

Black Rain

a change in the weather?

by Jennifer Beck

Summer is the season when the studios go all out — with special effects, big-name casting, and astronomical advertising budgets, to create the smash hit, the blockbuster. New movies flicker onto the screens every weekend, vying for that golden summer title.

Recently, however, the blockbuster has slipped its 20°C boundaries and can be found inhabiting all climes — from winter's *Rain Man* to autumn's *Fatal Attraction*. So, what can we expect for this fall's blockbuster?

Well, one movie destined for success opened Friday the 22nd: *Black Rain*. This impressive action flick stars Michael Douglas as Nick, a semi-ruined, manic New York cop.

Nick has two liabilities: an anti-establishment attitude (the same "us cops gotta stick together" schtick that Eddie Murphy flogged to fame in his Beverly Hills Cop blockbusters), and a younger, less experienced, unnecessary sidekick (we all know what happens to them in movies, don't we?).

As far as action-adventure pictures go this one is pretty predictable, but the gritty, grimy atmosphere is so well-maintained that you don't really mind knowing where the threats will come from, because they still seem threatening. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the person



of Sato, Nick's brilliantly-ported, psychotic death-monger who leaves a trail of severed arteries from the diners of New York to the nightclubs of Japan.

Perhaps this gruesome plot detail, comprised as it is of sequential intentional gross-outs, is responsible for Japan's

being perpetually shrouded in a cinematographic fog: smoke in the alleys, smoke in the clubs, smoke in the underground parking garages. This ominous condition could make one wonder why Japan is called "the land of the rising sun."

Nick, our wonderfully foul-mouthed hero, finds that working in concert with the Japanese police to catch Sato is a nearly impossible task, considering his

own anti-bureaucratic mentality ("It's us against the fucking suits, man"). Part of his inability to connect in Japan he suffers, because according to Nick, "If any one of you monkeys ever had an original idea you'd be so tight you couldn't pull it out of your ass." The clash of cultures is much more eloquently expressed by the scenery: neon signs advertising American products in Japanese, steamy inner-city streets teeming with rickshaws and Subarus, balding Japanese nightclub singers haltingly coughing out "That's Amore" and a gracefully terraced traditional farm with twisty, reedy rivers that turns into a battle zone. By the end of the movie we have been shown what happens when American ideals are superimposed over Japanese tradition.

So, what makes this movie different? Well, it could be the attractively consistent characterization of Nick and his sidekick Charlie. It could be the fun fact that Nick and his love interest Joyce don't get together (awww!). It could be the unexpected moral sub-plot which opens the movie, but which gets predictably resolved by the end. It could even be the thrillingly disgusting special effects — but what I like best is the hilariously vitriolic hatred Nick spews out during his close-ups: when his plans are frustrated by a bureaucratic sheep, Nick snarls, "I usually get kissed before I get fucked." If only it weren't for the misnomer "Black Rain" — "Black Fog" would be more like it.

Student Advocacy Service SEMINAR

Tuesday, October 10, 1989
7:30 PM, Room 318
3rd Floor, SUB

The Student Advocacy Service will be recruiting advocates for the 1989-90 academic session beginning with an information seminar on October 10, 1989. Senior students from all undergraduate programs at Dalhousie, as well as students from graduate and the professional schools who are interested in volunteering as an advocate are encouraged to attend.

For further information, please contact the Director of Student Advocacy Service, Lori Marshall at 424-2205 or drop by Room 404 of the Student Union Building.

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Storm warning

by Joey Goodings

Ray Lyell and the Storm's debut album is average. It's full of songs that blend easily into radio, songs that you may hear hundreds of times without ever knowing who the hell sings it. It's tailor made for radio and I'm sure stations will eat it up.

Lyell has a basic rock and roll style with a country overtone making him sound like a watered-down version of John Cougar Mellencamp. The acoustic guitars, harmonica, and backing vocals give it a nice clean sound that's wholly uncaptivating.

The album's first single, "Another Man's Gun", has a building energy that is drowned out by a bland chorus and drab instrumentation; all the ingredients for a sure hit.

The album shows lyrical optimism in songs such as "Carry Me" and "Cruel Life," depicting the world as a place where the human spirit can eventually triumph over forces that seem to be crushing it. I like his message, but the lyrics lack the poignancy to make the album really speak for people.

The musicianship is nothing impressive with the exception of the Storm's female vocalist, Paula Tessaro, whose colourful melodic voice is the best thing about the album.

There's not much variety on *Ray Lyell and the Storm*, which probably has more to do with the production than the songwriting. It's too much a product for the airwaves. The corny promotional photo of the band in a fake studio storm with Ray Lyell's thumb in his crotch reveals that this band is trying too hard to sell their stuff.

But hey, it's his first album, and it doesn't take much to move from average to unique. I hope he eventually does.

This album is boring. If I can't sleep at night I can put Ray Lyell on and I'm out like a light. But that's just my opinion, and if you're thinking to yourself, "What the hell does this Goodings guy know anyway?" Check this band out at the Misty Moon on October 5-8. If it's a great show you can write to me and tell me, 'cause I won't be there.



This album is boring...