

# Queen for a Day

**T**he *Madness of King George* features a number of striking contributions: Nigel Hawthorne repeats his exceptional stage performance as the loopy king; the usually handsome Rupert Everett pads himself out and dons a horrendous wig to play the snitty, usurping Prince of Wales; theater director Nicholas Hytner (*Miss Saigon*; *Carousel*) makes his film debut. And while the guys have all gotten their share of attention, it's **Helen Mirren**—who has a small but pivotal role as

George's adoring, long-suffering queen—whom everyone wants to talk to. "I just loved to get dressed up in those clothes after wearing police-lady clothing," she exclaims, referring to her much-lauded portrayal of Detective Chief Inspector Jane Tennison on the popular British series *Prime Suspect*, the reason for Mirren's popularity with the press. "I got to wear a lot of very, very big dresses—



big dresses and major, big hair. They were all specially made at vast expense, many of them with antique material." Mirren hopes to come to the New York stage sometime in '95, perhaps with *A Month in the Country*, the play she recently performed in London. But first comes more police work: She's currently in the middle of shooting three more two-hour stories for *Prime Suspect*. Dealing with stories of political corruption and missing children isn't quite as glamorous as playing a queen, however. "We were shooting outside St. Paul's Cathedral at six or seven on a Sunday morning," she says. "We were driving round in this ridiculous pink-and-gold coach for shot after shot. And I think the tourists thought we were the real thing." **MICHAEL GILTZ**