

Watch a collage of issues flash before you on MTV's 'Buzz'

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But don't think MTV has dropped its signature visual frenzy for a staid lecture on "The Issues." It probably took you twice as long to read the above paragraph describing the images as it takes them to flash across the screen.

In fact, in the first five minutes of the show, this is what appears:

A collage made from hundreds of commercials, films and other footage, intercut with quotes from eight people from different countries around the globe, a B'nai B'rith public service announcement, a Cuban man talking about stereotypes, an informational bit about Esperanto, a language developed for universal use, the quote from the Jamaican woman, a quote from singer John Cougar Mellencamp, and a performance clip from a Brazilian band called Sepultura.

"Collage is meant to give the impression of a whole or completion with parts," says Mr. Pellington, who has created many of MTV's collaged image campaigns. His partner, Mr. Klein, has composed 75 percent of MTV's original music.

"We're really influenced by William Burroughs' cut-up theory: mass images, words, sounds are cut up into seemingly random pieces. But there are really meaningful patterns there. It's kind of orchestrated chaos," Mr. Pellington says.

"We take images people know about, but, ah, put them together and they mean something new."

Unlike MTV's typical fare of music videos that invite couch-potatism, Buzz requires some concentration. English subtitles are flashed across the screen when people (including some from English-speaking countries) are quoted. Some of the images are obscured by design elements, or flash across the screen so quickly that they barely register.

"It's a show designed for the mental participation of the viewer," Mr. Pellington says. "It goes to a deeper level of consciousness."

Since arriving at MTV five years ago, Mr. Pellington wanted to create a non-linear show using "short forms" — the bits-and pieces format that defined MTV's look. Mr. Klein had an idea for a global show. The two were paired up 1½ years ago by MTV.

They now work in London with

Too much food for the brain can make your head buzz

By Ed Bark

Information Group of The Dallas Morning News

Watching Buzz is like trying to figure out where these words start and stop.

Translation: Watching Buzz is like trying to figure out where these words start and stop. Moving at warp speed through sounds, images and "data" banks, MTV's globally conscious Buzz makes 30-second commercials seem like documentaries. Wow, 30 seconds on one subject? It seems like an eternity after seeing Buzz render the word "vroom" obsolete. What's going on here? What isn't on here? View Buzz 200 times and you might still be playing catchup. Perhaps perceiving that, MTV has substituted a slightly slower-paced premiere for the originally scheduled whoosh to the 100th power.

But Buzz might be too much too fast for even the hippest of heads. Perhaps perceiving that, MTV has substituted a slightly slower-paced premiere for the originally scheduled whoosh to the 100th power.

requires 65 hours of editing and 35 hours of sound mixing. The total cost is about \$100,000 per episode.

The show — apparently the first of its kind — was created with global syndication in mind. "It's visually and conceptually democratic," Mr. Pellington says.

So far, channels in Australia and Britain plan to air the show. MTV is banking Buzz at an international syndication market in Cannes, France.

"The whole reason we're doing all this is so that MTV in the United States can spend more money on its programming, which translates into higher quality," says Russ Naiman, senior vice president of international syndicated sales at MTV.

"Somewhere along the line we were going to produce a program that was more expensive than MTV could pay for in the United States, so we needed overseas markets. Buzz

is

TV REVIEW

Buzz, 8 tonight, MTV.

In other words, tonight's first of 26 half-hour episodes occasionally allows the mind to focus for as much as 10 seconds on one aspect or another. First image: Al Jolson in black face singing Mammy. The overall theme is worldwide cultural diversity and the need to embrace rather than repress it. Early on, we get a printed supposition: "We like to be with our own kind." The same appearance. The same customs. The same beliefs. (OR SO WE'VE BEEN TOLD.)

Buzz says otherwise. "We are not the world" — the "we" being the West (or, as Jesse Jackson says — succinctly! — racism is "a form of skin worship").

Other celebs — John Cougar Mellencamp, Don Henley, Eric Burdon — add their observations to those of commoners the world 'round. Mr. Henley's quick take on Elvis Presley — "I wish they

seemed the right program to do it with.

"The idea is to invest a lot here and recoup a lot there."

Themes for some of the 25 future shows include time and memory, censorship, fear and danger, the future, happiness, love and philosophy.

Mr. Pellington says that as the format evolves, future episodes will be more "mature."

"It's like a conversation. It takes awhile to figure out where the other guy is coming from. When you do, though, you can establish a dialogue. Once we get the viewers' attention, the shows will be more focused on one subject," he says.

For instance, for the upcoming show on the theme "Time and memory," the global panel is made up entirely of elderly people.

"We want to talk about percept

ions of the future. These people are



it's inviting. You really don't know what's in it. But hopefully, if you're lucky, it goes down good, stays down and you enjoy it. If you're not from Jersey, you might get sick on it."

Societies couldn't have said it any better.

And from the Buzz "data" bank — "Chances that a deep breath inhaled today will contain a molecule of Hitler's breath: 99 in 100."

"We ask real simple questions. They're not, 'What are your political opinions?' They're, 'What are your fears?'" Mr. Pellington says.

A global perspective aimed at young viewers is aided by the youth of its creators. Mr. Pellington is 28, Mr. Klein is 29, and the average age of their staff is 22. Mr. Pellington says Most MTV viewers are between the ages of 18 and 24.

"I accept that television is a drug. That's proven by the fact that there's a TV in 99 percent of American households," Mr. Pellington says. "To me it's how much people say, 'Well, I love it' or, 'I hate it.' I don't want any indifference. Most television is so passive."

Suddenly Twin Peaks like just another episode Valley Buzz is way out of the ordinary. What to make of one should be expected to that just yet. Ask people if seen Buzz and they'd proba

able to say yes or no. End

version — unless you re

lieve that life is best compar

Jersey sub

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