

# MTV provides new outlet for music industry, artists

By SARAH OATES  
Senior Staff Writer

First there was radio, a novel invention that for the first time brought entertainment — especially in the form of music — into the American home. Radio could only be listened to, forcing audiences to create mental pictures to go along with what they heard.

After radio came television, an entirely new phenomenon combining the sounds of radio with pictures previously seen only in movie theaters and bringing them both right into the American living room.

Rock 'n roll came along, marking a turning point in radio history. TV was also a part of rock 'n roll, providing an occasional showcase for new artists.

It was only a matter of time before cable TV introduced videotapes to radio music and married them not long after. That union has resulted in one of the most profitable infants in television history, Music Television.

Actually, profitable is an understatement, considering that the Warner-Amex Satellite-owned network, still a baby at two and a half years of age, is broadcast into 18.4 million homes and commands the highest 24-hour rating of any basic cable network, according to the Nielsen Home Video index.

The channel's formula for success is astonishingly simple: it mixes conceptual and concert rock 'n roll videotapes by various artists with interviews, music news and musical movies, all smoothly presented by MTV's five energetic hosts — coyly dubbed "V.J.'s" or video jockeys.

Add to that the fact that MTV is an inexpensive, basic cable service, that it's in stereo and that it's on 24-hours a day, and you have a revolution in the television and music industries.

The network has created a cushy arrangement for itself and artists presented, but sources at the channel refuse to qualify it as a mutual and advantageous dependency.

However, the situation speaks for itself. Artists with enough money to create high-quality videotapes can present their songs in a conceptual, fantasy format, or simply record concert footage. Both types of videos are popular and provide extra exposure for the individual artist or group.

Although the careers of rock luminaries may not soar or falter depending on MTV exposure, aside from submitting videos, many artists wisely have agreed to participate in the channel's unique promotional stunts and appear in commercials touting MTV.

Rock personalities such as Pete Townshend, Billy Idol and The Police have graced the small screen, declaring "I want my MTV!" and contest winners can be seen and heard proclaiming that "People really do win on MTV!"

Audience involvement is an obvious key to MTV's success. The network's many extravagant contests and promotions include: a Hawaiian Holiday with Devo," in which the winner and a few friends vacation with the band, or MTV's "Lost Weekend with Van Halen," in which the winner travels with the band for two days. Winners of MTV's "One Night Stand"

are flown to concerts by big-name groups, such as the Rolling Stones, and back home again the same day.

Other audience participation stunts include the "Friday Night Video Fights," where two popular videos are screened and the audience can call a special number to vote for the most popular one.

Naturally, all of this keeps the targeted audience, the 12 to 34 age group, watching MTV.

So far, MTV has been credited with almost single-handedly ending a four-year record industry slump by creating a resurgence of radio airplay and record sales. An MTV source who requested anonymity, insists the network is not as great a force in determining the success of new groups as some would have it, but industry statistics prove otherwise.

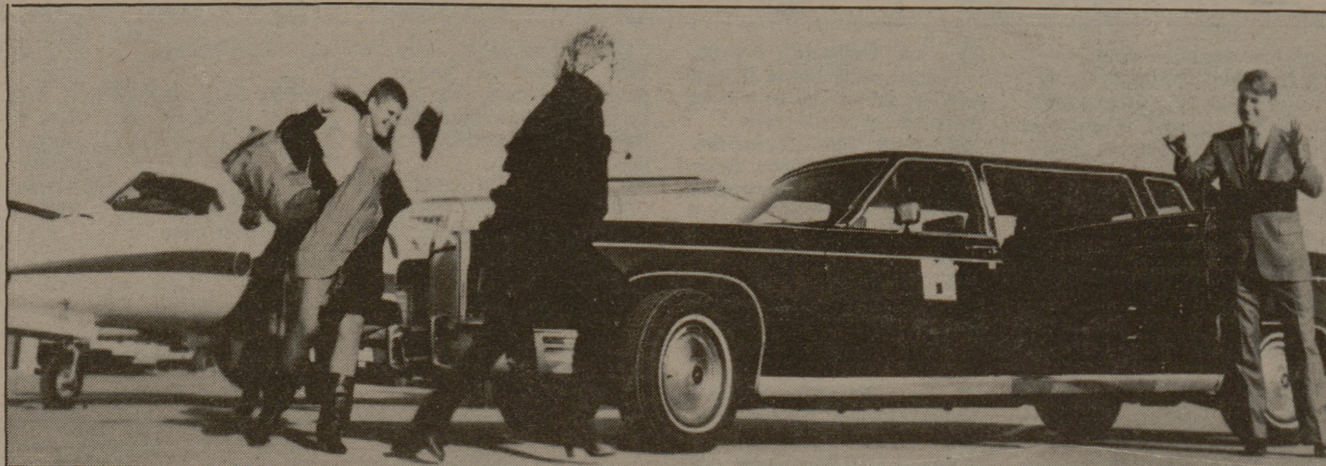
For example, when Duran Duran's debut album came out in the summer of 1981, it just barely made it onto Billboard magazine's Hot 100, but after the band's videos appeared on MTV the following year, their two albums leaped into the Top 10. The rest is music video history.

Other recent discoveries such as singer Cindy Lauper also can be considered MTV "creations." Lauper's video, "Girls Just Want to Have Fun," currently is one of the most popular videos shown on MTV, the single is in the Top 10 and Lauper is the center of a whirlwind of media coverage, with a recent article in LIFE magazine referring to her as "Rock's Red Hot Red-head."

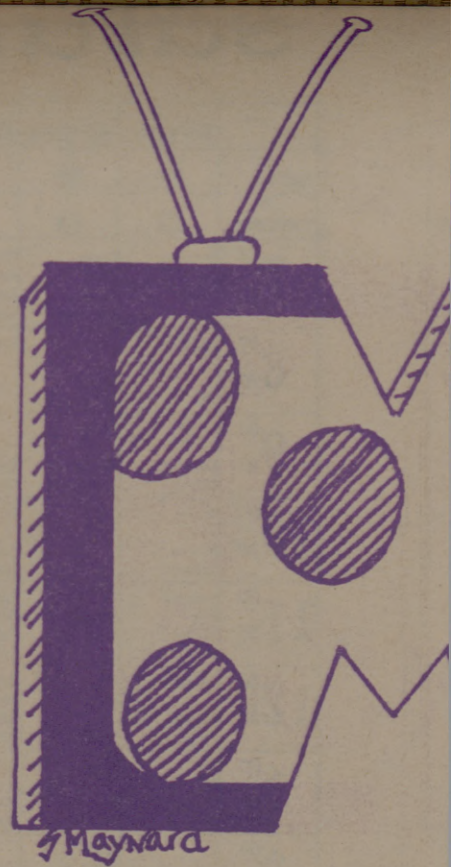
From all of this is apparent  
**See Music Television page 12**



Top to bottom: Billy Idol, Simon Le Bon and Nick Rhodes of Duran Duran and Adam Ant have all been guest VJ's on MTV.



V.J. Nina Blackwood and One Night Stand with Men at Work winner Audrey Zelenko race from Lear Jet to chauffeured limousine.



MTV VJs (Video Jocks) are from left to right, Alan Hunter, Mark