

## DO'A

They call their style "earthly music in harmony with the celestial melody," and there seems to be no better way to describe the particular blend of musical styles and traditions presented by Ken LaRoche and Randy Armstrong of the musical group Do'a. Through the use of various instruments, as many as 35 in any given performance, the duo create a totally unique listening experience. "We like to think of ourselves as a positive force in uplifting people's spirits," commented Ken, "and that energy is evident in our music."

Both Ken and Randy have extensive musical backgrounds. Ken's experience stretches from the N. H. Philharmonic Orchestra, Longy School of Music, to summer stock theatre. His main instrument is the flute, but his repertoire includes recorders, Indian Bamboo, Kalimba, Pan Pipes, Bells, piano, guitar, various percussion and special effects. Randy, who began on the concert trumpet, considers guitar his first choice. He is also studying the Sitar quite intently at the Lalit Center of Indian Music in Boston. His past includes numerous classical, jazz, and rock recitals, concerts, and club engagements throughout the country.

The work of the group has been greatly influenced by their commitment to the Baha'i faith, the belief in the oneness of the world and all things. "We are attempting to merge all national strains of music into one



Summer Festival and various places throughout the East Coast. Locally, they have performed at the Scarecrow, Lion Galleries, Dana Place and Oxen Yoke.

Randy and Ken are sometimes joined by violinist Sloan Williams when he is not studying at the New England Conservatory of Music or the Interlaken School of Music in Michigan. Eventually, they intend to add other musicians to the group and perhaps introduce mixed media with visual presentations. They are considering the possibility of free-form dance assisted by lighting techniques using color and tone to create the mood. After all, Randy added, "Music paints a picture." For the present, Do'a is looking forward to a college concert tour throughout the East in the fall. They also have plans for audio-visual presentations of 18 New York cities and their good news. A hectic undertaking indeed, but not for the two young men, the musical group Do'a, who believe: "Music is our gift; it's our calling, our life's work."

tude which they try to extend to their audiences. The reciprocating relationship that they share with those listening often defines the music presented. Ken commented, "We have a basis for each song but each has its own flexibility to change with each night's performance." Randy added, "One half of every performance is our sensitivity to the audience. It's a feeling that generates itself in the music."

Although Do'a has been together less than a year, they have made an impressive number of appearances including Franconia College, UNH, Ithaca Arts Festival, Greenfield Mid-

natural blend," said Randy. It's more than just a feeling; it's a belief, a truism, an act of faith. Recognizing their Western heritage, they are utilizing the best of what they have learned with their new exposure to Indian, African, South American, and Near Eastern music. It's quite a goal, they agree, and that is why their music is always progressing, always seeking a higher level of consciousness, a merging of art forms while playing upon past experiences.

Do'a is a Persian word meaning prayer, meditation, and chanting. It's this message of peace and solemn-