



## Tracey Ullman

**B**efore 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. ■