

# English octet shares 'easy warmth' with audience

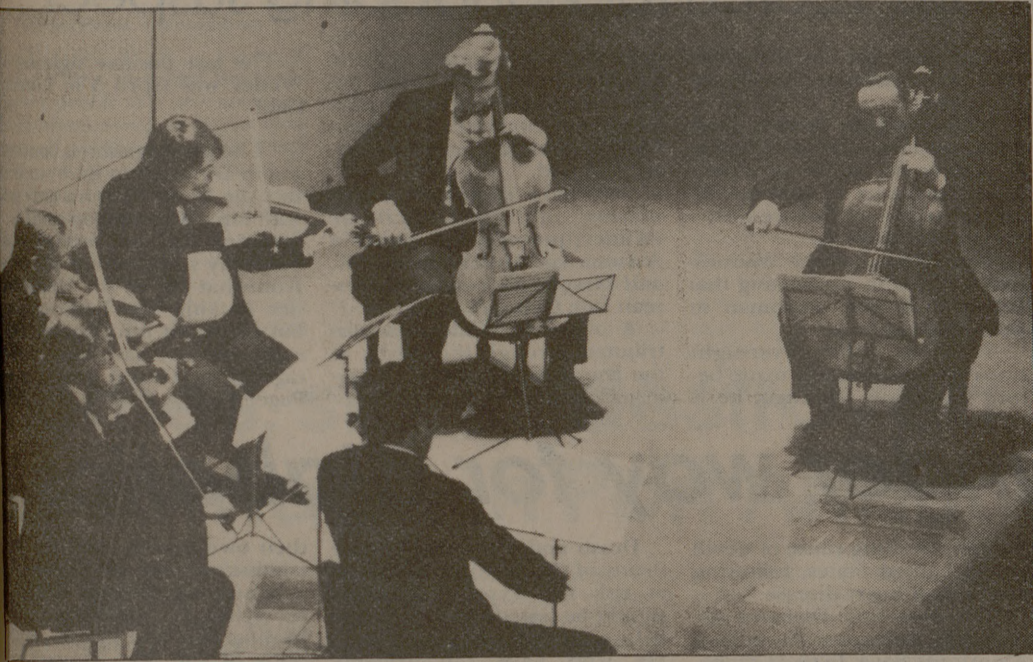


Photo by JOHN RYAN

The Academy of St. Martin in the Fields Octet performs the Sextet in B flat major, Opus 18 by Johannes

Brahms during their performance Wednesday. The concert was sponsored by the MSC OPAS.

By SARAH OATES  
Senior Staff Writer

Hailed as the finest octet to come out of Great Britain, St. Martin in the Fields Orchestra lived up to its reputation Wednesday night. The ensemble performed three works in Rudder Auditorium.

Chamber music is defined as being appropriate for performance in a small, private room or hall. Although Rudder Auditorium is not an intimate setting, and though it was filled to near-capacity, the eight musicians played with the easy warmth an audience could expect to share in a chamber setting.

The first presentation, Brahms Sextet in B flat major, Opus 18, provided a winsome opening to the performance. The solemn first movement led into a melancholy second movement, which in turn metamorphosed into a spritely melody during the third movement. The fourth movement, a lively exchange between the cellos and violins, was a rousing climax to the work.

For the second piece, the Prelude and Scherzo for String Octet, by Shostakovich, the group was joined onstage by another violin and viola. This work was an opportunity for the musicians to demonstrate their virtuosity, but had a mournful and almost contentious flavor. This work was unpleasantly dissonant.

The last work presented was the famed Mendelssohn Octet in E flat major, Opus 20. This was a marvelous piece that brought the evening to an energetic close. During the four movements, the violins, violas and cellos sounded as if they were engaged in an alternately frivolous, then more serious conversation that built to an exciting peak during the third and fourth movements.

This work was particularly vibrant and demanding; the musicians performed with a particular synergy that surpassed the rest of the evening's fare.

First violinist Kenneth Sillito played with warmth and brilliance. His performance was richly textured and at the same time very controlled.

Cellist Denis Vigay also delivered a fine performance. The mellow violas and the physical exuberance of Sillito and Vigay, combined with outstanding performances by the cellists made this a memorable evening.

## Veterinarian

(continued from page 7)

After much moving, Fiske finally received a bachelor of science degree in animal science from the University of Florida in 1974.

She returned to Texas A&M when her husband got his job here. Fiske received a master's in animal science from the University in 1976. She published a book in 1977, "How Horses Learn."

She received her doctorate in veterinary medicine in 1980 and began her practice.

Ninety-eight percent of her practice is with horses, which have always been her true love. She got her first horse when she was six. And almost ever since, she has had at least one. A veterinary practice has always been the goal for Fiske, something her mother found hard to accept.

"My mother always envisioned me as a beauty pageant type," she says. "She never did get used to me in blue jeans and boots." A year and a half ago, Fiske began working at a local horse ranch three mornings a week. Her main duty, in addition to providing the veterinary care, is to directly oversee the breeding activity at the ranch.

Almost all of the breeding is done through artificial insemination, and it is Fiske's job to collect the sperm from the stallions and then to implant it in the mares.

The process is physically demanding and could be shocking to people unfamiliar with the process, but it is a routine part of Fiske's job.

"I work out and lift weights regularly," Fiske says, "because when you have a 1,000-pound horse thrusting against you, you have to be strong." On an average day she will collect and in-

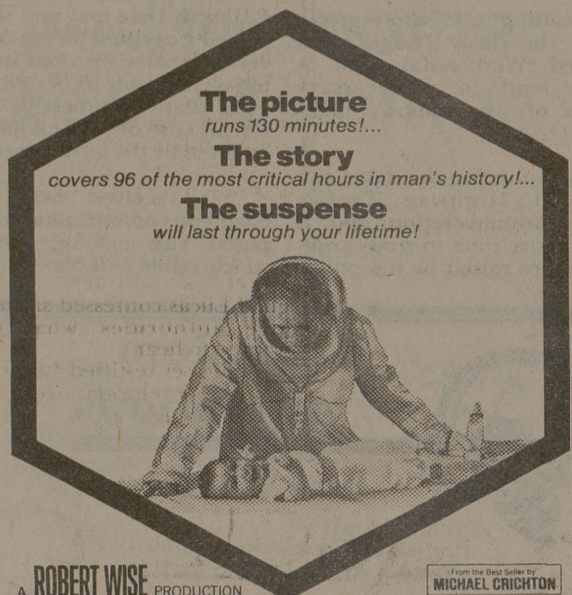
seminate about six stallions and mares. If everything goes smoothly, the process from stallion to mare usually takes just 20 minutes.

The rest of the day is spent making calls of varied sorts, ranging from castration to birth. Assisting in births are easily her favorite type of call.

"There is nothing I like more than helping to give birth to a live animal," she says.

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