afternoon concert with the kind of musical competence which other groups might find too great a challenge; it performed with precision and feeling for the rhythmical qualities.

After intermission, a Walter Piston Fanfare was followed by an original composition by a member of the ensemble, Charles T. Neal, the bassoonist. A work by Rolf Johnson had been originally scheduled, but because of some circumstance, had to be substituted. We would have liked to hear the premiere of Rolf Johnson's work; we have heard his music before, and it is highly competent and impressive. But the Neal work, entitled Second Symphony for Band, was just as interesting. Gibson read an introduction by Neal, in which the composer flatly came out against the atonal and serial fads, ascribing them to senility.

He opts for the melodic. After the brave words, Neal proved to be a composer who has every justification for taking his stand: Not only is his music melodious, with certain allowable modernisms, but has emotional impact. This takes it out

of the light-aired light-hearted and puts it into the serious category. This work which should definitely be transcribed for full Symphony orchestra, where it could become an audience favorite.

The program concluded with the Symphony in B Flat by Paul Hindemith. In this work we should give credit to the ensemble for clear delineation of the musical material, for a grasp of the rhythmic qualities which in lesser hands would not have come through, and for infusing an emotional quality, so that Hindemith does not sound any more as merely a logical construction, but as a musically intriguing work. And that's saying a great deal for the performers.

The refreshing thing about this concert, arranged under the sponsorship of Dr. Albert Seay, himself a veteran bassoonist, was that it was an informal concert, played, so to speak in shirt-sleeves, with the members of the orchestra dressed in informal dress of the most various colors, establishing a friendly atmosphere. There was no formality or grandstanding; the musicians presented the concert first and last for the music alone, placing the music in the immediate present. These musicians, deserve a full house in this community, and we hope they will get it as the good word spreads.

2-A—Gazette Telegraph  
Colorado Springs, Colo.  
Monday, Oct. 8, 1973

## Chamber music group gives light, spry debut

remove most obstacles in the program.

The first concert of the season was a wonderful evening with an excellent program that leaves us waiting for the second.

By Jim Reynolds  
Special to The SUN

Like a bright sun-glazed afternoon, the Colorado Springs Chamber Music Society gave us a light, spry debut performance yesterday at Armstrong Hall on the Colorado College campus.

Adequately symbolizing the performance was "A Fanfare" by William Walton. This bright piece swept over the concert hall like a refreshing ocean wave beating rhythmically against our senses. The concert, under the youthful and exuberant guidance of Michael Gibson, was a tribute to joy.

### SUN review

The Colorado Springs Chamber Music Society very probably presents more fun to its audiences than any music group in the city. The fun is produced by the dedication of the musicians witnessed by the fact that many of the pieces performed were written by members of the group.

Mainly because of the exuberance and the fast-paced movement of the group, the program stumbles on occasion, but ironically the same reasons

The SUN, Colorado Springs, Colo.

Monday, Oct. 8, 1973

# Chamber Orchestra Event Shows Fine Musicians

By JOHN FETLER  
Music Critic

sentation may help solve this. It certainly is the best group of its kind in town, probably in this part of the country.

It was another splendid occasion for rarely-heard music, when the Colorado Springs Chamber Music Society, conducted by Michael Gibson, presented a concert Wednesday night in the Assembly theater of the First Methodist Church, as a contribution to this community.

Most of the musicians are from the NORAD band, but for this organization they donate their time and talents in order to perform some of the classics, as well as compositions by musicians from their own ranks.

They opened with the Serenade No. 10 by Mozart for 13 instruments, and some of the lines of Mozart's compositions in this group are rather interesting.

The fine thing is that such a group as the one directed by Gibson can give such a great deal of clarity to the various musical lines, which uncovers some of the intricacies of the score for the listener.

A fanfare by Dukas followed. After the intermission the work of two of the musicians was performed: "A Dulcet Ebbulience by Gibson, described as a birthday present, in which Gibson shows a capacity for what could be described anticipatory composition which serves to keep the listener's attention, presenting varied moods.

Then followed Rolf Johnson's "Music for Sixteen Winds and Percussion" in which Johnson himself conducted the composition of strong contrasts and musical development, and which impressed the audience deeply.

The "Fanfare for the Common Man" by Aaron Copland ended the concert, and was undoubtedly the favorite selection of the evening, played with strength and great sound.

This group was given quite a bit of publicity, and the theater was furnished free by the church, but it deserves a greater audience, and perhaps a different format or location in pre-

## A Review

# Performance said 'refreshing'

By Jim Reynolds  
Special to The SUN

A pleasant interlude to a musically dreary month was last night's performance by the Colorado Springs Chamber Music Society at the First United Methodist Church. The society,

composed mainly of NORAD band members and wives, presented one of the finest concerts this spring.

Utilizing a tremendous variance of instrument usage in a finely diversified program, the society gave us several pleasureable moments of music. The program was exceptional for

its tonal qualities and complete musical clarity.

Conductor Michael Gibson moved the concert with position in the crystal-clear interpretation. Led by a tranquil enjoyable rendition of Mozart's Serenade Number Ten in B Flat, the concert was as refreshing as May itself.

14-A—Gazette Telegraph Colorado Springs, Colo.

Friday, June 1, 1973

# Arts Chronicle *by John Fetter*

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Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph

Saturday, October 13, 1973

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## CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

— It was gratifying to hear the performance of the Colorado Springs Chamber Music Society at CC's Armstrong Hall. Composed mostly of young musicians from NORAD and Air Academy, including also some of their friends, it is a group such as would be difficult to organize even in a big city. These young professional musicians are drawn from all parts of the country. The audience has increased for this group, which has been in existence for two years, and it deserves an even bigger audience. The switch to the college auditorium is a step in the right direction, although some people may still be confused by the official title of Chamber Music Society, which is usually associated with string groups. This group is composed mostly of wind instruments. It was a difficult program, but the training of these young musicians (some not quite so young anymore) is obvious. It is a valuable addition to this community's musical fare.

# A BAY CITY NEWS SERVICE REVIEW: "A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM"

by MARK WILSON  
Bay City News Service

Oakland's Woodminster Theater has begun a two week engagement of the popular comedy "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum." This well-known Broadway musical farce, written by Larry Gelbart and Burt Shevelove, has been regaling audiences with its raucous wit since it was first performed in 1962.

This community theater production, directed by James H. Schlader, is a real crowd-pleaser, full of rousing musical numbers, outlandish dialogue and zany slapstick routines.

The lively musical numbers are underscored by the competent musical direction of Michael P. Gibson and the energetic orchestra.

BRIGADOON, a romantic musical in the fine tradition of Lerner and Loewe, opens November 30 at 8 p.m. in McKenna Theatre, located in the Creative Arts Building on the San Francisco State University campus. Additional performances are scheduled for the evenings of December 1, 7, 8 at 8 p.m. with a matinee December 9 at 2 p.m.

Geoffrey Lardner, Professor of Theatre Arts at San Francisco State will direct the production. Musical direction will be by Michael Gibson, lecturer in the Music Department.

## *Musical's songs rise above plot*

by Connie Rusk  
staff writer

The wonderful songs of "Finian's Rainbow" overcome the dated silliness of the plot Woodminster Amphitheater's final musical production of the summer.

Musical director of the fine orchestra is Michael P. Gibson.

The Daily Review, Friday, March 12, 1982



## Ray Orrock

### Jaborrocky

**NOSTALGIA BE DAMNED** — Last week my wife and I attended the *Cavalcade of Music* program at Chabot College. It was a dandy show.

There was a symphonic orchestra and a jazz band, both under the direction of Michael Gibson, and a massed chorus made up of choirs from Hayward, San Mateo and San Francisco. No matter what your musical tastes, there was something there for you; and if you were simply an across-the-board music lover, the evening had *everything* — a touch of Tschesnokoff, a bit of Buddy Rich, a soupcon of Sousa, a cup of Copland, a dash of Debussy, a bubbling of Basie.

And at the end of the evening, both orchestras and all the choristers combined to close the show with *Battle Hymn of the Republic*. They gave that old eye-crosser an arrangement and treatment that may be the best I've ever heard; and, predictably, it brought down the house. Or, rather, brought *up* the house — to its feet, where everybody stood and clapped and whooped and cheered for a full minute.

**ON THE DRIVE HOME**, a couple of things ran through my mind. One was the fact that, while the turnout had been good, it wasn't a full house — and it should have been. I suspect it was one of the two or three best chunks of entertainment being presented anywhere in the Bay Area that night. I *know* I've spent 35 bucks for a ticket to a show in San Francisco that was nowhere near as enjoyable as this one.

I can only guess that an awful lot of people are just not aware of the caliber of entertainment available these days from the music and drama departments of local community colleges and universities.

**AND THAT LED** to the second thought: Today's young musicians are light years ahead of the ones in my youth.

That's an uncomfortable admission for an incurable nostalgiaholic like me, particularly one who isn't crazy about contemporary music. But it's totally true. These kids can *wail*.

Today, a high school band is as good as any college band from the '40s and '50s; and a college band is as good as most professional bands from that same era. What today's music lacks in substance, memorability and melodic line they more than make up for in musicianship; and they play Porter, Kern, Rodgers and Berlin better than *we* did, for *pete's* sake.

It used to be that you went to an entertainment presented by your local college primarily out of a sense of civic duty, and with the feeling that, if you didn't show up, you'd somehow be shortchanging the youth of the community.

Today, if you don't show up you're shortchanging nobody but yourself.

