

ARTS



photo Ray Giguere

World-class octet

The Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields Octet
SUB Theatre Oct. 22

review by Ray Giguere

The Edmonton Chamber Music Society's 1981-82 season opened last Wednesday with the presentation of the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields Octet. And what a start it was! This particular ensemble consists of none other than the principle string players of the world renowned Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, perhaps the most extensively recorded and respected orchestra in the world.

Wednesday's near-capacity audience was treated to two works: Johannes Brahms's sextet in G-major, Opus 36 and Felix Mendelssohn's Octet in E flat major Opus 20.

It was the first chamber ensemble I've ever seen who could actually look up from the sheet music to smile at each other, and occasionally, viola player (par excellence), Anthony Jenkins, would be jumping in his

seat exuberantly. Not only are these gentlemen beyond comparison musically, but they show that they really enjoy performing together.

The unsurpassed finesse of these eight players who are intimately accustomed to playing together (they've been together for the last ten years) was a necessary requirement for Mendelssohn's early Octet. From start to finish, the Academy played the piece with passion and fluidity. Their timing was spectacular, especially in the Presto (finale) where the players achieved a near-symphonic sound.

The opening Sextet by Brahms seemed more like a warm up exercise to players of this calibre; nonetheless, it was performed flawlessly and in a way that made the audience listen to the overall ensemble. Noteworthy here is the fact that not one individual really stood out as outstanding. They were all so excellent that nothing else need be said about any particular soloist.

Hopefully there will be more such extraordinary performances in the future.

Nihilists rock it

Rough Trade
Jubilee Auditorium
October 23

review by Ed Blackburn

Imagine 2000 screaming fashion victims assembled under one roof. Such was the scene last Friday night at the Jubilee Auditorium where Rough Trade sang of blood lust, bodies in collision, the sacred and the profane, emotional blackmail, and physical violence -for all those who think young.

Only a handful of fans were there showcasing the newest in the world of fashion, but of course according to song-writers Carole Pope and Kevan Staples, we're all victims of fashion.

The popularity of these frustrated psychologists is hard to pin down. Most of their music explores the bitter world of alienation in general, and in particular, victimization, failed personal relationships and human manipulation.

All of this is fine for our bitter, alienated, victimized, and manipulated youth, but it doesn't explain why the group attracts such a broad societal cross-section.

Or does it, he asked naively?
Perhaps it does.

Almost everyone at the concert -

from the bopper to the student to the adult -was a dedicated fan who insisted on cheering even when the band's performance sank to levels of mediocrity. It wasn't what the band was doing that was applaudable, but rather, what they were saying. And most of the time they said it well. Lead vocalist Pope has both a commanding voice and a magnetic stage presence; her live performance is every bit as powerful as her performance on records. Only a couple of miscues made her act less than perfect.

The four other members of the group maintained a high level of interest in their work throughout the concert -a pleasing change from the boredom exhibited by many groups who seem eager only to get the show over with and cash their checks. The visual aspects of the concert, while not stunning or overwhelming, were well suited to the moody, often dirge-like music of the group. The stage was lit primarily with hospital green, and radiation purple. Judging from the audience's enthusiastic participation throughout the concert it might be fair to say that Rough Trade's nihilist psycho rock represents the current popular thinking about society. To use people and to let oneself be used by them is the only way, they say, to get by in the jungle out there.

concerts

Classics mostly pleasant

Mostly Mozart (ESO)
Jubilee Auditorium
October 22

review by Peter West

October and November are busy months for the arts in Edmonton. Even as winter lays its icy hand on us we can console ourselves the Mostly Mozart concerts, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet (27 and 28 October) as well as the free concerts in the U of A's Con Hall.

The Mostly Mozart Series is an understandably popular group of three concerts, with Mozart symphonies and concerti blended pleasantly with a little Mendelssohn, Schubert and Beethoven. The second in the series, on October 22, featured Tamas Vasary as conductor and pianist in Beethoven's first piano concerto. Tamas Vasary is a well-known artist and it was fascinating to watch him playing the piano and conducting the orchestra, more or less with his nose.

He played the first movement allegro with a good deal of brio, then performed a gentle largo before dashing straight into

the final Allegro Scherzando. The orchestra seemed fired up by Vasary's energy and played rather better than usual, apart from a few untoward noises from the wind section. Vasary asked that Harlan Green, the flautist, take a solo bow, and this was deserved.

In the second half of the program, David Hoyt performed Mozart's Horn Concerto No. 2. Hoyt coaxed some fine sounds out of his instrument, apart from one lapse, and in general showed the orchestra's horn players a thing or two. The Horn Concerto is not the best known of the series: perhaps the audience was expecting the concerto which Flanders and Swan set to words. At any rate, this was a pleasant piece and the evening came to a close with a spirited rendition of Mozart's "Prague" Symphony.

This series concludes on November 4 with a new symphony of Mozart's, Schubert's fifth symphony and Mozart's 23rd Piano Concerto. Anton Kuerti is the pianist, and it promises to be another enjoyable evening. Give the volleyball and hockey a miss and come along.

Up and Coming

MUSIC

The Nylons; Nov. 3, 4, 5; SUB Theatre; shows at 7:30 and 10 p.m.; tickets available at all BASS outlets.

The Nylons are an a capella group who are preceded into Edmonton by a thick press kit containing blurbs by dozens of critics who fall all over themselves throwing superlative words at the group. The press kit also contained a 45 with two very nice songs on it. The Nylons will be singing a blend of their own songs (like the two on the 45) and older standards like "The Lion Sleeps Tonight," "Eli's Coming," "Up on



the Roof," and even Randy Newman's "Lonely at the Top" (!) If any of their hardcore fans are in the audience the Nylons will probably also be compelled to sing their California Iced Tea commercial. Sounds like a promising show.

Ann Mortifee; Oct. 27, 28; SUB Theatre; 8 p.m.; Tickets \$9-11.00 at all BASS outlets.

READINGS AND SPEAKERS

Sara Stambaugh; Nov. 12; SUB Art Gallery; 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.; admission free. Stambaugh, from the U of A's English Department, will read selections from her novel, *I Hear the Reaper's Song*.

Father Glendenning on "The Eucharist"; Oct. 28; Newman Centre, St. Joseph's College; 7 p.m.

Is the ritual a sublimated form of cannibalism? Attend the lecture and learn the gospel truth.

LOCAL RECREATION

Subhumans and X; Saturday; Dinwoodie Lounge, 8 p.m.; tickets \$4.00 HUB, \$5.00 at the door.

See record reviews for details.

Help! Help!

Are there any Fine Arts students out there willing to cover, say, the SUB concerts of the Edmonton Chamber Music Society? Is there any Commerce student who wants to give the campus the lowdown on Jerome Smith's book *The Coming Currency Collapse*? Any Home-Ec student who would like to assess the *Campus Survival Cookbook #2*? Anyone who wants to express themselves through criticism of these or other events? And make an Arts Editor happy in the process by volunteering their services to the *Gateway* at Room 282 SUB? Anybody out there at all? Hello? Hello?