

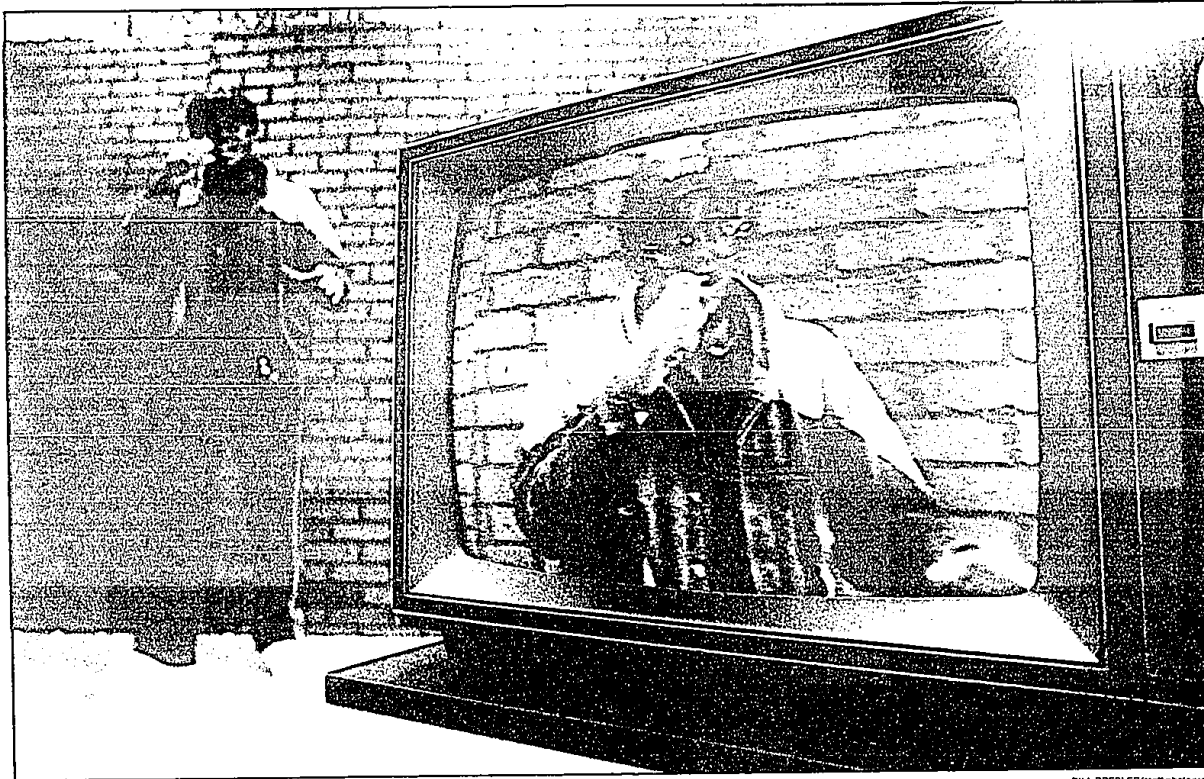
# STREET SCENE

Richard Loch coordinator/591-2300

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BILL BRESLER/staff photographer

Ruol Lavender croons Lionel Ritchie's "Say You, Say Me" at Unique Television at Northland Mall in Southfield, one of several local recording studios that let the average person record his or her own music video.

## TV tunes

### Everyday people turn rock-video stars

By Brian Lyseight  
staff writer

Harold Dickson wants to be a rappin' superstar.

"I've been rappin' since I'm 16. Now I'm 18. I really wanna make it to the top," he said.

He writes his own words. His songs speak of "streets, girls and love," he said.

Dickson spoke a moment after he had cut his first video. The project took all of one-half hour. It cost him \$30, which he plunked down because he wanted a video to show somebody — talent scouts or agents in the music business.

He went to Unique Television at Northland Mall in Southfield to make the video.

The project began when he recorded his words on top of a UTV beat track of bass and drums. With the audio tape made, he moved to UTV's video studio, where he mouthed the words of the audio recording while a camera rolled.

TWO STORES IN metro Detroit — UTV and Guest Artist Recording and Video Studios in Farmington Hills — are bringing music video production to the masses. They took production out of Hollywood and into the shopping mall and made it affordable.

Granted, these videos won't make the one-gloved man look bad, and they aren't Steven Spielberg productions.

But they are relatively easy and

**"If they can count to four, we can make them sound respectable."**

— Sheldon Rott

Guest Artist Recording and Video Studios

relatively cheap. And if it's true that everybody wants to be a star, one of these numbers may provide the most direct path to stardom. You don't have to sing well or read music, but it helps if you can keep a beat.

At either store, you pick a song, preferably a familiar one, and are provided with headphones and a sheet with words and music.

Your song selection plays

through the earphones — music only. After a dry run with a store employee who directs you from behind the counter or through the earphones, you sing the words into a microphone.

You can stop there — take the audio and run — or get filmed while singing.

The stores' owners say that although some pros come in, most of their customers are good-humored

amateurs having fun or serious amateurs who will use their recording to get their foot in that mythical door.

"IF THEY CAN count to four, we can make them sound respectable," said Sheldon Rott, whose wife, Carol, runs Guest Artist studios.

If they can't carry a tune? No problem, said Rott. Store employees can turn up music and echo to bury the vocal track.

UTV opened two months ago at Northland Mall. Two partners, one an engineer, the other a business expert, call the project an experiment that has gone well so far. They declined to give their name for this story, saying it might jeopardize their daytime corporate jobs.

The store has 1,200 musical tracks, including rock, country, pop, gospel and big band tunes. But UTV has been deluged by the rappers like Harold Dickson.

"It appears that the women are into singing stuff, and the guys are into rap," said one of the owners, who added that Detroit is one of the rap capitals of the world.

UTV responded with three rap

tracks which vary in rhythm from fast to medium to slow. Unlike the singers, the rappers record their own words to the music track.

Detroit is also the gospel capital of the world, and many gospel groups and individual singers also record there. Some groups bring their own music tapes and do only the video.

UTV IS SET UP to have fun though, so anyone can come in to make a video, said manager Sandra Campbell.

"It's like singing in the shower," Campbell said. "Everyone sings in the shower."

While tape quality is pretty good at these shopping mall studios, it is not equal to professional recording or film studios.

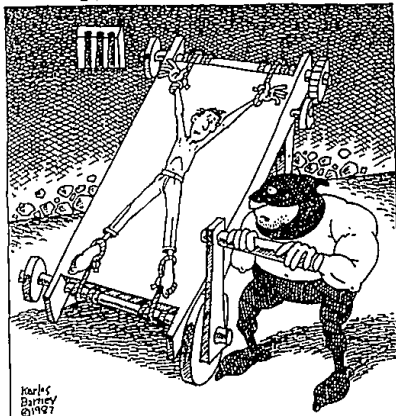
A basic video — Beta or VHS — is \$30 at UTV. A cassette tape along with the videotape is an extra \$3.50.

There are other extras. Rappers can get synthesizer riffs added to

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### R.U. Syrius

Karlos Barney



"You know what I hate most about this? All my pants will have to be altered!"

## Finnish hospitality can knock tourists down to the carpet

By Iris Sanderson Jones  
special writer

There is something about staying in Seppa Summanen's hotel in Pieksamaki, Finland, that gives me a mild hangover.

It may be lying face down on the carpet drinking champagne under the table with flowers, candles and small Finnish and American flags around me. (Read on: This is not quite what it seems.)

Maybe it's the jellied vodka eaten with a spoon or the shot glass of Koskenkorva, a vodka-like drink sold only in Finland. Seppa's rule is that you must drink one glass of Koskenkorva with every crayfish, and the crayfish are small.

Whatever it is, I am in exactly the right place for a cure: the sauna. Not with Mr. Summanen, of course. The

Finns don't sauna coed except as a family.

SEPPA SUMMANEN is the general manager of the Hotel Savonsolmu in Pieksamaki, in the lake district of Finland, four hours by train north-east of Helsinki. You've probably never heard of Pieksamaki unless you are one of the thousands of Finnish families that emigrated from Finland to Michigan, or unless you tap your toes to that popular Finnish song "Blues on the Pieksamaki Railroad Station."

Most Americans touch down briefly in Helsinki on the Baltic Sea to the south or in Lapland, land of the midnight sun and the reindeer to the north. But very few go where the Finns and other Europeans go, to the huge network of lakes in the middle.

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MICKY JONES

The waiter joins the dinner guests under the table for a taste of birthday cake during one of the wacky special programs at the Hotel Savonsolmu in Pieksamaki, Finland.

