



Baez during workshop at Mariposa festival: film is a triumph of subtlety, a model of restraint.

A beautiful film on Mariposa

By LESLIE MILLIN

THE CBC, which all too often has strained mightily to produce all too little in the way of a variety show, seems without too much effort to have produced a very fine film.

Mariposa: A Folk Festival is the first 60-minute production the CBC has commissioned from David Acomba. Obviously, it must not be the last.

That folk festival on the Toronto Islands was somehow a strange and sweet thing in a summer when similar musical bashes turned into overcrowded, overwrought melees that did no credit to the music that supposedly was at their centre.

Mariposa was quite a different thing, and Acomba's success is perhaps best measured by the fact that his filmed version of the folk festival is a more entertaining thing than the festival itself, if one is to believe the testimony of those who visited the islands during those three days.

The folk festival was not overwhelmed with stars, although it had good, substantial performers. Joan Baez and **Joni Mitchell** were the strongest participants—particularly Joan Baez.

Acomba used these two performers as the glue to hold the show together, **Joni Mitchell** toward the end and Joan Baez splashed through from the beginning whenever the pace of some other artist faltered.

What he has held together is fascinating stuff:

long, lovely shots of the islands at dawn; children reacting as only they can to the strange folk festival scene around them; a kid sleeping on the beach; a workshop in the pouring rain, in a hut rudely built with stacked picnic tables.

It is a beautiful film, strongly composed.

To watch it is to be reminded of the deft strokes of a master bricklayer, who can put together a wall with motions that would seem more appropriate to a painter, but with results delightfully tangible and pleasantly rough-textured to the touch.

Compared with the heavy-handed approach taken by the producers of the film Monterey Pop, which chronicled a pop festival not too dissimilar, Mariposa: A Folk Festival is a triumph of subtlety, a model of restraint.

Since the sound is irrevocably attached to so much of the film (rather than being created specially to enhance it), the assembly job had to be much harder to obtain the sort of effect Acomba wanted.

But he achieved it; and the sound weaves through the film like a streak of black through a Mexican blanket: essential, and not to be denied.

Acomba has faith in his creation; he is the first producer I ever heard of who gave himself a byline right at the start: By David Acomba.

The pride is justified. The show is on the CBC tomorrow at 9 p.m. and it is the best depiction of Mariposa you are likely to see.