

Monte Nagler used a very fine grain film in this shot of the "Mittens at Monument Valley." He wanted the sharpest print possible.

## Grain can add or detract

Inevitably, when talking with a group of photography buffs, the subject of "grain" comes up.

To many, grain can be puzzling. Is it good, or bad, and just what is it in the first place? Today, I'll sift through the mystery of grain and hope to give you a better understanding as to what it's all about.

Unexposed film emulsions contain light-sensitive silver halide crystals. When these crystals are struck by light during exposure in the camera, they acquire what is called a latent image, or, in other words, the potential to form an image during the development process.

In actual development, those crystals struck by light are transformed into metallic silver and those crystals unstruck by light are not.

Fixer then removes the unexposed crystal area of the negative and a recognizable image is formed consisting of discrete particles of silver suspended in the emulsion.

DENSE SECTIONS of the negative are those struck by light and clear areas are those that were not. There will be many values in-between depending on the intensity of the light.

What we call graininess is when negatives are enlarged to the point where we begin to see clusters of developed silver



photos

Monte Nagler

particles in the print. It is most apparent in areas of uniform tonality such as clear sky and bare walls.

While an individual grain particle is far too small to see, we tend to group lots of individual grains into "clumps" that form a visible pattern.

Several factors affect the appearance of grain such as film, speed, exposure and type of developer.

Photographers are constantly juggling these variables to get an optimum print, but usually the key factor is film speed.

Fast films (400 and higher) have thick emulsions that contain large silver halide crystals. These in turn develop to large particles of metallic silver, more noticeable as grain in an enlargement.

Slow films (50 and below) have thinner emulsions, smaller halide crystals, and therefore less observable grain. Medium

speed films (64-200) fall somewhere in between.

SO, IF YOU want to minimize grain, use slower speed films. This is particularly true for landscapes. Also, try not to overexpose your shot or overdevelop at both of these will add graininess to your negative and resulting print.

What about special "fine grain" developers? Developers such as Microdol-X and Atomol contain agents that attack the silver particles as they are developing.

Grain clusters are softened although a tradeoff is that image sharpness may be slightly reduced.

While I've been directing most of my comments toward black and white films, color films work in a similar way.

For example, Kodachrome 1000 will show more grain than the slower Kodachrome 100. Also, Ektachrome 400 will display noticeably more grain than Ektachrome 64.

There may be times you'll want grain in your shot for aesthetic reasons. Exaggerated grain can give a photograph a special mood or dreamlike quality. Pushing film to a higher ASA and then overdeveloping will result in a grain pattern that will give your photograph a certain sensuality just not available from use of a fine grain film.

—Monte Nagler

## Chamber group plays

The Detroit Contemporary Chamber Ensemble will focus on classical music of the 20th century in a 8 p.m. Friday concert at Varner Recital Hall on the Oakland University campus.

It will be the sixth concert of the ensemble's first season and the first locally.

The ensemble was formed to fill an area of music that is being neglected, at least in the eyes of a number of fine musicians who truly appreciate and want to share contemporary music.

Saying, "I've always been involved in contemporary music," Dr. James Dawson of the Oakland University music faculty, saxophone virtuoso and Ensemble member said, "This is the only century in which people haven't been involved in the music of their time."

He was speaking purely of classical music explaining it is because of the recordings available — allowing people to return to the music of Beetho-

ven, Brahms, Mozart and other masters of previous eras.

Barrett Kalellis, music director of the Detroit Contemporary Chamber Ensemble conducts, composes and performs on the piano. He is also music director of the Grand Rapids Musica Nova Ensemble.

His composition, "Homage to J.J. Q.," a three-movement work will be performed in Friday's concert by Magdalen Heilbronn, violin, Jill Feiler, flute and Robert Conway, piano.

Kalellis and Dawson will be featured in the opening selection on Friday's program, "Seven Strange Little Pieces" by Gregory Youtz.

The concert is sponsored by the Oakland University Center for the Arts and the university's department of music. For ticket information, call the Oakland University Center for the Arts, 377-3013.

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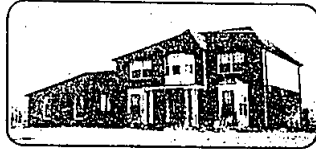
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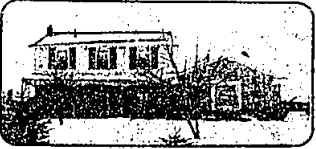
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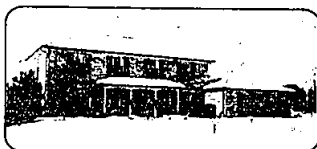
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