



Miami Vice's visual style is interesting for the visual dichotomy it creates. The world of Miami is a very polished one. (Before shooting night scenes, for example, the streets are watered down to get a nice smooth reflection of moonlight off the pavement.) Yet underneath this glittering world of polished streets and winking pastel nightclubs are sleazy degenerate dope dealers and outlaws. The setting for the show has been appropriately coined 'glitter-sleaze'. There is one very strict rule on the Miami Vice set and that is 'no earth tones'. Pastel shades are definitely the rule and anything red or brown is strictly taboo. "One of the reasons for this," said Klovan, "is to reinforce the dream-like quality of the show."

Another appealing aspect to the program is its quick rock video-like editing. "Miami Vice is the first TV show to use rock video-like editing," said Klovan. "In either reveal character or advance the plot. It is linear narrative. Every shot also must be self-explanatory so that if you leave the room for a few minutes, you can still follow the few strands of plot when you return. It's like Dal-las. Every three months or so I watch 15 minutes I'm caught up in everything that's going on. The techniques of TV restrict the range of choices. Since every shot must be self-explanatory, one show is pretty much like the other."

hard-boiled detective and into Samurai ethics."

Another contributing factor to the show's innovative look is its music. "Usually in television," said Klovan, "music is used to reinforce the action of, say, a love scene or a chase scene. In Miami Vice it is used to comment either directly or ironically on the action, like the chorus in ancient Greek theater. For example, in one show, over a shootout involving Crockett, Tubbs, and a gangster, we can hear the Clash singing 'No Peace in the Western World'. The lyrics comment directly on the action and this creates emotional excitement."

Miami Vice's musical score is notable also for its use of original songs, not cheap made-for-TV imitations. If necessary, Executive Producer Michael Mann will spend \$10,000 per episode just to acquire the rights to an original work.

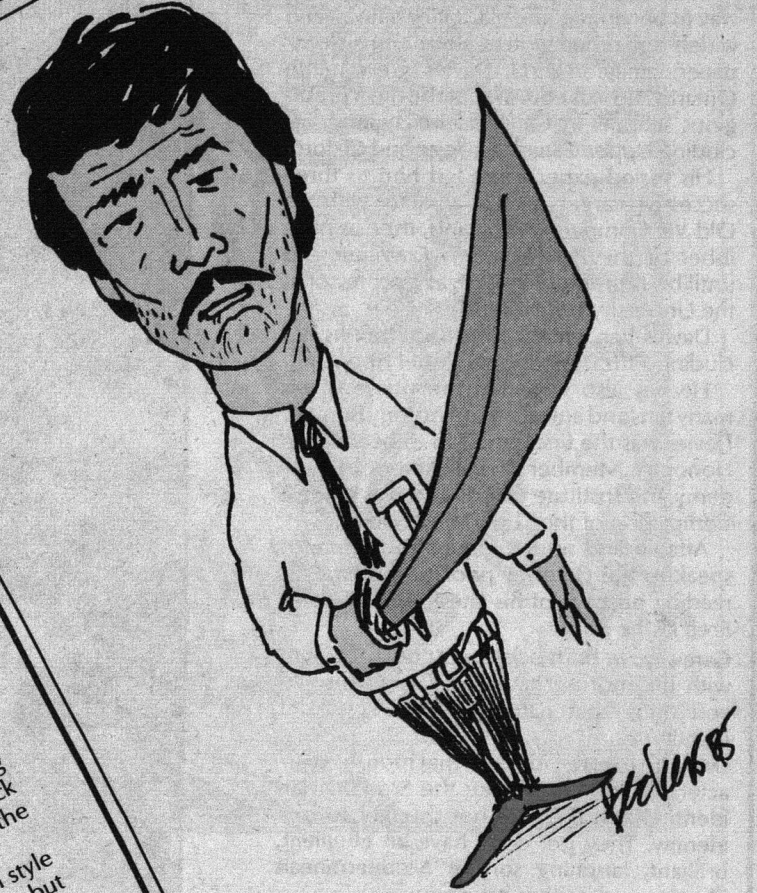
"The visual style of Miami Vice," says Klovan, "has its roots in the expressionist elements of the later films of the West German director, the late Werner Fassbinder." In Fassbinder's later films, the whole screen is awash in flamingo pink and cobalt blue neon, the predominant colors of Miami Vice. But where Fassbinder's world was very grimy and seedy, Miami Vice is, in Klovan's words, "more streamlined for a cooler colour and a jazzier look."

Because of this, the producers didn't bother with composition or mise-en-scene and paid little attention to the music score. Today, though, the screens are much larger, the picture is better, and you can hook your set up to speakers the size of a refrigerator. But television has refused to adapt. Miami Vice is style is forty years out-of-date. Their visual alluring and powerful because it uses modern techniques to present an ancient theme. I can't wait to see the number of imitators it will spawn."

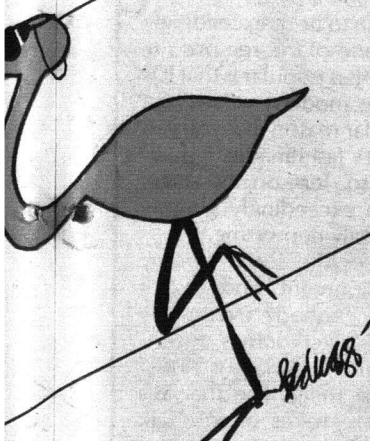
are left in the story. Each scene does not necessarily build on the preceding one. And after the first ten minutes the story doesn't give you a lot of exposition. If you miss the first few moments of the show, you're lost. "The scenes themselves contradict the complete entity unto itself. There is a beginning and a middle and an end. Not so in Miami Vice. The viewer will enter a scene in the middle and leave before the end. Miami Vice likes to do this. It likes to challenge you. It throws you into the middle of something and lets you figure it out. Also the quick editing from one scene to another gives the impression of a dream."

The knock on Miami Vice has been style and sound at the expense of storyline, but Klovan does not see this as legitimate criticism. "Miami Vice's audience doesn't read. It wants images and emotion and energy rather than plot or words."

Although he applauds Miami Vice for the innovative use of visual and aural techniques, he also sees the show's success in the context of television just keeping up with the times. "Forty years ago," he said, "the television screen was very small, as was the speaker."



vides a good example of what in one show, actually titled Castillo finds out that a friend of new outlaw. But Castillo has no amma. "I can't let you walk," he tells d, "It's my duty. It's what I am." This dedication certainly goes beyond the



# MIAMI VICE

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