

Bad vibes in Slipstream

Insufferable disc jockey turns off viewer

In the middle of the Alberta plain, a lone disc jockey sits in a rundown shack broadcasting the area's most popular radio show.

His low-keyed manner and frequency-modulated voice are syndicated to several radio stations, and the popularity of the music he plays allows him total artistic control of his shows.

Out of the blue, a fan shows up, amazed to meet Mike Mallard in person. She decides to stay. Out goes the isolation, in come the troubles.

THE PLOT SICKENS

The trouble with Slipstream, a new Canadian film playing downtown, is that by the time the tension starts, the viewer has completely lost interest.

Mike Mallard is the sort of announcer you switch off as soon as he turns up on your radio. He would say, "I can see you through the holes in your radio speaker", and branch into long discourses on man's place in the universe.

Not only can't the viewer understand why he's so popular, he is forced to concur with Mike's sleazy boss, Allec Braverman, when Braverman echoes listeners' complaints that Mike is getting too talky.

BACK TO 1967

And the girl who shows up at his farmhouse comes from a pack of empty-headed, boring collegiates, probably the same ones mowing the hay at the commune in Easy Rider. By the time the viewer sits through

a horse-back ride in the nude and a futile argument about whether or not the farmhouse should have curtains, he's ready to phone up the distributor and ask him if he's sure the film was really made in 1973. Not 1967, eh?

The poor acting in this film is so rampant that only Braverman, played by Eli Rill, turns in a convincing performance.

Luke Askew as Mike Mallard seems to be doing his best to impersonate the wooden Peter Fonda, and Patti Oatman as Kathy, the girl who came in from the cold, retaliates with a strident piece of over-acting.

DISAPPOINTING SCRIPT

It came as a shock to learn that Bill Fruet (author of Wedding in White, Goin' Down the Road, and Rip-Off) had written the dreary script.

He wrote it a few years ago, which may explain the superficial, "hip"

approach, since that's what was selling back then. But even that doesn't excuse a screenplay which takes half an hour's worth of material and blows it up into an hour and a half.

The soundtrack is blessed with Derek and the Dominos' rocker Layla, which packs the same punch as the Stones' Gimme Shelter. But the rest of the score, Van Morrison's Astral Weeks included, hasn't a hope of

salvaging the creaking film.

Surprisingly, Slipstream picked up this year's Canadian Film Awards for best picture, best direction and best sound. Other films under consideration, despite the Quebec directors' boycott, were Kamouraska, Between Friends, La Mort d'un Boucheron and Paperback Hero.

That's a pretty unfortunate state of affairs.

Koss hi-fi show to model stereophones

Anyone interested in hi-fi may enjoy the Koss mini hi-fi show coming to York on Monday, November 19. The show, contained in a 28-foot travelling van, will be parked in the D-D parking lot (by the Ross building) from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Fully outfitted with sophisticated two-channel and four-channel sound sources, the van will present talks on stereophones, and in particular (not surprisingly), Koss stereophones. Admission is free.

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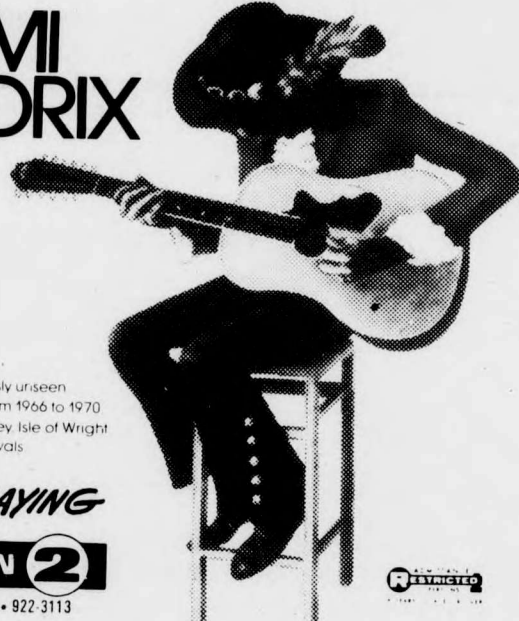
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