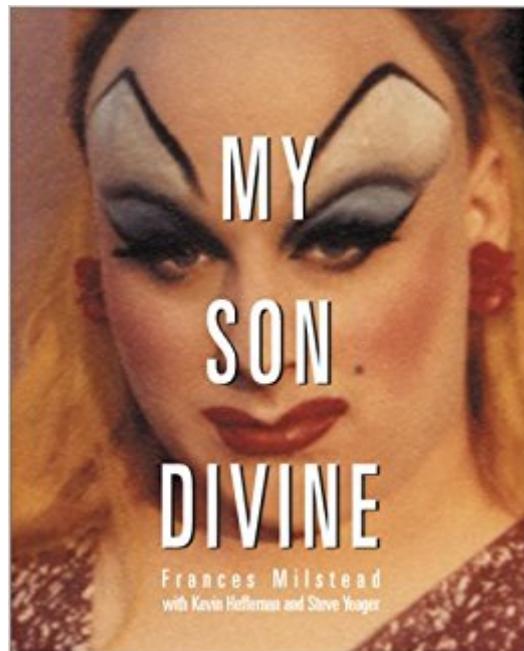


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My Son Divine



Synopsis

This remarkable biography-written by Divine's mother Frances Millstead, with Kevin Heffernan and Steve Yeager, the award-winning filmmakers whose documentary film *Divine Trash* won the Filmmakers Trophy at the 1998 Sundance Film Festival-reveals a never-before-seen side of the internationally renowned actor and drag performer. As she tells of his childhood, their long estrangement, and a heart-warming reconciliation before his death, Frances Millstead brings a mother's love and insight to the story of Glenn Harris Millstead, who would shock his way to international stardom as Divine, the star of John Waters cult films *Female Trouble*, *Pink Flamingos*, *Polyester*, and his breakthrough hit, *Hairspray*. Following him as he grows from angelic choirboy to troubled teen to flamboyant adult, this account reconciles for the first time the two sides of Divine-outrageous performer and loving son-as the legendary star's humanity is lovingly and movingly revealed through words and heretofore unpublished photos. Features: Hundreds of previously unpublished photographs. 8 page full color insert Marketing Plans: Bookstores: Posters, Postcards, Tattoos. Media targets: Entertainment Weekly, People Magazine, US Weekly, Premiere, Vanity Fair. NPR national and affiliate programs. Network morning shows. Advance reader copies available. Frances Millstead lives in Florida, where she is active in a variety of civic and religious groups and works to increase acceptance for the gay and lesbian members of the Southern Baptist Convention. Kevin Heffernan is assistant professor of cinema at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, where he lives with his wife and daughter. Steve Yeager is the director of *Divine Trash*, *On the Block*, and *In Bad Taste*. He lives in Baltimore.

An Excerpt

Thursday, October 18, 1945, was a beautiful fall day. The doctor had told me I would give birth around the 19th. I decided to go to my mother-in-law's house so I wouldn't be alone if I went into labor. Harris dropped me off there on his way to work. Mom and I prepared dinner, and we talked and laughed about my having the baby. I was

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Customer Reviews

No mother wants to watch her son eat dog poop, as Frances Milstead, mother of the gifted actor and outrageous drag persona Divine (1945-1988) would agree. Divine asked her not to see the John Waters film *Pink Flamingos*, in which the unforgettable poop-noshing scene occurs, and she has abided by his wishes. To her credit, though, she proudly describes the scene and its aftermath, in which Divine's friends overheard him calling an emergency room to ask what diseases his 12-year-old son might have picked up from eating a dog turd ("Yes, well, he's a little retarded."). Clearly Milstead is no ordinary mother. Page after page she provides a remarkably unembarrassed view of her son's adventures on and off screen. With amusing childhood details for true devotees of Divine, plenty of new photos, and judicious quoting from other sources, such as John Waters and his friend and producer Pat Moran, *My Son Divine* serves as a corrective to Bernard Jay's harshly drawn *Not Simply Divine*, and offers a warm, entertaining version of the drag star's life. --Regina Marler

This loving, photo-filled tribute to the 350-pound female impersonator/disco chanteuse/ character actor Divine (born Harris Glenn Milstead) offers cult movie fans an intimate biography of the star of *Pink Flamingos*, *Female Trouble*, *Lust in the Dust* and other films, and stands as an excellent companion to John Waters's *Shock Value*. Thanks to an ideal matching of coauthors, there is a satisfying balance between "Glenny at home" anecdotes from Divine's mother and detailed coverage of his career from coauthors Heffernan and Yeager (writer and director, respectively, of *Divine Trash*, the award-winning documentary about the early films of Waters and Divine). Born to doting parents, Glenn was a complicated child: he struggled with his weight, and with his social life; he could be moody and occasionally demanding. His habit of charging purchases to his parents' credit cards eventually led to a nine-year estrangement. During that time, Waters rechristened Glenn "Divine" and created a midnight matinee star. "I wanted him to be the Godzilla of drag queens," said Waters, who, along with costars and friends, is extensively interviewed throughout. Later, happily reunited with his family, Divine found mainstream success with 1988's *Hairspray*; a

few weeks later, at 42, he died of cardiac arrest. Many quoted within this volume decry the negativity of *Not Simply Divine*, the lively 1993 memoir by Divine's manager Bernard Jay. But the portraits resemble one another, in that each is a warts-and-all biography of an artist who was larger than life in both talent and temperament. Color and b&w photos. (Nov.) Forecast: With hundreds of never-before-published photos and the ace credentials of the authors, fans of the flamboyant star will find this package hard to resist. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

When you think of glamour you automatically think of the most beautiful "woman" in the world: the 300+ pound monstrosity, Divine! Yet there was a side to Hlr that few saw or understood. This book is written by Hlr mother. Harris Glenn Milstead was the shy overweight femboy who was constantly teased as a child. Fate brought him into the universe of the budding gay director, John Waters. It took John's warped psyche and Glenn's perfectionism to create the glorious persona, Divine. The result shocked and overjoyed millions and millions of moviegoers and students of the bizarre. Yet in private, Glenn was still the shy femboy who was extremely personal and generous. His only flaws were his love for food and marijuana. After being estranged from his parents for years, they finally reconciled and shared out remaining years close and personal. Glenn's star was at last rising and he was being noticed as a great and talented character actor in his own right, apart from the grossout persona, Divine. Yet, as he was preparing for a permanent role in the series 'Married with Children, fate took him from us. Tipping over 400 pounds, he had an All-American heart attack in his sleep. Few actors can match Glenn's exuberance and hunger for life and humorous good times. He had more talent in his little finger than most actors have in their entire lifetimes. It is sad that he was taken from us right when he was on top of his game. Yet, thank God, we still have the movie records of him and his joys and talents to gross us out and make us feel good. Get to understand Glenn in ways deeper than him wearing outrageous drag and eating dog spoor for the camera. Read this book and open your mind to the other who made us love him so much through talent, hard work and his outrageous antics on film!

I bought this for my girlfriend; seeing as how she is a huge John Waters/Divine fan. I too enjoy reading about Divine, so I naturally read it before gifting it to her. It is chock full of pictures you will have seen no where else, as Divine's mother wrote it. Some say this is his mother's way of cashing in on her son's fame, and I totally disagree. This book is nothing but full of support for her son and gives an unseen look into a younger Divine. If you have seen and enjoyed *Pink Flamingos*, you are going to love this.

WHAT TRULY MAKES A PERFORMER A STAR? IS IT LEGIONS OF FANS? MILLIONS IN THE BANK? EMMYS AND OSCARS ON DISPLAY IN THEIR MANSIONS? NO. IN MY OPINION, WHAT TRULY MAKES A PERFORMER A STAR IS A PERSON WITH THE ABILITIES TO INDELIBLY IMPRINT THEMSELVES/THEIR WORK INTO THE MINDS' OF THEIR AUDIENCE - AND THAT IT WHAT DIVINE DID BEST. THIS IS AN EXCELLENT BOOK WRITTEN BY HIS MOTHER, ETC., THAT GIVES YOU THE TRUE STORY OF ONE OF HOLLYWOOD'S MOST INFAMOUS OF STARS. FRANCES MILSTEAD DOESN'T SUGARCOAT ANYTHING HERE. SHE PUTS THE GOOD TIMES, AND THE BAD TIMES (AND EVERYTHING IN-BETWEEN), HERE IN PRINT FOR ALL TO SEE. THERE REALLY IS NO NEED FOR ANY OTHER DIVINE BIOGRAPHY TO BE WRITTEN IN THE FUTURE, FOR EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT DIVINE (BUT WERE ALWAYS AFRAID TO ASK), IS RIGHT HERE IN THIS BOOKS' PAGES. AND, AS AN ADDED TREAT, THERE ARE MANY, MANY RARE PICTURES OF DIVINE (IN FULL GLOSSY COLOR) IN ALL OF HIS WONDERFUL GLORY HERE TO BE SEEN. A MUST HAVE FOR ANY DIVINE FAN. WE LOVE YOU DIVINE!!!

i'm not very good in writing in english(i'm italian),but i can say that this book is SUPERB EXCELLENT FANTASTIC!!!!plenty of rare pictures of DIVINE,beautifully written,a coffee table book!!!i'l give a vote :10++++

Wonderful story of a unique soul.

This book comprises seemingly of more interviews than anything else, but it doesn't take away from the quality of the book. Includes never before seen photos and other interesting tidbits on Divine. Doesn't seem to go very in depth, but is an overall good book.

Do not presuppose that this is the story of Divine -- although it is certainly part of the story. Written by Divine's -- Glenn Milstead's -- mother, it is truly her story to tell. What does it mean to be a mother? What dreams and hopes do we have for our children? More importantly and to the point, what is it that we learn from our children? If we are open to loving them unconditionally, we can learn a great deal. And there is much to learn from Glenn Milstead's mother's love, and from her own learning experience. It's an odd relationship, to be sure, with years of estrangement and healing. In the fifties, children did not just "come out" in some youth group and attend regular summer Pride

festivals. Mothers of the fifties did not have those kind of expectations -- and the sixties were a wake-up call all around. But Frances loved her son, and struggled with her confusion. In spite of everything and anything he did that would cause more timid souls to faint dead away, Frances and Harris continued to lend Glenn money they would never see again, absorb credit card bills for exorbitant expenses they had never approved, and support the lavish habits of a man they didn't understand. Still, they loved him. As he unfolded into that love, the most extraordinary creature emerged. Who was Divine? No drag queen, for sure, for drag queens seek to soar to great heights as fabulous beauties. No beauty was Divine -- and yet, no more beautiful creature could have emerged from that soul. Without Divine, there would have been no RuPaul. Still, Divine made us think about the nature of femininity, beauty, and love. He exuded it all in a place one would not expect to find it. We live in a world full of miracles, and we all too often close the door on them because they are beyond our comprehension. Take the time. This is one human being who is truly a Divine miracle....geminiwalker

A good book to read as it shows another side of Divine that only his family would know. Its more of an upbeat book than one might imagine, and a great read for insight on the person, not the actor.

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