

Fassbinder

A Perfect "Marriage"

by Michael McCarthy

The Marriage of Maria Braun, presented at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium Sunday, September 28, is a piercing human drama that transcends language and other cultural barriers. A German film (by Rainer Werner Fassbinder, produced 1979), the emotion and power of the film pulses through the audience with such accessible immediacy that one could almost forego the English subtitles provided and still absorb an intelligible experience and identify with the situations and characters portrayed.

Maria Braun is separated

from her husband by the deployment of his army unit on the Russian front only a day after their wedding. She remains true to her passionate love for him until news of his "death". She finds solace in the arms of a black American, whom she will not marry because of the memory of her husband. Her husband, not dead, returns to find her in those arms, and in the confusion and scuffle that follows, Maria tries to subdue her lover by hitting him on the head with a bottle. He dies, and Hermann Braun takes the blame for his wife, going to prison while she tries to prepare a good life for them on his release. Unfortunately, she needs money, and the

sacrifices she makes to get it (becoming a mistress, and a capitalist pig) affect her and her husband to the point that their love can not be recontinued. Maria, empty, kills herself, and her husband follows in his last demonstration of union with her.

Fassbinder delves into the human soul in this film with almost as much passion as his anterior countryman Goethe did in his books. He studies the character of Maria as she is propelled from starry-eyed newlywed to dance hall widow to bitter, calculating business manager, her motivational reserve so bankrupt that she commits suicide.

Hanna Schygulla gives an incredible (and award-winning) performance as Frau Braun, brilliant in dimension and depth as she shows Maria's determined battle to keep her

faith in her love and her husband vibrant in the face of the heartless inconsiderateness of events, and despite the innumerable frustrations she must deal with in her struggle to remain an integral person.

She is radiant in innocent love, which she is sure will bring her husband home unhurt from the war; flashingly undaunted and practical as she seeks to establish herself alone in the world; and hard and hostile as she finds herself, at the end of her struggle, with a life which humans live "as if we had signed a contract to enjoy life." She is also one of the most blazingly sexual actresses I have seen, with the allure and smouldering eroticness of Maria Schneider (*The Passenger, Last Tango in Paris*), yet with much more

strength and independence; a woman who can handle what life throws at her, yet a woman always.

The supporting characters also give fine renditions, and the screenplay and camerawork are meticulous. The movie sums up the ironic mockery that can be made of life in a bitter but dramatic ending. Maria tries to kill herself by causing an explosion of her gas stove. Her husband, equally drained of life-force, follows her lead in an agonized last manifestation of their once all-encompassing love. While this tortuous self-immolation is occurring, we hear, from a television set in the house, the thunderous cheers of soccer fans, for whom passion and emotion are easily, but speciously, evoked by a different sort of game.

Martha and the Muffins — good munching

by Gisele Marie Baxter

Review: Martha and the Muffins — "Metro Music" (Virgin V-2142)

Martha and the Muffins, a Canadian band which had to go to England to achieve success, is a six-member group fronted by two very talented women, both named Martha. It is also one of the most exciting and original Canadian bands to come along in a while. Their debut album, *Metro Music*, is a well-

produced collection of strong pop songs.

The Muffins are most reminiscent of the progressive rock bands of the late 60s and early 70s, although their tunes are short, and their production has the tight, spare, clean quality of the new wave era. The lyrics are also very up-to-date, with their balance of cynicism and wit.

Metro Music is not specifically English or Canadian. It is, in a sense, an album of the Western World, with its images of urban loneliness. A

number of the songs treat broken or damaged relationships, the best of these being "Paint by Number Heart," a crisp and danceable declaration of independence. Yet there is an underlying belief in idealism, and in a timeless place of escape, which is developed in three of the album's best songs: "Saigon," "The Sinking Land," and "Echo Beach."

Time is viewed as a force of entrapment, as in the day to day monotony of unfulfilling work, and sometimes only the

belief in the escape saves one from insanity. This is the theme of "Echo Beach," in which an office worker daydreams about a place where one can escape from time and routine, and find a calming sense of beauty. ("On a silent summer evening / The sky's alive with light / Building in the distance / Surrealistic sight")

A similar quality is imparted to "Saigon," which has an effective Oriental flavour in its introduction. Caught between eastern and western cultures, old Saigon becomes a place apart from the rest of the world, a place where "endless nights filled with haunting shadows/Slowly fade into morning mist/Faces seen but not remembered/A place where time does not exist."

A long silence precedes the introduction to "The Sinking Land," a haunting ballad which suggests that the scape is due to idealism as much as frustration: "Left behind, a life you've known too long/Just ahead a new horizon glows..."

One of the most delightful tracks is "Cheesies and Gum,"

an enthusiastic pop ode to junk food, which punctuates a strong, staccato beat with melodic instrumental breaks and spirited repetitions of the title.

As musicians, the Muffins are proficient, ambitious, and play very well together. There seems to be some Pete Townshend influence in the guitar work. I do wish that Andy Haas' saxophone, put to excellent use on "Echo Beach," had given more prominence on the record. The vocals, handled by Martha Johnson and Martha Lady, are clear and strong, with a nice sardonic edge but also a sense of humour which could have been used to greater advantage. The harmonies are crisp, bright, and unsentimental.

Metro Music is an exciting, refreshingly original record. It intersperses haunting melodies with danceable rock, and its lyrics combine intelligence and perception with wit and strong pop construction. The record has just been released in the United States. The Muffins do not fit into any trendy slot, but with songs as compelling as "Echo Beach," I think they should do well.

BETTE MIDLER

is

Divine Madness



Produced and Directed by MICHAEL RITCHIE
Written by JERRY BLATT, BETTE MIDLER, BRUCE VILANCH
Executive Producer HOWARD JEFFREY Director of Photography WILLIAM A. FRAKER, A.S.C.
Filmed in Panavision * DOLBY STEREO Color by Technicolor *

A Ladd Company Release Through Warner Bros. A Warner Communications Company

For more madness, read "A View From a Broad" by Bette Midler
Soundtrack available on Atlantic Records and Tapes

ADMITTANCE
15 YEARS OF AGE OR OVER

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CKDU Trivia Quiz 3

- Who played piano for Neil Young on his album "After the Gold Rush?"
- Who was the opera "Evita" written about?
- Joan Baez wrote the song "Diamonds and Rust" for whom?
- John Cage is known for what type of music?
- What is Elton John's real name?
- Linda Eastman became the wife of whom?
- He was a member of the Jeff Beck Group and Faces before his solo career; who is he?
- What did Scott Joplin die from?
- In Mozart's opera "Don Giovanni," what is the name of Giovanni's manservant?
- Who plays saxophone for Bruce Springsteen?
- What was Maxwell Edison's major?

12. Who recorded the album "Alladin Sane?"

- What ex-King Crimson guitarist recorded with Brian Eno?
- Who wrote Peter Paul and Mary's smash single "Leaving On a Jet Plane?"
- After Glen Matlock left the Sex Pistols, what band did he form?

Answers to Trivia Quiz 2

- Paul Simon
- Bon Scott
- Harmonium
- Ella Fitzgerald
- Quadrophenia
- BB Gabor
- Magical Mystery Tour
- Jeff "Skunk" Baxter
- Classical guitar
- Fran Sheehan
- I, Robot
- Igor Stravinsky
- Aron
- Long John Baldry
- BB King