on-line cut took 20 hours.

The music came together smoothly. John Mills-Cockell, at the time doing a show at Toronto Free Theatre, wrote the original score in two days. "It was like a Christmas gift," said Griffiths. Two Rolling Stones songs were used in the show, "Paint It Black" and "Wild Horses", but those aren't the Stones on the soundtrack. Producer Butler put together a sound-alike band and recorded the tunes at Comfort Sound in Toronto – and he says he hasn't met anyone yet who can tell the difference.

Pickford, a Canadian who spent eight years working in Los Angeles for the U.S. television industry, says *Maggie & Pierre* changed his outlook on Canadian production. "It really illustrates what can be done in TV, and what can be done by film personnel in TV." When he was in Hollywood in 1982, says Pickford, "Film people were just starting to realize they'd better learn video if they wanted to continue editing. In the late seventies, video was considered a toy. Only recently has there been recognition (from film people) of its real potential for artistic expression."

First Choice has licenced the show essentially for five years. The pay network has it exclusively the first two years, except for eight playdates on TVOntario in year two. It's available to broadcast TV the third year, and Global has bought one playdate for Ontario. First Choice re-acquires it in years four and five. Video cassette right are available at the end of the first year.

No TV sale has been made to the United States or Europe, though a British distributor, London Films, is handling European sales and Butler travelled to MIP-TV in Cannes this spring to promote the show. Though he says it's "reasonably possible to get all its costs back in Canada," Butler is hopeful *Maggie & Pierre* can also be successful in foreign markets. "It's as handsome as anything produced by BBC or the U.S. networks. I've seen nothing that makes it look pale. The only thing standing in its way on the international market is its subject matter. Some people might feel it's too Canadian for a foreign audience."

If anything disappoints Griffiths, it's public misconceptions of her play. "People who don't know the show think it's tied to current events and assume it's no longer relevant today. I feel the show can surface in five years and be able to stand on its own." And please, says the actress, don't call it satire. "I hate that word and its connotation that the play is spiteful." Director Lavut agrees: the show, subtitled "A fantasy of love, politics, and the media," is not really satire, preferring instead the term romance. "Some of it *is* funny, but it's not an anti-Trudeau diatribe. It's a feminist look at Canadian history." Whatever you choose to call it, if time proves that the only good thing produced by Canadian pay-TV's first year is *Maggie & Pierre,* it's a legacy the whole country can be proud of. ●

Martin Lavut's

Maggie & Pierre

It often seems Canadian television dramas have existed exclusively in the realistic mode, the country's most influential genre being docudrama, those issue-oriented hybrids of fiction and fact which frequently achieve neither. Perhaps that's why the pay-TV adaptation of Linda Griffiths and Paul Thompson's hit play *Maggie & Pierre* feels so refreshingly different: though its subject is undisputedly factual, its approach is decidedly *not* realistic. Expressionistic, poetic, even surreal might better describe this magnificent one-person show starring Griffiths and directed by Martin Lavut.

This TV production has risen impressively to the original material: not since *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* has the English Canadian production industry so skillfully transformed such a hard piece of cultural currency to the screen. In both cases, not surprisingly, the original authors contributed greatly to the success. Linda Griffiths' tremendous resourcefulness as an actress shows fully here as she accomplishes three roles, two of them men, one the Prime Minister of Canada. If that's not enough, as co-author (with Paul Thompson) she has pared down the screenplay to a lean and efficient 75 minutes. Not padded to meet network time requirements, the shortened stage script achieves a taut TV rhythm of its own.

For director Lavut, whose film *Bruce Cockburn: Rumours of Glory* was that cinematic rarity, the compelling rock concert documentary, *Maggie & Pierre* represents another triumph in a perilous genre. Plays can start slowly: the audience has paid good money for their seats and no one's going to walk out after 15 minutes. On television, though, especially cable TV where converters have spawned a corps of "zappers" ready to change channels at the slightest provocation, programs must grab the audience immediately and hold them. How? It can "jolt" them with titullating bits – some sitcom analysts prescribe a success formula of one jolt every seven seconds – or do it the old-fashioned way, mixing quality writing and performance with compelling cinematic technique.

Lavut has taken the hard road. An avid photographer, he has placed great emphasis on the production's visual approach, designing fluid camera moves and striking lighting contrasts more sophisticated than those seen in the average Canadian feature. He has relied only minimally on realism. The characters evoke the *real* Maggie & Pierre, but verisimilitude is not the intent: when Griffiths delivers Pierre's convention speech, the campaign posters are of her, not the real Pierre Trudeau. Careful attention to detail has been taken in the art direction and set design, as with Maggie's little-girl-perfect pink bedroom or the interiors of 24 Sussex Drive, with the furniture slightly larger than life-size, where the clutter of books, statues, and an inordinate number of portraits smother the scene with historical fixity, evoking the oppressiveness of power.

The stage show's appealing character transformations have been stunningly accomplished for TV. With the camera on her bare feet as she rolls out of bed, Maggie steps into black oxfords, then into men's trousers, and as the camera pans to her face she has become Henry, trenchcoat on, microphone in hand, pursuing Pierre. In the press club scene, the characters of Maggie and Pierre change back and forth in the same perfectly credible shot through the magic of lighting and Griffiths' performance. For these marvellous transitions alone the show is worth seeing: they indicate a creative refusal not to fall back on the full conventions of realism.

It's ironic the production revives the story's original events on television, the medium which more than any shaped the national consciousness of Pierre and Margaret's public images. Television, which borrows dramatic techniques for its tidy little 90-second newsclips, is plundered by drama for source material: the confrontation on the steps between Henry and Pierre over the War Measures Act is lifted right off the six o'clock news. But the news media's pat assumptions clearly aren't enough to satisfy the intellectual curiosity of Griffiths and Thompson, who move the text a step further – into an imaginary world whose hypotheses nevertheless bear a sharp resemblance to the viewer's own personal experiences.

Though it makes the points that sex is political and politics sexy, the show ultimately succeeds through its hard, unflinching look at the discrepancy between how Canadian society exists and how it perceives itself. It stabs the country's complacency, narcissism, and guilt. Experimenting with "lifestyle", Maggie wonders what to do with her life: "Maybe I'll open a school for retarded children. Maybe I'll join the revolution and the Black Panthers. Maybe I'll drop out and do lots of really good drugs." Whatever her choice, her conscience will torment her: "Margaret, you still sound like a phony." Her insecurity and self-absorption, typically Canadian, leaves her more worried of what others think than how she feels about herself.

Pierre does not share her insecurities. As an angry young man in Paris, he rises at six each morning to splash his body cold water. "Why? To be strong. What for? To fight. Who? Myself, and whoever else dares me." His determination and individuality bring him to power, but the play asks, What kind of person wants to be Prime Minister? One who envisions a Just Society which will "cast down the totems, break the taboos", or one, intoxicated by the job's uninhibited adulation, shrugs at the camera and says "It's hard to resist."

Maggie and Pierre's May-December marriage ideally could achieve a synthesis of complementary opposites, yet the play offers no grand vision of love. The real terms of their marriage are embodied in Pierre's motto, "Reason Over Passion", and the emotional chasm between them is manifested in Maggie's speech in the garden. "It looks like wings beating underneath the water," she says of raindrops falling on a pond. "Pierre would say, 'No, Margaret, it's just the intersection of the wind and the rain causing that configuration on the surface. But I know it's wings."

If Maggie is Passion and Pierre Reason, the third party, Henry the journalist, is Judgment. A passive recorder but active moralizer, Henry fills many functions. On one level, the story can be said to be played out in Henry's imagination, neatly taking the pressure off the show's use of real people and real events. With Henry, the play can explore the parasitic/symbiotic relationship between politicians and journalists, as when Pierre solicits marital advice from Henry. "Don't you have someone else you can talk to, like a friend?" asks the uncomfortable journalist. "No," responds Pierre, surprised at the question.

Canada's mythmakers and pop heroes have more often been journalists than writers and actors (who's *really* the bigger star, Barbara Frum or Gordon Pinsent?) so it's apt that Henry explains the country's attraction to Pierre: he wasn't what Canadians were like, he was what they wished they were like. "Pierre Trudeau? Oh yeah, just another typical Canadian. French? Sure, most of us are *bilingue parfait.* Sexy? It's the long winters." But after the October Crisis, Henry supplies the ammunition to turn this adulation into hatred. "We believed that this was one country that wasn't backed up by guns. He rubbed our noses into the fact that it was." But what exactly was betrayed, freedom or illusion?

After their marriage collapses, Maggie runs off to (where else?) the United States to "have fun" while Pierre shrouds himself in solitude and prayer. In these final scenes, as Pierre bares his soul to Henry and Maggie delivers a searing indictment on hypocrisy from the Studio 54 dance floor, Griffiths makes the viewer confront her characters' humanity, forcing the audience to suspend moral judgment. She turns the tables, and suddenly it's clear that Pierre and Maggie have been standing in for a vast segment of Canadian society, affluent, complacent, bored, who live in a world of twice-a-year tropical vacations and of running off to Europe with "Five thousand dollars of Daddy's money", a world "run by Mums and Dads in their rented tuxedos and one long dress" where the kids sneak off to the bathroom to smoke a joint.

"Oh, we're so together, aren't we, ladies? We're so on top of it all," says Maggie to her legion of accusers, her voice wicked with sarcasm (her indictment no doubt influences Henry's decision to abandon journalism.) As Maggie dances at Studio 54, oblivious to her detractors, she has finally achieved freedom from the guilt that so tortured her youth. But she has paid her price, and her journey has led only to that den of narcissism, the disco. "Which do you think is my best feature: my legs... or my bum?" asks kinky Maggie, and the audience is allowed the illusion they're off the hook.

The play ends where it began, at a pawn shop under the bridge where Henry now makes his home, the TV set in the window playing the national anthem (the NFB's *Oh Canada* film, no less). The camera pulls back to reveal the crew, sets, and lights: a post-modern admission of the artifice. On the soundtrack, mad Henry's voice rambles: "An amnesia is spreading over the land... But I'll remember." Given the quality, strength, and imagination of this remarkable TV production, audiences will remember, too.

Bruce Malloch ●

MAGGIE & PIERRE **d.** Martin Lavut **p.** Rick Butler **sc.** Linda Griffiths, with Paul Thompson **orig. mus. & comp.** John Mills-Cockell **a.d.** Gerry Wilkinson **creative cons.** Paul Thompson **orig. prod.** Theatre Passe Muraille **art. d.** Charles Dunlop **cost. des.** Mary Jane McCarty **make-up** Shonagh Jabour **hair** Judy Cooper-Sealy, Ivan Lynch **props.** Enrico Campana **asst. props.** Gerry Wilkinson **dance choreo.** Norrey Drummond **p. man.** Jane Reid **p. sup.** Greg Copeland **staging sup.** Don Mortimer **light. cons.** Barney Stewart **light d.** Adrian Goldberg **light. ops.** Bruce Whiteford, Tom Fennessey **tech. d.** Ed Yen **audio sup.** John McEwen **boom** Gord Chakra **sd. efx.** Ralph Cole, Roger Harris, Morgan Earl **cam.** Simon Dalrymple, Les Medon **video** Eric Posner, Richard Gundersen **VTR** Peter Light **post-p. cons.** Linda Pickford **p. assts.** Tim Sabourin, Bob Sorger, Ron French **TV assts.** Pat McEleney, Derwyn Barker **grip** Michael O'Connor **sup. ed.** Terry Pickford **post audio** Greg Zekkou **sp. tnx.** John Ryan **studio rec.** Comfort Sound **p.c.** Tapestry Productions, produced with the participation of the Canadian Film Development Corporation **dist.** First Choice Canadian Communications Corp. **running time** 75 min. **Lp.** Linda Griffiths.