

"Anna doesn't give a damn what people think," says Donna Murphy

Theater

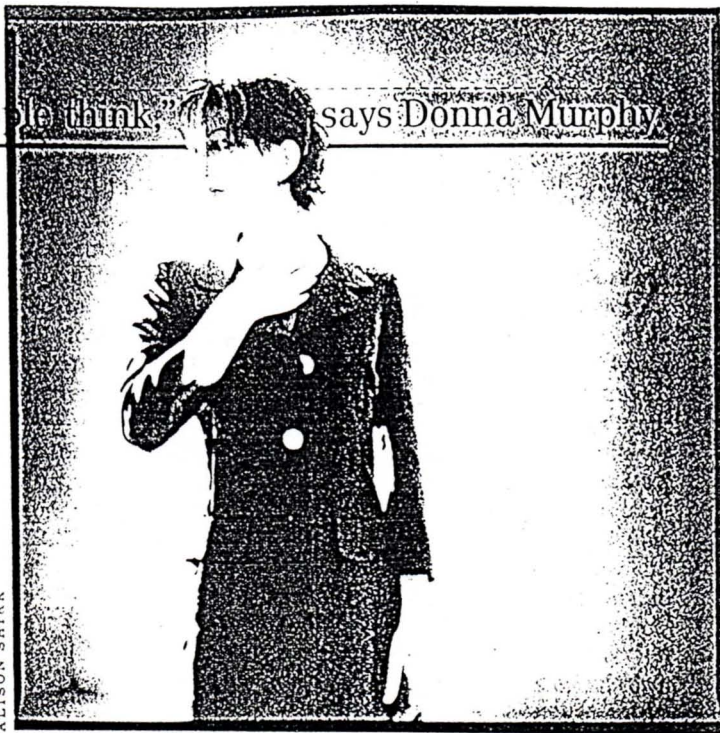
Murphy's Law

ANNA, THE PRETTY AND CHARMING English tutor in *The King and I*, seems worlds apart from Fosca, the dour, proud, and fiercely obsessive center of Stephen Sondheim's 1994 play *Passion*. But actress Donna Murphy sees their similarities. "Ultimately, Anna doesn't give a damn what people think either," points out Murphy, who currently stars on Broadway in the Rodgers and Hammerstein classic.

Murphy won a Tony as Fosca, and she has happily watched that character's most piercing moment—the song "Loving You"—turn into a gay standard. Friends asked her to sing the number (which begins, "Loving you is not a choice, it's who I am") at their commitment ceremony. "A number of friends who are gay have said that to them that song, more than anything else—not in a literal way, but a heart way—really cuts to it," she says.

Murphy, who has a recurring role on the ABC show *Murder One* and sings along with Mandy Patinkin, Dawn Upshaw, and others on the CD *Leonard Bernstein's New York* (due out in May on Nonesuch), knows crowds love the lavish costumes of *The King and I*. But when she struggles in and out of corsets and petticoats and massive crinolines, Murphy remembers with longing that "Fosca had abandoned the trappings, the outer facade of being a woman. She was one smart babe, that's all I can say!" —MICHAEL GILTZ

Michael Giltz also contributes to New York and Entertainment Weekly.



HEARTFELT:
*The Tony
winner at
work.*