



Drag king commands a downtown counter: Diane Torr transformed.

CHRIS BUCK

coil, let rage and pain alter their dynamics. For the third, Torr's in drag, a coarse, dim-witted masher who won't take no for an answer and is baffled when Albin whumps him to the floor again and again.

Both shows feature chorus lines of three perambulating black pillars whose opened windows reveal a flash-lit dance of tongues and another of wriggling butts. The tongues win the day for expressiveness and agility (even if, at P.S. 122, they have trouble getting in sync). The Judson performance also offers Pablo Beracochea, a beguiling wild boy, trying to insert himself violently into a contact improvisation duet by Eva Brunner and Daniel Safer, and then making do with an inflatable woman (she's terrible at supporting him). Torr's performances, though, made me wonder again about the raffish, thrown-together look that seems to be a hallmark of much downtown performance art. Maybe it's a legacy of the '60s horror of sickness and the wild-party aspect of Happenings.

Making Men

By Deborah Jowitz

Diane Torr

P.S. 122

February 6 through 26
Judson Church, January 23

Onafhankelijk Toneel

New York Theatre Workshop
February 15 through 19

At P.S. 122 the other night, I learned how to make myself a penis out of surgical gauze and cotton balls. This is not a matter I've given much attention to before. Now, thanks to Diane Torr's *F2M transformation*, I can fantasize about slicking back the hair, gluing on the stubble, and charging out to take back the space those guys with their wide-apart legs steal from me on the subway.

Torr's lecture-demonstration—the most engrossing part of her current show—is a spin-off from the drag king workshops she's been giving around the U.S. and Europe for several years. At least two choreographers, Jane Comfort and Paula Josa-Jones, have gone to Torr for lessons when preparing gender-twisting works. It's enlightening to watch this former modern dancer-choreographer, go-go dancer, black-belt in aikido, feminist, political activist, wife, and mother transform herself from a somewhat stereotypical woman (red lipstick, heels, dangling earrings) into Danny King, a stocky little man with a perpetual sneer. Addressing us as putative members of the American Society of Men, he warns us not to smile forthcomingly at anyone; he shows how to move big, keep our hands off our own bodies, turn the

whole head rather than just the eyes, and make our gestures cut the air (George Bush to the life).

Power—getting it, losing it, being born to it—is Torr's main concern. Twelve years ago, she was investigating the sleazy world of go-go dancers: how they manipulated their male audiences and were in turn controlled by their male bosses. In her current impersonations of men, she's smart and on-target, although her personae are shameless stereotypes, like the beer-swilling low-life limey Jack Sprat, a has-been rock singer/fan, still ecstatically replaying the 1960s and the drugged-out wars between Britain's Mods and Rockers, and singing—excruciatingly dead-voiced and to taped accom-

panion—"He was a mutant, she was an amputee."

I found Torr's *Contexts/Desire*, on a Movement Research evening, livelier than *Drag Kings and Subjects*, although her film, *Open for Flavor*, which all but vanished on a wall of Judson Church, fully revealed its elegantly lubricious black-and-white compositions (piled-up naked bodies and busy tongues) when projected on a sheet made to billow by two of the P.S. 122 performers.

One pleasure at Judson was comparing three aikido duets for Torr and Elizabeth Albin. The first is a straightforward affair. During the second, the women allow what they might be feeling during real combat to show. They grunt, re-

DANCE 79
DEBORAH JOWITT Diane Torr



GREG MILLER

Diane Torr claims the power . . . and transformed, she even has the balls (Jowitz, p. 79)