



Tracey Ullman

Before she was a fabulous comedy chameleon, Tracey Ullman was a teen dancer touring with a gaggle of chorus boys. In her variety shows—the 1987–1990 Fox series *The Tracey Ullman Show* (which spawned *The Simpsons*) and HBO's *Tracey Takes On...*, Ullman has “become” a gay male flight attendant, a lesbian professional golfer, an adorable adolescent with two gay dads. This year Ullman is teaming with Carol Burnett in a new TV version of *Once Upon a Mattress*. And on May 14 HBO presents *Tracey Ullman: Live & Exposed*, a smashing stand-up show that tells the whole story of Ullman's performing life. —Michael Giltz

Live & Exposed makes it clear you missed performing to an audience.

God bless HBO for letting me do this, letting me reenact stuff from when I was 6. It made me realize I've always done basically what I did on my mother's windowsill.

You got a big dose of “gay” back in your dancing days.

Did I say the word “gay” enough in the show? Gay, gay, *gay!* [*Trilling*] That was the dance world. I had so much fun getting out of my house and going to Berlin when I was 16. They were a big family, and they all took care of me. It was an astonishing time. Berlin was amazing, decadent, and fun. It was an oasis then. Now it's horrible.

Any chance you'll tour with this? Like *Lena Horne: The Lady and Her Music*?

If I did want to do a short run onstage, there's so much more I could put in, like my experiences with Meryl Streep. [*Out of nowhere*] And when are we going to get the gay channel?

There's one in Canada.

I know, I saw it. Why don't we have that here? It's going to happen. You've got the Korean channel and the Hindu channel.

There's one gay person you still hold a grudge against—the theater director who you thought pointed to you at an audition when you were a teen. He said, “No, no, no, no, no!” He wanted the blond girl next to you.

I'll never forget the humiliation, you horrible '70s English queen with your clipboard and your bugly stuffed willy! I always remember those guys—they used to call each other Gladys and Daisy. That was when they did gay talk. No one does that anymore because you don't have to.

It seems almost every decade you give us a variety show. We're about due for another one, aren't we?

I guess so. I'm a bit more ready for an Angela Lansbury *Murder, She Wrote*-type sedentary series. She'd pop in at the beginning. “There's been a murder at the local theater, Jessica.” And then people took over and she came in at the end. ■