

ENTERTAINMENT

You watch Dynasty, I know you do

by Olga Jogodnik

It is impossible to talk about Louis Del Grande, star of *Seeing Things*, the critically acclaimed series now in its third season with CBC-TV, without mentioning how much he detests that Canadians leave here to go to the U.S. to become "rich and famous."

In fact, that is all Mr. Del Grande talked about, or returned to talk about in the forty-odd minutes I was held captive by him. Literally and figuratively. I mean I did try to get out of that office, just once, because it was beginning to be a little boring listening to him talk about my leaving Canada to seek my fortunes elsewhere. Really. As though I would even *THINK* of deserting beloved Canada for a greener, warmer pasture, say, in L.A., where Johnny Carson lives. Where Elvis Presley once drew breath. Where Eddie Murphy is making millions. Just think of it.

Seriously, though, and Del Grande's aura is pervasive even days later; recalling that talk, it makes one angry at the mere suggestion that we Canadians would dare to squander our extraordinary talents—comedic talents especially—across the border. But that is what we are doing, says Del Grande effusively, in slightly mocking anger.

"Margaret Meade would kill you if she heard you say you want to leave the country. Look at Norman Jewison and Mordecai Richler. They've come back." (And they're glad they did, I add rhetorically). "Don't think that being rich and famous is all there is to it," he says. (What else is there, I ask? Loudly).

"Aren't you angry at the situation? Aren't you aware of what's happening in your culture?" I am. "All you people want (university students) is to get your green card and head for glory. You feel as though you are inferior (Canadians) and you act it out. Don't you think it's weird that you're living other peo-



Louis Del Grande, star of CBC's *Seeing Things*, sandwiched between Martha Gibson (left) and Janet-Laine Green (right).

ple's dreams? (American dreams). You're filled with self-loathing."

"Yet," he says, "all you have to do," pointing to several video cassettes of upcoming *Seeing Things* programs, "is go out there with a camera and do the same thing I'm doing. Know how much those are worth?" "Millions?" I ask, incredulously. "Right."

"You are psychotic, like the self-loathing Irish, self-destructive, and filled with major mass media bullshit, just like the blacks in the U.S.," says Del Grande, even as I think he's given up the argument. But there's more.

"I bet all of you watch *Dynasty*," he says, and when I contradict, he asks, "you watch

Dynasty?" No, I don't. (I think he's angry that people are watching *Dynasty* and not his series which is 'Made Canadian' — just an educated guess). "Well, anyway, *SOMEBODY'S* watching *Dynasty*!"

Calmly, Del Grande states: "Marshall McLuhan said that T.V. is as dangerous as L.S.D. (I agree). Don't you people know when you're being raped? You're sick, you're proving that you are in dire need of teaching by Americans? yes, if necessary. I'm telling you something that may sound hyperbolic, is filled with hyperbole, but is something I'm very serious about," he says. (Look it up for yourself—I had to).

Taking a deep breath, I ask tentatively, looking at his bald pate, "what do you think about the notion that you may be considered a sex symbol?" He answers: "I'm not worried or concerned about being a sex symbol. I'm forty-two years old. Cynicism is a part of your life," he says, looking at me. Well, it was worth a try. Flattery, I mean.

"The disintegration of the family is what I am concerned with" he says. "And many other things." Drugs? "People who take drugs are people without imagination, with the mentality of accountants. I'm against drugs personally but not against accountants taking them. They can use some imagination. Other people who take drugs usually end up in straitjackets. I've worked with some of them and I've seen it. Don't do it."

About politics. "The Prime Minister—frankly, I don't think much about politicians—they should all be on *Dynasty*. It's a major cultural influence. Subtly convincing people to get their own—about poor people pulling up their boot straps when they've already pulled them up as far as they'll go."

What's next on his immediate agenda, I ask. "I'm writing a satirical book on fame and celebrities," he says, "so I won't have to vomit all over the interviewers." (I grab my coat).

Outside in the office, I ask the women at their desks, "Is he always like this?" From the other room, Del Grande shouts, "Only with college kids." How's that for a finale?

If Mr. Del Grande is only half as amusing as *Seeing Things* as he was in person, I'd say you were getting the thrill of a lifetime watching the show. Actually, I have seen it a couple of times myself and I think it's a pretty funny and interesting show—a little far-fetched to have a detective solve crimes because he has second sight, but what the heck—it's O.K. for a Canadian show!



Some highlights:

Friday

- 7 pm Alanis Obomsawin and her film *Incident at Restigouche*
- 9 pm *Missing*
- 9 pm *When The Mountains Tremble.*

Saturday

- 1 pm *Distant Thunder*
- 4 pm *First Contact*
- 7 pm Lillian Allen and her dub poetry
- 8:30 Central America films
- 9 pm *Rockers, a reggae film*

Sunday

- 1 pm *Born in Flames*
- 4:30 *Strategic Trust: Making of a Nuclear Free Palau*
- 7 pm *Hanna K*
- 7 pm *Aguirre: the Wrath of God*

Women Around the World

From 1 pm Saturday and Sunday, films from India, Senegal, Peru, Latin America, Nicaragua and other countries.

Look for the 16 page program

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