

« THE BETTER MAN '08 »
DR. OZ'S PLAN TO IMPROVE YOUR LIFE

MAY 2008
MAN AT HIS BEST

Esquire

75
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Q • A
Q members who vote for who wins, and every year, it's a 120,000-way tie. Everyone's just there waiting to see if they won their award.
AJJ: On your show, you deal with race really well.
TF: From the beginning, as soon as we had [Tracy Morgan, Alec Baldwin, and me], I thought we could deal with race, gender, and power. Also, fart jokes.
AJJ: I once wrote an article about the Conan O'Brien show. And they had a ritual in the writer's room that when someone had to fart, they'd get up on a table, put on a wolf mask, and then let loose.

TF: I made this known at SNL: I'm not a fan of purposely farting in front of other people. If you have to fart, leave the room.

AJJ: Conan banned pirate jokes. Anything you won't allow?

TF: I would shut down any Mayor McCheese reference. People under 35 don't know Mayor McCheese.

AJJ: What is the funniest accent?

TF: Australian.

AJJ: The funniest shoes?

TF: Tuxedo slippers.

AJJ: The funniest number?

TF: 58,008, right? On a 1970s calculator, upside down.

AJJ: The funniest beverage?

TF: Buttermilk, as in "I'll have a venti buttermilk, please."

AJJ: Animals in people's clothing: Funny or not?

TF: Always funny!

AJJ: The word *douchebag*?

TF: I prefer *jagweed*.

AJJ: Bugaboo strollers?

TF: How dare you.

AJJ: Are puns funny?

TF: Only in porn titles.

AJJ: The funniest word?

TF: Can it be two words?

AJJ: Sure.

TF: *Hamburger sandwich*.

[*The phone rings.*] It's probably a fake call from my assistant to end the interview.

The Hall of Cultural Significance

The six most intriguing performances this month

- ODD BUT FRUITFUL PAIRING** →  **Robert Downey Jr. and body armor** in *Iron Man*. No actor plays the role of the sarcastic motormouth better than Downey. Which is why giving him the power of flight seems curious. But Downey as Marvel Comics superhero works in a way that makes you wish Peter Parker had been more of a loquacious bastard. **See also:** Amy Poehler and breast pumps in *Baby Mama*.
- ACTRESS WHOSE NAME BELIES HER BEAUTY** →  **Martha Higareda** in *Street Kings*. We're not sure if everyone who hails from Tabasco, Mexico, looks like this, but it would make sense. Already a star in the Spanish-speaking world, the 24-year-old is not the typical Martha—neither matronly (Washington) nor domestic (Stewart). **See also:** Mammie Gummer in HBO's *John Adams*.
- WHITE GUYS OF THE MONTH** →  **Flight of the Conchords** on their eponymous album. The time is ripe for a Conchords backlash. Season one is a distant memory, season two is coming, and all that's currently available is an overabundance of people adopting bad New Zealand accents. Will this album of the first season's songs make things a little better? Yes. **See also:** Ira Glass on *This American Life* (season 2).
- PERFORMANCE BY A NONHUMAN** →  **The thoroughbreds** in *The First Saturday in May*, about horses vying for spots in the Kentucky Derby. This documentary shows Lawyer Ron, the late Barbara, and four others at their best (coming in six lengths ahead) and their worst (biting). The most exciting two minutes in sports expands well to an hour and a half. **See also:** the *USS Nimitz* in PBS's ten-part series *Carrier*.
- SUDDENLY IMPORTANT DEAD PERSON** →  **Nina Simone**, inspiration for her daughter's album *Simone* or *Simone*. Nobody does it like the High Priestess of Soul could. That's less of a placation for her daughter (who goes by only Simone) and more of a reminder to listen to *I Put a Spell on You* again. **See also:** *Mary Todd Lincoln* in *The Lincoln: Portrait of a Marriage*, by Daniel Mark Epstein.
- ELDERLY ACHIEVEMENT** →  **The senior citizens** in *Young@Heart*. If a documentary about an elderly chorus performing songs by the Clash and Sonic Youth relied on clichéd irony, it would be entertaining for five minutes. But when a duet becomes a solo because one singing partner passes away before the concert, Coldplay's "Fix You" takes on a different meaning. **See also:** *Def Leppard* (below).

(Music)

THE UNDER-RATED OEUVRE: DEF LEPPARD

TIM MCGRAW appears on Def Leppard's new album. I have no idea what that means. But I do know that if Def Lep had sat out the '90s, they'd be playing *Pyromania* in its entirety at summer festivals. Instead, their classic three-album run—*High 'n' Dry*, *Pyromania*, and *Hysteria*—wound up tossed aside as hair-metal relics when they were near-perfect pop records, as vital as much of Bowie's catalog. From "Bringin' on the Heartbreak" to "Animal," they brought sophistication—and large ensemble harmonies—to anthems and power ballads unmatched before or since. An immediate correction: Def Leppard's first three albums are slightly less vital than Bowie's catalog. —ANDY LANGER

