



thieves

freedom



The "orchestrated chaos" of Buzz TV — starting on Channel 4 early evenings from May 4

e're reflecting the speed at which life goes," say the creators of MTV's 'global series', *Buzz* TV, to be screened on Channel 4, Fridays at 6.30pm

from May 4. It's hard to argue. Described by co-creator Mike Pellington as a "thematic global collage" and "orchestrated chaos", the fast and furious format takes in influences from cyberpunk and sci-fi to comics and pop videos. "It's not documentary, it's an impression," says Pellington. "It's like a hit of acid." Encompassing an impressively wide range of footage from all over the world, the series embraces everything from Mexican surf-culture to virtual reality and computer hacking. Though occasionally sacrificing depth of content for the sake of its self-consciously futuristic style, *Buzz* is, nevertheless, thought-provoking television. What makes the series is its focus on "real people", offering the viewer a chance to hear, for example, what an Italian New Yorker has to say about gangsters or what a young Brazilian woman thinks about love and AIDS. "It's people that are the real stars," say the *Buzz* producers, "fuck the pop stars." *Lindsay Baker*

'Buzz'

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global maldistribution of wealth is followed by a lame joke about James Brown's personal wealth), the show is unable to suggest a way of popularizing or transmitting more honest images.

Thus, stereotypical portraits of women are amusingly, if easily, lampooned, but there is no compensatory suggestion of what a more honest portrait would entail. It's as if the show's producers were as afraid of unsettling images of women as the producers of soft drinks.

Still, the show's vitality and creativity shouldn't be underestimated, and "Buzz" is a welcome and rare acknowledgment of the last 25 years of political filmmaking, if nothing else.

Buzz
MTV
Initial Film and Television
Executive Producer Malcolm Gerner
Creators/writers/directors Joe Keim,
Mark Pellington
Producers Ricky Orlan
Initial Airdate: Sunday, April 22, 9-10:30 p.m.

more enlightened than the average MTV viewers.

The episode in question examines national and ethnic stereotypes, using a mixture of videos, interviews, titles, travel film excerpts, commercials, movies and any other piece of imagery it can get its hands on. The target is not only racism or chauvinism, but the viewer's smug self-assurance that he or she does not suffer from cultural blindness.

Aside from being a little too flip for its own good (a graphic about — *continued on page 21*

Cable TV reviews

'Buzz'

By HENRY SHEEHAN

To "Buzz's" credit, this new MTV documentary series is hard to describe. Composed of snippets of film and video that fly across the screen, the show is an obvious descendant of the '60s avant-garde, both formally and politically.

Using a cascade of images, it uses rapid-fire juxtaposition to expose the dishonesty of those same images and thus break down the miasma of misconception that permeates popular visual culture.

Unlikely to attract older viewers, the show may well become a staple of an audience a bit older and a little

What is "Buzz"? Is it a news show?

It's not really meant to be categorizable in any traditional sense. There's a bit of news, there's a bit of art, there's a bit of current affairs, there's a bit of documentary to it.

It's on Fridays in England and on Sundays on MTV in the States. It's a regular TV show. It's edited to be very fast-moving, but it's meant to be watched like a regular TV show.

How is the show organized? Is there a plot?

It's sort of thematic. The first U.S. show is about cultural stereotypes, so people talk a lot about racism or about sexism or about other forms of cultural stereotyping.

It's kind of like meditations on a theme. There are different elements to it; it's through different people's eyes, through different stories, but it does stick to the theme fairly religiously.

How do you get information?

We set up bureaus all over the world. They're not really bureaus in a traditional sense, they're basically just kind of knowledgeable people, people who know what's happening in a city. We've got people in New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Tokyo, Germany, Ghana and Cairo. And these people just call us with information about what's happening. They read newspapers, they go to the movies, they go to the clubs. And they just tell us what it's like in Cairo, for example.

Does your sound track have songs in it?

We're pretty free with [the sound track]. We take all the sound off the interviews we do. We mix it with music both off videos and off records and old commercials and stock footage and make a kind of collage with it.

The show is very sound driven, the sound is pretty important. We spend half our time in sound studios and half our time in video studios.

And that's your way of staying in keeping with the "Music Television" aspect of it?

I don't think it was that planned. But it just happens to be a real colorful rhythmic type of show, so we use a lot of music, we push the rhythm along, we cut to the beat. We do cut it very much like a music video. It's sort of like a music video with content.

What kind of a commitment has MTV made to the show?

We're taping the first 13 now, and we're starting in July with the next 13. We assume it will be 26 shows, and then we'll see what happens. It should definitely establish itself as a hit or a miss by then.

What age group are you looking for?

I would say it's for people who are 14 to 35, but I'm not sure. I don't know many people who are under 14, and I'm not sure if people in the older age group would like it. It's for people who grew up with television.

Does the show have a point of view?

We're trying to show a side [of life] that isn't usually portrayed on TV shows.

We aren't really taking any particular political stands or waving anyone's flag. I think if anything, we're asking people to doubt the flag wavers, to doubt the things that will only tell you what to do and what to think, to doubt advertisers, to doubt TV shows.

Sometimes if you're watching a news show, the newscaster can be saying something which sounds very straightforward but is actually a very subtle way of making you believe one thing or another. You hear things in ads where things are presented in one way, and it's really for the convenience of selling that product, so "Buzz" sometimes mocks this kind of corporate slickness in certain advertisements and certain TV shows and says this kind of TV show can be a bit dangerous.

So "Buzz" looks like a TV show that's a bit dangerous sometimes, because it's trying to point out that TV can be a bit dangerous.

What is your vision about what this program will do for the people who watch it?

We hope it makes them think or wake up a bit. This is not television that is meant to be relaxing or is meant to coddle you. This is television that sticks its hand out of the TV set and shakes you a bit.