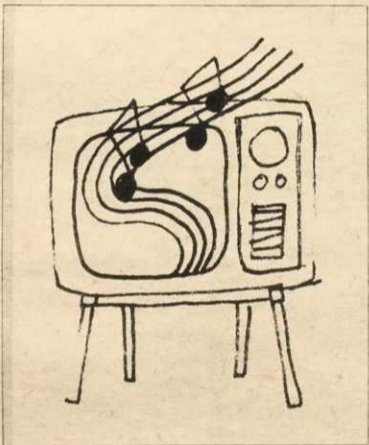


Much Music - More than a Canadian MTV

By JANICE WALSH

“Anything You Can Do I Can Do Better” should be the song with which each six- or three-hour set of videos played on Much Music should open. While commercialism, formulated music, and high-gloss images dominate the top 40 of America's MTV, Canada's Much Music tends to sway to the more original, less commercial music and a low key image.

Much Music has been offered to the Canadian public since Sept. 1. Many Canadians awaited its arrival with dread feeling that, like many other things that originate in the U.S. and make their way to Canada, the station would bear a very strong resemblance to MTV—bringing with it the controversies which the American station had raised (most people are likely aware of the issue of ‘racism’ raised when Rick James’ “Super Freak” was rejected by MTV).



In September, however, Canadians were much relieved to find laid-back, ‘normal’ veejays J.D. Roberts and Christopher Ward (soon to be joined by Mike Williams), in an informal setting (the “newsroom

effect” with phones ringing and typewriters typing in the background), playing lesser-known groups like Japan in the same hour as they played Van Halen. Yes, now the country's music fans had something besides Rush and Sibirry to be proud of.

Much Music's main attraction is, of course, its videos. A good portion of Much Music's videos are Canadian (at present, M+M and Rush are getting much airplay) in

conjunction with the CRTC ruling that 30% of Canadian content must be played on radio stations across Canada. Also, as to be expected, the songs in the top 40 get the most continuous airplay so that constant viewers are often gifted with the sights and sounds of the Thompson Twins and Rick Springfield freeing their respective brothers and sisters from slavery.

Where MTV would stop at these requirements (perhaps their occa-

The Little Drummer Girl

By SIOBHAN McRAE

The Little Drummer Girl presents a carefully balanced picture of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and brings home the realities of that ongoing situation without giving any easy answers.

The intricate plot centres around Charlie (Diane Keton), an actress with Palestinian sympathies who is kidnapped by the Israelis and subsequently convinced to infiltrate a Palestine terrorist group to bring about the destruction of its leader.

Both sides are given equal amounts of humanity, dedication and ruthlessness. There are a lot of attractive, idealistic people who are difficult to associate with the cold-blooded killing that is an integral part of their political philosophy.

There are moderates in both camps. An Israeli claims that they do not want to drive out the Palestinians but only come to terms with them. A Palestinian insists that they are not anti-Semitic but only anti-Zionist. Yet the overall

impression is that the extremists are the ones who are in control.

Charlie comes across as a character without any really deep political convictions one way or the other. As a Palestinian sympathizer she took part in a few ineffectual demonstrations; as an Israeli sympathizer she is motivated by her love for one of her captors as well as her own sense of excitement and importance.

The even-handed treatment of the subject matter suggests that in this situation there is no obvious morality, no real right or wrong. Charlie's admission late in the movie that she doesn't really believe in anything is less an indication of her superficiality than it is seemingly the only appropriate attitude in the face of such impossible choices.

The Little Drummer Girl is not just a good suspense movie but also a vehicle for putting across the predicament of the Middle East more vividly and with greater impact than dozens of newscasts.

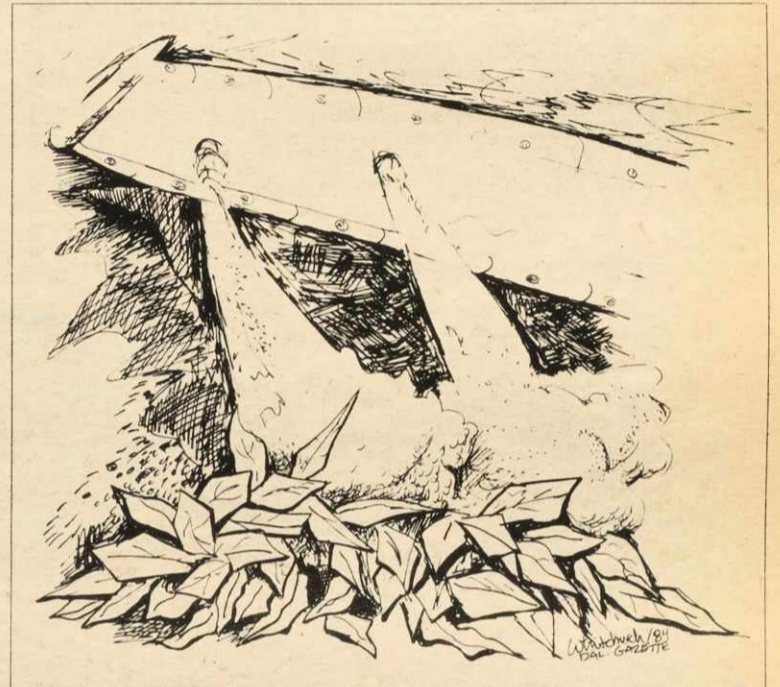
It is currently playing at the Penhorn 2. □

sional playing of “black music” video is somewhat equivalent to our Canadian content regulation). Much Music travels further into the world of videos with spotlights (three videos in a row) on the not-so-popular, not-so-commercial artists such as Kate Bush and Japan, occasional videos from the R&B and country music worlds (Ricky Scaggs makes frequent appearances), and a weekly show entitled “City Limits” which was carried over from Toronto's City TV and shows the more imaginative, artistic videos from the past and present.

Unlike MTV, there does not appear to be too much that is cen-

sored on Much Music. Videos such as the original *Two Tribes* by Frankie Goes to Hollywood and *Invisible Sun* by the Police, which have been banned in many countries due to their violent nature and/or blatant political statements, have been played in their entirety on Much Music. The uncensored version of David Bowie's *China Girl*, which contains a nude scene along the lines of the beach scene in the film *From Here To Eternity*, has been shown on Much Music as well.

The other major positive factor to Much Music's appeal which is, to many, a negative factor when



Herbicide Trials David and Goliath film

By NAIRNE HOLTZ

Herbicide Trials, produced by the National Film Board, is a 50-minute documentary depicting the struggle of 15 Nova Scotia landowners who took Nova Scotia Forest Industries, a subsidiary of Swedish-owned Stova Kopparbergs, to court in 1983 to prevent the spraying of the herbicides 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T adjacent to their land.

Since the film's release in June there has been what director Neil Livingston calls a “quiet, well-organized campaign” to have the NFB delist *Herbicide Trials*. One commentator even called the film “brilliantly propagandistic.” Is this reaction on the part of the pulpwood industry and its supporters a legitimate one?

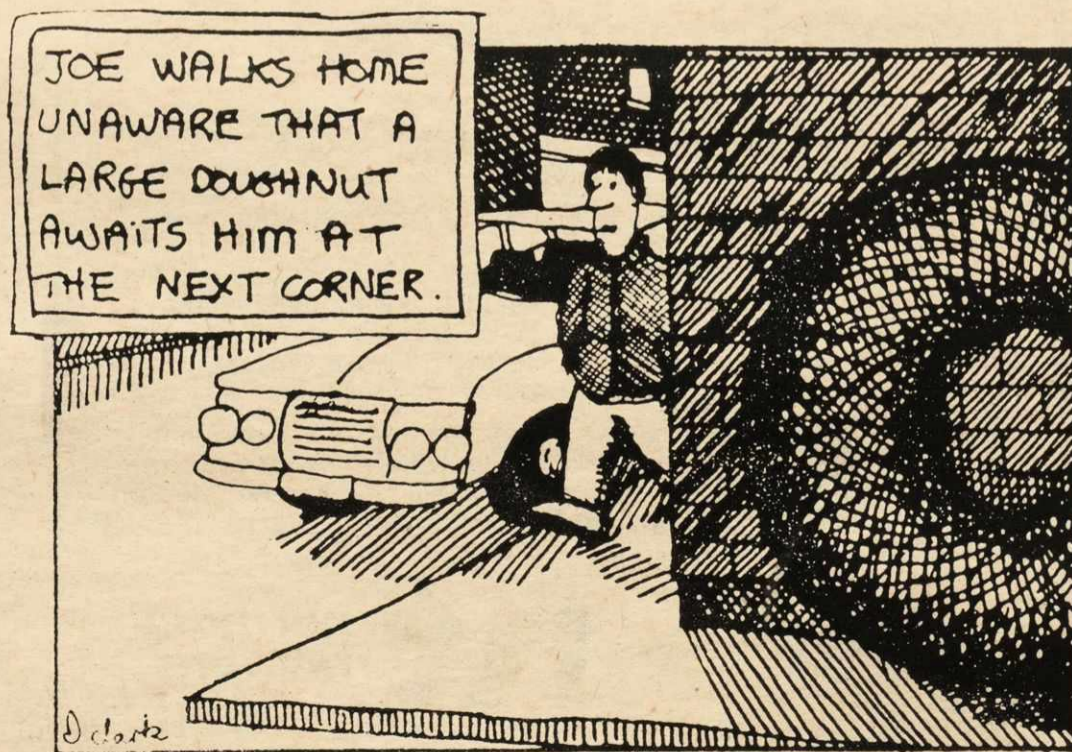
The documentary is a roughly made, but always interest-sustaining and sometimes amusing, David and Goliath story which deliberately and unashamedly takes the side of David—in this case the landowner plaintiffs.

The film gives glimpses of people talking about aspects of the political battle, fundraising to meet legal fees in the plaintiffs' office above a pizza parlour, getting ready for

court, visiting the parent company in Sweden where use of such herbicides is banned and also includes a clip of a promotional film produced in the 1950's to sell herbicides about “weeds—the enemy of man since the dawn of time.”

The film makes the assumption that you know “David's” arguments and doesn't probe the details of the evidence of safety and health effects on which the case was established, or the issues of forest management and manual weeding as an equally feasible economic option to spraying. (Given that the reason N.S.F.I. and the provincial government support spraying is solely economic and that unemployment in rural N.S. is 20%, I felt that the latter issue needed some in-depth investigation.)

I would not agree with the censorship of this film on the basis that it is propaganda. It is not manipulative propaganda but a factual account of one side of a controversial issue. It is so clearly one-sided that it establishes a feeling of ambivalence, of questioning. “Is there another side? What is it?” Having seen *Herbicide Trials*, I'd now like to see the issue through the eyes of ‘the other side.’ □



Graphic: Gauntlet (U of Calgary)