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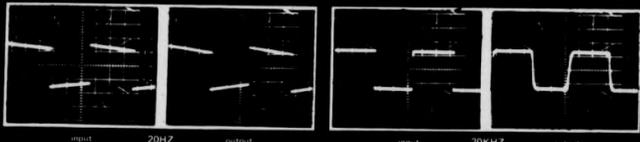
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## Radio ship in Mideast

# Rock and talk peace

By GREG GERTZ

Somewhere off the coast of Israel floats a pirate radio ship that broadcasts rock, classical, jazz and pleas for peace into the heart of Arab and Israeli lands.

And one of the most popular disc jockeys on the "Peace Ship" is former York student John Thomson.

Thomson, 23, left his third-year English programme last January in search of a way to put his beliefs and abilities into practice. He found what he was seeking on the high seas.

"I got tired of walking in demonstrations," said the ex-Radio York DJ. "I started asking myself what I had accomplished."

"I saw an ad in the paper for volunteers on the ship. I felt I had some talents someone needed. So I signed on."

Thomson, on vacation in Toronto, had only five days off between May and September.

"After the war started we increased our broadcasting time from 14 to 24 hours a day. We broadcast in English, French, Arabic and Hebrew."

The ship, which left New York March 19, sits 10 miles off the Israeli coast. The 50-watt transmitter can reach 200 miles during the day and farther at night. The 14 to 20-man crew has had volunteers from Canada, the U.S., Israel, France, Portugal, the Philippines and the Netherlands.

The station is trying to encourage peace in several ways. It plays tapes of

discussions on the issues in the Middle East, arranges for Arab-Israeli "pen-pals," and brings small groups of Arabs and Israelis together on the ship to discuss the tensions.

In one group of eight, a remarkable change of attitudes occurred. The four Arabs and four Israelis, after a hesitant and mutually - suspicious start, eventually drew up their own peace plan for the Middle East. They are all friends now and are writing letters and bringing others into the discussion.

"Our service became especially essential once the war began," said Thomson. "We have influence there. We can bring people to people for dialogue. The issue is more emotional than it is political. We want to tone down that emotion."

The ship has received considerable press in Europe and Israel. One Arab paper described it as "the only serious attempt at peace," said Thomson.

Several thousand letters a week have been coming to the ship, running 500 to 1 in favour of the idea. Personal replies are sent for each one.

As a disc jockey, Thomson gets a lot of fan mail: requests for albums, girls who want to meet him, and Canadians who send their greetings. On the air he talks about Canada and Toronto frequently.

"I don't work from a script," he explained, "so I can pretty well talk about anything I want. I like to read letters, or talk about books or remember friends of mine in Canada."

## Exciting news at Radio York

The campus's common rooms will resound with music and news seven days a week, following a Radio York decision to broadcast on Saturday and Sunday from noon to midnight.

Station manager Claude Vickery said Tuesday he hoped the weekend hours would eventually expand to match the weekday schedule of 10 a.m. to midnight.

Apart from the general news and information programming, the station has planned a series of special shows to be aired at 1 p.m. and again at 7 p.m. throughout the week.

Tomorrow, Radio York's Jim Seagrave looks at birth control and immigration in Canada. Saturday, Jeff Feldman examines the relationship between apathy and politics, both on campus and off.

Sunday, Mick Jagger will be interviewed, followed by the complete airing of the Rolling Stones' new album, Goats' Head Soup.

Monday, former Radio York announcer John Thomson, who left last year to work on the Peace Ship operating in the Gulf of Suez, will talk about the operation of the station and the recent Mideast conflict.

Tuesday, the Eubie Blake-Bob Darch ragtime concert is aired once again, and Monty Kaplan speaks to Darch about his extensive career and the recent resurgence in ragtime music.

And on Wednesday, there will be a discussion of the recent coup in Chile and its effects on Chilean students living temporarily in Canada.

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