

# with Divine

in the world almost (almost because I'm a man) and I would come out having a modelling fit and then answer questions about acting, which I thought took a lot of balls. That was our routine.

He would also help me with my first club act in San Francisco. I would push out a shopping cart. There was ground beef and fish and a telephone book. I would spin the fish around and rub them all over my body and then throw them into the audience. They would break open and splatter all over people. It was a horrible mess. Then I'd throw ground beef at the people, and then I'd rip the telephone book in half. Three guys all dressed in black would come out and lie down head to foot, I would walk over top of them and squat over their faces and flash-bulbs would go off. Then I would answer questions. This was my nightclub act at the time.

**Gateway:** This must have been very racey, over 10 years ago, versus today, 1986.

**D:** Yes, it's come around now. People used to sit there with their mouths just open — especially if they got hit by a fish. When I did my first play in New York I played a dyke matron in a women's prison. One convict had a pet chicken, I find the chicken and in the next scene I go into my office with a cooked chicken on my finger and I pull it's leg off and eat it, and throw the chicken into the audience. One night it hit a man with a suede coat on, and the producers had to buy him a new coat — five hundred dollars!

**Gateway:** So you were well received off-Broadway and on the London stage?

**D:** Oh yeah. I got rave reviews in London. I used to have them memorized. But I've had better ones since!

**Gateway:** Do you have any plans to work with Waters again soon?

**D:** It all depends on the script. If he's going to do a *Pink Flamingos 2* then no I'm not really interested. I think I'd be going backwards. I can't speak for John but for me I don't really feel it's the right thing to do at this particular time in my career. I think John's a brilliant writer. He's one of my favorite screenwriters, and directors, and he's one of my dearest friends.

**Gateway:** Is the rumour about a CBS TV series true?

**D:** All these rumours! I'd love to do a TV series. There are some people in Hollywood who are quite interested in me. But at this point that's as far as it goes.

**Gateway:** I was wondering how any of the major networks would ever have the guts to put Divine in a series. I could see it on *Showtime* perhaps . . .

**D:** Oh, you'd be surprised. I've been up for major TV shows. They've usually been killed by the head of the individual network at the last minute. This is the same problem I've had right throughout my career. But now, many of the studio heads have changed and are young men and women who were in fact big fans of *Pink Flamingos*. Which is great for me! There are in fact quite a few shows I could get on at present.

**Gateway:** A *Dynasty* appearance perhaps?

**D:** (laughs) I'm not going to name them.

**Gateway:** I recall your well-publicized ban from *Top of the Pops* in London. Have you appeared on that show since your first time?

**D:** No. But one of my records was on the charts and they did cover it. They just showed parts of the video.

**Gateway:** I was surprised by the producer's decision. You just sang the song, you made no suggestive gestures. Boy George had appeared on the show in drag, and no one protested. It seems people were offended by fat!

**D:** That's what I said too. But I thought 'some of the people who watch it are fatter than I am and sit home on their fat asses watching television.' They're the very ones who complain! They had 12,000 complaints and they say about 10 million watch the show. That's not a very great ratio. However, my record sales doubled the next day! The only people who were ever banned from *Top of the Pops* were The Sex Pistols, Frankie Goes to Hollywood, the Beatles, and myself. So I felt this wasn't bad company to keep, when it goes down in history.

**Gateway:** You travel a lot. Do foreign customs ever give you hassles?

**D:** Only in Canada.

**Gateway:** Really.

**D:** Once in Germany, and another time in Sweden.

**Gateway:** You're riding a real wave of popu-

larity right now. I'm wondering where you see yourself in ten years.

**D:** I'm going for it. Right to the top. Why not? all I can do is not make it.

**Gateway:** One could say you already have. You're quite a cult phenomenon.

**D:** Oh, but I want more than that. I want Oscars, Golden Globes, Grammy's, I mean why not? If somebody had told me five or six years ago that I'd have Gold and Platinum records I'd have said they were crazy because I didn't sing. But now I've got them on the wall, and if someone had said that I'd make a movie with Kris Kristofferson or Genevieve Bujould I'd have told them they were crazy. These are big stars. My final scene was shot with Kris — I got to get shot by him.

**Gateway:** I'd like to see you get an Oscar.

**D:** So would I. And I will, if I have anything to say about it. Its been a dream of mine since I was a kid.

**Gateway:** As an outsider, what do you think of Edmonton — it's one of Canada's most conservative cities.

**D:** You wouldn't have thought so from the crowd last night! I haven't had a chance to see much of Edmonton. I'm going out to that big shopping mall today. I've heard so much about it.

**Gateway:** David Byrne even mentions the mall in his new book, *True Stories*. He discusses this weird mall with rivers running through it complete with submarines and sharks.

Some people are offended by your act. They consider you a bit of a freak — a novelty only because you're overweight and obviously homosexual. How do you react to this?

**D:** They're assholes (laughs). These are people who are uptight about their sexuality. Not everyone's going to like me. But I'm not doing my act for everyone, I'm doing it for those who like it. Some people don't like Dianna Ross, and all she does is get up and sing pop songs. I don't think I'm a freak, I'm just another entertainer who happened to do something no one else had. People don't know how to label me. Unfortunately, it seems everything has to have a label. I've always said that I'm a character actor, I play different characters. It just so happens that the characters that I was given to play were women. I don't knock these roles — they've given me a large following.

**Gateway:** Boy George has said a few remarks about you to the press. These negative comments surprised me.

**D:** Especially when he'd be sitting in every show I did in London. Then he'd go on TV and say that he couldn't stand me — well then why did he buy a ticket for my show? I've heard through people that he's actually a big fan. Basically, he just said those things to protect his image.

**Gateway:** Which he's now blown with this whole heroin thing. Can you tell me about your latest film?

**D:** Well, I don't want to tell you too much. It's titled *Medium Rare*. The director is Paul Madden. I have two roles, a man and a woman. Meatloaf will also star. We start shooting in September in New Jersey. I don't want to tell you any more or it'll ruin it.

**Gateway:** You've been interviewed by almost everyone. How did David Letterman react to you?

**D:** I've been on *Late Night* three times, twice by myself and once with John. David is actually a fan of John's. He was always very nice to me. We did have a problem last time I was on, that's why I haven't been back. Generally, I sing a song in drag and then I'm interviewed in my normal clothes — they overran the show and didn't do the interview. It seemed quite purposeful, so since then we've reached no agreement on my return to *Late Night*.

**Gateway:** Will you do Joan Rivers?

**D:** She's already asked. We were set for the *Tonight Show* however, she had that split with Carson.

**Gateway:** And Merv Griffin?

**D:** He was the nicest of all. He introduced me and said wonderful things about me. The first commercial came on and he said 'now you stay right here next to me for the whole show'. It was supposed to be a three minute interview. It ran for seventeen minutes and I had fifty-eight minutes on the air.

**Gateway:** Our very own Alan Thicke?

**D:** He's quite good. He's got his own comedy show now.

Divine's latest film *Trouble in Mind* plays the Princess Theatre September 5-6.

## Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is unwanted attention of a sexual nature, often with an underlying element of threat or coercion. Sexual harassment may occur between employer-employee, between professor-student, or between student-student.

If you need advice about a sexual harassment situation you can seek help from your association or union, or you can reach any member of the President's Advisory Committee on Sexual Harassment (PACSH) for confidential advice by phoning 432-TALK. The members of PACSH are:

(academic staff) Anne McLellan,  
Associate Dean of Law and  
Chair of PACSH

Paul Hagler,  
Faculty of Rehabilitation  
Medicine

Dianne Kieren,  
Faculty of Home Economics

(non-academic staff) Tim Brockelsby,  
Department of Planning  
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Ellen Kvill,  
Office of the Comptroller

(undergraduate students) Marguerite Storbo,  
Faculty of Law

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Faculty of Science

(graduate students) Pat Valentine,  
Faculty of Education

David MacKinnon  
Faculty of Education

The PACSH's office is located in 2-1 University Hall. You can drop in anytime from 8:30 - 4:30 to talk with Ellen Solomon, Coordinator of PACSH, or to be put in touch with a member of PACSH.

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432-TALK  
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