

JASON STUART: FLAMBOYANT COMEDY AT ITS BEST

by Thomas Basgil

Actor and comedian Jason Stuart is a step away from being incredibly offensive, and that's what makes him so funny. His DVD, *Making It to the Middle*, is a small look into the life of a gay actor and comedian. It shows us a glimpse of Stuart in the middle of his life and in the middle of the country: Columbus, Ohio. After coming out in 1993, Stuart has been an icon in gay comedy. He has appeared on *Will and Grace*, *House*, and *Charmed* and he played Dr. Thomas on *My Wife and Kids*. Less well-known than Ellen DeGeneres, but probably just as prolific, he has made a name for himself as a comedian through his use of gay male and Jewish stereotypes. Part of his success must stem from his ad libbed interaction with the audience. He plays on masculine, straight men's fears by overtly hitting on them and deals with homophobes in the audience with an admirable blasé attitude.

His DVD opens with him on the way to Columbus, attempting to understand the airport's automated ticket machines, scrutinizing the scratches on his rental car, wondering why his hotel lacks the essential bellhop, and surviving the dog hair in his lackluster "limo." Describing his standup as "gay comedy for the

whole family," he explains where his desire to be a comedian came from: his mom was flamboyantly funny and "all the guys wanted to have sex with her." Snippets of his routine intersperse an interview with Stuart and a look at his adventures on the way to the comedy club. Probably his funniest bit includes his attempts at wooing a straight male in the audience, whom he nicknames Buck.

A definite must-see, Jason Stuart's playful use of homophobia works towards breaking down the barriers between the straight and queer communities. His next DVD will be an anticipated arrival at movie stores in every gayborhood.

Jason Stuart: Making it to the middle with "gay comedy for the whole family."