

Emerson Comedy Archives Oral History Project

PHYLLIS DILLER

Interviewed June 8, 2005

By Bill Dana and Jenni Matz

In Brentwood, CA

Biographical Info: Phyllis Diller, (born Phyllis Ada Driver on July 17, 1917, in Lima, Ohio) is an American comedian who is generally considered one of the pioneers of female stand-up comedy. Her one-woman stand-up act sold-out a record 87 straight weeks at San Francisco's legendary nightclub The Purple Onion in the late 1950s. Diller appeared on *The Jack Paar Show* in the mid-1950s. Bob Hope costarred with Diller in twenty-three TV specials and in three films in the late 1960s, *Eight on the Lam*, *The Private Navy of Sgt. O'Farrell*, and *Boy, Did I Get a Wrong Number!* Hope, credited often by Diller as her comedic hero, also invited her to perform with him on his 1966 tour of Vietnam. More recent television appearances for Diller have included a guest spot on the long-running family drama, *7th Heaven*. As an interesting aside, this interview was conducted in the so-titled "Bob Hope Room" of Diller's home, in which resides a larger-than-life portrait painting of the legendary comedian on an easel. In 2005, Diller was featured as one of many contemporary comics in a documentary film, *The Aristocrats*. Diller's recent autobiography titled Like a Lampshade in a Whorehouse: My Life in Comedy (with Richard Buskin, 2005, Penguin Group) came out in February of this year, and a screenplay about Diller's early years in showbiz is due to be released in 2006.

The Following is an Excerpt from our Interview with Phyllis Diller. To read the full transcript, please contact the Archivist.

DILLER: Oh, yes. I must hold my book up.

DANA: Yes, please.

DILLER: Yes. Here it is.

DANA: Here it is. Phyllis Diller, *Like a Lampshade in a Whorehouse: My Life in Comedy*.

DILLER: Just a line out of the show. It means nothing.

DANA: (laughs) It's a -- it's a great read, and so -- you are so generous with not only the joy but the *tsuris*, the trouble.

09:01:10

DILLER: Oh, yeah. Well, -- I told the truth. I think the truth is better than fiction. Most people, when they write about their biography, they clean it up and dress it up, and they're richer and thinner and cuter and more adorable.

(laughs) Ahh. It's nitty-gritty.

DANA: Unh huh.

MATZ: That's always been the source of your humor.

DILLER: That's true, the nitty-gritty, the -- the -- Well, I claim that **all humor rises out of tragedy**. If -- if everything goes well, you have nothing funny! But if the bride's train comes off and shows that she's wearing panties that say "Tuesday," and it's -- and it's Wednesday, (laughter) oh, we're in trouble. Then we've got a joke.

DANA: Yeah, that's right.

DILLER: Yeah.

DANA: That is absolutely right. The juxtaposition of humor and tragedy, it's -- it is right there.

DILLER: It grows right out of tragedy.

MATZ: One of the things that I noticed in watching many of your tapes of you performing your comedy was that you immediately make yourself endearing to the audience, and your -- the self-deprecation. Can you talk a bit about --?

09:02:30

DILLER: I think that started in high school, when I realized I was not going to be Queen of the May. And I thought, well, I -- I'll get them -- I'll tell them about it before they tell me. So I always made jokes, about my appearance and what I was wearing and -- I never had the proper clothes. Now I have far too many clothes. You want to borrow something?

(laughter)

DILLER: I -- I think it started in -- as a defense mechanism in high school, truly. Because I was not a beauty. And I wanted to be a beauty. I can't tell you a comic lady who doesn't want to be a great beauty! In fact, **Totie Fields** gave her life up to try to become beautiful. She had a facelift, and she shouldn't. (claps her hands) That was the end of her.

And, of course, Joan Rivers we know she's addicted to beauty, and -- and keeping it, and youth. And, oh, **Carol Burnett**, she's a whole new person! There's no more Carol Burnett, that I knew and adored. I still love her, but she's not that Carol Burnett. But comic ladies want to be beautiful! Sometimes they do it to the detriment of their career. Like Doty Goodman. She should have stayed funny. She became beautiful and unknown.

DANA: Yeah, that's interesting. I'm trying to remember whether I saw Totie after she had that --

DILLER: Well, she uh kind of uh -- A lot of funny women do that. The lady who sang "April in Fairbanks" in *New Faces*.. And she was on --

DANA: Well, just uh --

DILLER: Can't --

DANA: -- Kaye Ballard? Uh no.

DILLER: No. I can't think of her name. Um --

DANA: Alice [Ghostley?].

DILLER: Yeah!

DANA: Alice, yeah.

DILLER: **Alice Ghostley** is another one who had a great start on being funny. And then I couldn't get over it when I went to see her in person, she was singing sad songs! Oh, stay with funny and get rich!

MATZ: But the humor was really a kind of therapy for you, as well --

DILLER: Oh, my God!

MATZ: -- to express yourself.

DILLER: I didn't realize it until recently. I get -- I -- Just recently. I realized that my ranting and raving every night about *Fang*, which I, was not Sherwood Diller -- It wasn't the same. To me, it was my -- my character I had invented, this Fang, this -- All the -- certain jokes went on Fang, you know, pigeonhole. Drunk, lazy, dumb, stupid, all that, was *Fang*. And I didn't realize, while I'm raving about this mythical character, I'm getting it all out-- down the alley. Without mentioning any names. (laughs)

DANA: Yeah, he's a great --

DILLER: I didn't realize it!

DANA: Sure.

DILLER: What a -- what a healthy thing!

DANA: Yeah. The purge orative.

DILLER: There you are.

DANA: It's speaking it, purging yourself through speaking.

DILLER: Yeah. Yes.

DANA: Yeah.

MATZ: Back to also just the -- the costuming, I mean, you have such a trademark comic personality that you created, the --

DILLER: The persona.

MATZ: -- the persona.

DILLER: Yes.

MATZ: And you said once, "Elegance isn't funny."

09:07;30

DILLER: Well, of course. Well, especially, good taste. But -
- and push it just over the edge -- See, **I invented punk!** I
invented the hairdo that's still around, that awful -- like all
that bed-hair now. You know, the -- the mussed hair and awful
hair. With me, it was an accident. Uh, it just happened. But
it caught on. And, you know, I really wore funky things before
that "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" girl. What was her name?

MATZ: **Cyndi Lauper.**

DILLER: Oh, yeah. Cyndi Lauper, she came out, and with little
gloves and everything. I take a lot of credit, you see! But I
was just having fun with clothes. Because I love fashion. In
fact, way beyond normal. I'm crazy about fashion. And I think
I knew just where to take it. And I invented those shapeless
things so that I could tell them anything I cared to about my
figure. And I wanted it to be funny. And -- and I was very
careful about what I -- I was just thinking, when I was coming
out here, I could never go onstage until I got those little
gloves on. I felt undressed for some reason. I always wore
gloves. **All clowns wear gloves.**

DANA: That's fascinating. [I never?] --

DILLER: Yeah, even -- even Mickey Mouse.

MATZ: Yeah, you -- well, you talked about that in some interviews, about having leftover things from your days doing jokes with props, impressions. Like the cigarette became --

DILLER: The cigarette **became a prop**. And I used it as chopsticks and to show anger and hostility. It was a wooden thing. It wasn't real. I never smoked, thank God. But-- I paid a lot of attention to that persona, and built it. And then the hair got worse and worse. It got awful! (laughs) Well, people started making it look real, natural. (laughs)

DILLER: I don't think there's a life ever lived that there isn't some tragedy in. But you don't have to make that public. You can -- You know, everybody thought I had no problems. (smiles)

DANA: That --

DILLER: I didn't want to --

DANA: I mean -- I mean, I -- I knew, obviously, Phyllis Diller, she -- she has to have some problems. But it wasn't until I read the -- *Lampshade* that I see this stuff. My God, how in the hell did you --? I mean, it was enormous!

DILLER: It was very -- very, very, very, very difficult. But you see, my whole idea was to spread cheer, get laughs, make

people happy. And, of course, it makes you -- Again, that therapy thing, that it's automatic, automatic.

09:12;28

MATZ: Can you talk a bit about mock hostility? I mean, you prefaced your book by saying, "I'm going to be truthful." You know, "Some people may be offended, but I'm going to always tell the truth." But your humor was always coming from a place of love.

DILLER: That's true. Uh that's true. Anyone I even knocked, I still love them. My -- I think God is love, you see. It's just an emotion. It's not a person or any thing. The spirit of it. Love, love. That -- that, to me, is the important thing of everything. And if you could just keep that in your life and in mind and spread that. And, you know, it works.

MATZ: The -- the difference, too, between your humor and some of the other comics who were using harsher language --

DILLER: Oh, yes?

MATZ: -- or more direct language. You would joke about sex but never directly say the -- the parts of the puzzle that you were talking about. Can you talk a bit about being the only female standup comic at the time? And, you know, Buddy Hackett and all the other people who were around and --

DILLER: (laughs) Well, being -- Number one, I didn't realize at the time that I was the only one -- working as a single.

Even the guys weren't working as singles. They were all doubles.

DANA: Yeah!

DILLER: When I was in it, they were all doubles --

DANA: Yeah.

DILLER: -- except maybe you.

DANA: No, it was **Dana and Wood**.

DILLER: Were you a double even?

DANA: Sure!

DILLER: They were all working double. And some of them had many guys with them, like, well, Burns and everybody.

DANA: Mmm hmm.

DILLER: And -- I mean, they were all doubles! **Martin and Lewis** and **Allen and Rossi** and this and that. And **Sanders and Young**. I mean, I didn't realize how unusual -- Which, it helped! Because it made me, not only a single, but a woman. Not realizing any of this, I just kept trotting and trudging and putting one foot in front of the other. And, oh, learning about comedy, trying to figure it all out. And I didn't have any feeling about it because I didn't know about it. I just was doing what I was doing. And at first, I was really not -- I couldn't be considered a standup comic, as long as I used **props**. No way. That's going to keep you small-town, smalltime. It was

very difficult to give up props. I had to have a funny hat, a -
- funny glasses, a chabot, or a cloak, or something. And I'll
never forget, the reason I gave up props, I wanted to be on **The
Ed Sullivan Show**. And I knew that you had to stand in one -- in
front of a curtain, and nobody's going to have props. So I had
to give them up. I was forced to give props up. What a great
step forward that was! Then I became a standup comic!

DILLER: You can go only so far with props.

DANA: Yeah. That's right.

DILLER: That's right. There's a -- there's a ceiling. But
the ultimate is to be a single standup comic.

DANA: Yeah.

DILLER: That's the hardcore hardest.

DANA: Right. That's you and the world.

DILLER: It's you alone and the world. And them. And all that
wonderful energy you use from them. The bigger the audience,
the more energy. But you've got to connect and plug it in, or
nothing lights up.

09:16;10

MATZ: Did you hone a lot of your -- doing the one-liners?

Was that honed from -

09:18;38

DILLER: Oh, I copied Bob {Hope} right down to the letter. I mean, I didn't even realize it. Because, see, I was listening to those old radio shows, (laughs) and it was his -- the same Bob Hope. He was the one-liner king! I mean, a setup, payoff, setup, payoff -- That was it.

DANA: And speed. I mean, and --

DILLER: Speed!

DANA: You didn't -- there was no waiting for him.

DILLER: No. No. Take no prisoners. And -- and he went for six laughs a minute. That was his goal. The great one-liner people are **Henny Youngman, Bob Hope, ah, Dangerfield.** (in sultry voice) Could I be included, darling?

DANA: Yes. (laughs)

DILLER: And I -- I -- to me, it's like --

DANA: So it was Diller and -- and **Berle.**

DILLER: And -- and Berle. The shortest distance between two laughs --

DANA: Yeah.

DILLER: -- is a one-liner.

DANA: Yeah.

DILLER: It's mathematics!

DANA: That's right. (laughter) Nobody's going to argue. They -- they laugh. They say, "Wait a minute! That -- that was a one-liner that made me laugh."

DILLER: Well, uh that -- that's it.

DANA: Yeah.

09:19:33

DILLER: And that's really the way to get the most laughs for your time. Of course, now the -- it's a new thing. People work out of situations. And they -- it's setups and -- And they -- it's a little different. They don't seem to go for jokes. They don't seem to uh -- Well, they don't -- they -- they're listening to a different something.

MATZ: I want to go back to using honesty, using your real life as a source for humor.

DILLER: Oh, yes.

MATZ: You started off, you were 37--?

DILLER: Yes. Yes.

MATZ: And I think it would be very interesting for students who are trying to enter the profession to understand how you hone an act. Because your act was very well prepared.

DILLER: Well, I'd been doing it -- I had been doing my act, when I was 37 and just got started, I was -- had been doing my

act for-ever! I didn't know it was an act! It was a little piece of -- of music and talk and piano and singing and, oh God, **Nelson Eddy, Jeannette Macdonald.** I did them all. And (laughs) corny as hell. But people stood still for it. And so that was the basis. I had -- I had that much basis. And also, I had studied music. And I had studied singing. Which meant I had -- had to stand up and do it be-- at recitals. It wasn't just like cold hoc. And it helped to have a little nucleus to build on. All you need is a start. You start a standup life with one line.

DANA: That's right. You've obviously -- when -- when you watch you, there is -- there is a musicality. There's a rhythm that -- that -

DILLER: Oh, yes. Well, I claim -- **I claim that if you can't dance to it it's not funny.** I mean, the -- the flow and the rhythm and -- Well, all that -- the -- the way Bob throws his voice and then -- It -- it flows, it flows. And you know what? The main thing is to get that audience in the rhythm. And then you've got them. They're rolled up, and they're with you. And you go off together like a symphony. **You're the conductor, you see? Have to know exactly when to pick it up, exactly when to let it go.** That way you don't have to worry about hecklers because there's always -- the air is full of something. Either

it's laughter or talk. For- a heckler would have to make an appointment to talk to me.

DANA: (laughs) That's right.

MATZ: That's a good lesson.

DANA: Yeah.

09:30:32

MATZ: Listening, to you, I would guess, would be another key, still.

DILLER: What's that? Listening?

MATZ: Listening. Response -- responding to the audience or to -

DILLER: Oh -- oh. Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Oh --! **One of the key things about being a fine comic, or actor, is to listen.**

Because if you're not listening, you're just doing something you memorized, and it doesn't matter at all. I mean, it -- it won't be right. Especially acting! My God, people who don't listen! -- well, it just doesn't make it. You -- It's the main thing! It's -- it's mu-- and it's m-- As you say, it's music.

09:31:07

DANA: Yeah, it is. It -- it is a terrific advantage or a -- a leg up to -- to have that in you so --

DILLER: Well, did --? Well, you know most comics are musicians.

DANA: Yeah.

DILLER: Are you a musician?

DANA: I used to play drums --

DILLER: See!

DANA: -- but I liked -- I compose and write --

DILLER: Well, see? You're a musician.

DANA: Yeah.

DILLER: **Johnny Carson** was a drummer. I once made a list of them all.

09:31;32

MATZ: Yeah, Woody Allen.

DILLER: Oh -- oh, come on! They're all musicians!

DANA: Yeah.

MATZ: **Phil Silvers**.

DILLER: **Sid Caesar**, saxophone. I mean, it -- uh Phil Silvers, clarinet, Woody Allen, clarinet, me, piano. Uh I mean, there's a whole -- it's in cur-- See, it's the ear. They listen, they hear.

DANA: That's right.

DILLER: In fact, it's just normal for them. It's just natural. Natural. Because --

DANA: It is. Well, **timing** is the essence of music and of comedy.

DILLER: And it's all one.

09:32;00

MATZ: There was something else interesting you said once in an interview about the **joke word** being the end of -

DILLER: Oh, yeah. Well, we -- I think all -- we all know that. It should be a -- an explosive consonant. Like "pike," "put," "jerk," "joke," "pop." You -- you know, **whenever you -- you are working out a line, try to find an explosion.** So they know it's over! (laughs)

DANA: Yeah.

DILLER: And that's time to laugh.

DANA: That's right. (inaudible).

DILLER: Yeah. And you've got to be careful of word-- Oh, my God! Every -- **every time you're building a joke, and you need a number, a certain number is going to be just right. Maybe it's two. Maybe it's 17. You have to work it out. Because, again, you're composing -- music. And rhythm! And balance.**

DANA: [singing] Da-da da-da-da!

MATZ: Another great thing you would do to end a joke would be to **laugh** at your own joke.

DILLER: That sometimes, nowadays -- well, recently, before I stopped -- was an accident, whenever I laughed. It was just I couldn't stand it any longer. I had to laugh with them. Or that or a new line. Every now and then, when I get a new line, I go crazy. I have to laugh when I -- I'm so thrilled, you know? Uh but uh people don't laugh as much in the act -- If you

listen to my CD, I don't laugh as much as people think I laugh.
They think I laugh a lot. I truly don't!

09:33;32

DANA: But it was ex-- It was part of --

DILLER: In the beginning I did, the --

DANA: Part of the audience expectation was that Phyllis
Diller -- Because it wasn't just a laugh. It was a **Phyllis
Diller laugh.**

DILLER: That's true. In fact, uh working the big stages, you
know, Las Vegas, for -- the -- you come out, and you do -- and
you're on, the first time I'd laugh, they'd applaud! In other
words, they came to hear the laugh.

DANA: That's right!

DILLER: Oh, and one of -- that's another thing about taking
advice from -- When you're a beginner, everybody is smarter
than you, and they're full of **advice**. People who just come into
a small club to listen to you. They -- they tell you some good
advice. A guy told me, "Cut out the laugh."

DANA: (laughs)

DILLER: Another guy told me, "Things are too short.
Eloooooongate."

DANA: (laughs)

DILLER: Oh, please!

MATZ: Didn't someone tell you "you smile too much", you were too nice?

DILLER: Oh, yes! The -- one of the club owners. And I adored him. **Keith Rockwell**, who owned the **Purple Onion**.

DANA: Oh, Purple Onion!

DILLER: He said, "You smile too much. You should be hostile." But he sort of was right. I was -- I was so eager to please and wanted to be loved by that audience. And but I did smile too much. He -- that was a little bit of something -- I should -- But I was doing the mock hostility, with the cigarette holder, and trying to show it. But I learned to be more hostile. I learned something from **Don Rickles**. When the wireless mic finally, you know, got able to be caroled around -- carried around -- You know, Don, you know, when he comes down the aisle, as the emperor of Germany or something --

DANA: Yeah.

DILLER: -- or of -- of a scary land -- euh! -- to this marital music -- Euh! And the minute he hits the light, (laughs) he goes into a fetal position -

09;35;29

DANA: (laughs)

DILLER: -- and begs the pianist, "Protect me! Are they -- are they coming up?" You see what I mean?

DANA: Yeah.

DILLER: The big thing, and then the [funny noise] *muyh!* I -- oh, I -- And then he paces. He paces. And I had never moved from the mike. I was just planted. I -- I couldn't! I -- it -- I had been there so long without the movable mic. Now I -- I saw this pacing makes good hostility. Because you're something in a cage. You're caged. And you -- animals in cages are so mad! They want out. And he paces. And so I put that in. But I learned to pace, learned to show hostility by going back and forth. You get more freedom and more freedom as you learn about it. The more freedom you have, the more fun the audience has.

DANA: I remember so clearly trying to wean myself away from that -- standing there.

DILLER: Oh!

DANA: Because here I had both hands, and then, what do you -- what do you mean? I've got to -- Uh you know, I can walk around. [I don't -- I don't?] --

DILLER: You mean when you went into television.

DANA: Yeah. No, I mean when I -- when I first started to take the -- wireless mic off. And there's that whole rest of the stage. (laughs)

DILLER: It's a whole new thing!

DANA: I know!

DILLER: I know.

DANA: But it's scary!

DILLER: Because you -- you -- You know what? You -- it's -- it's your security.

DANA: Yeah!

DILLER: It's your security. At The Purple Onion we all got started with that wonderful overhead mic. We didn't have that extra thing to worry about. So we never learned about the mike. Now at the next place we go, we've got a mic. All of us just went berserk!

09:37:07

DANA: I know!

DILLER: I mean, I -- I --

DANA: It seems like such a small thing but --

DILLER: No, it isn't! Your security is built on such little things.

DANA: That's right. It emphasized the delicacy of all this.

DILLER: Of the whole thing.

DANA: Yeah.

DILLER: You have to feel -- you have to feel secure. You have to feel good. You have to be in charge. You can't have any loose ends hanging around. Or chinks where someone can get in there. Because there are people in your audience, now and then, who would like to "work with you." They want to be a star!

(laughter)

DANA: This idea, I -- I sometimes approach this question eh with difficulty, as I am now (laughs) because I don't want to be judgmental about the -- what's going on with the younger comedians today, you know?

09:38;10

DILLER: Yes. No, we don't want to do that.

DANA: But -- And -- and I know we -- we've tested on it -- on it a little bit. But are we wrong? I don't -- I --Are we being judgmental about this stuff, about this language and -- and the -- especially from the women -

DILLER: The women! Oh, gosh!

DANA: -- the -- the comedians who are women, today.

DILLER: Oh, and they really use the F word.

DANA: Oh, yeah!

DILLER: I'm against it. I don't -- I don't --

DANA: And -- and the other is the C word, the F word, I mean --

DILLER: Oh, C!

DANA: -- you know.

DILLER: Oh, God! Well, I'm against it. You know, a nice, clean-talking comic whom I just love his work is **Seinfeld**. Uh I've -- I've seen so many of them do things that really, really repulse me. I -- I can't imagine why other people don't feel the same way. I -- (claps her hands) I'm not for it.

DANA: It is. It's -- the -- the difficulty that we -- we have, it is definitely a generational thing. And the respect of -- I'll say we had for our audiences, to come dressed up. I mean -- we would never sit down because it would take the crease out your pants!

09:39:32

DILLER: I know. That's right. It would take the crease out. You never sat in your pants. And I loved you in your underpants. (laughter) But, you see, they -- all the guys all worked in suits. Well, you see -- I will say this, uh **Jerry** [Seinfeld] works in a suit. Jay [Leno] works in a suit. They come out dressed like real people. And -- and uh **Letterman**. You know, I like that. I like that! I -- Jesus! I don't want to give it up! And uh some of the girls come out, and you wonder where, where did -- what bin did she find that one in? I -- uh there's no thought, evidently. Or no idea of to build a persona, or ah something pleasant to look at, or make a statement. I -- I just don't understand why that doesn't go with the clothes too. Ah, they look like they just -- Well, they're not dressed for the stage. Jeans and stuff! I don't understand. And --

DANA: Along -- along with that is the fact that there's no beginning, middle, and end.

DILLER: You mean to the acts?

DANA: To the act, yeah.

09:40:47

DILLER: No. And you must have a beginning, middle, and end. The last thing I learned was how to get *on*. And guess who helped me with that? **Charlie Manna.**

DANA: Oh, God bless Charlie.

DILLER: He had an early death. He was a smart comic, but he -

DANA: [We -- we were?] talking to Buck Henry about Charlie.

DILLER: He was almost too smart. He -- his material was so smart that it was almost over the head. But he gave me the greatest -- Because I was struggling. I would -- I just couldn't know how to say hello to an audience. And it's very important. **You must have a hello.** And I would try different things. I'd start in the middle of the act. I'd try everything. And he said, "Tell five of your hottest jokes and keep going." And that is it. That is it. That way, they never have a chance to hate you. They're laughing.

DANA: That's right. They can't pull the trigger if they're laughing about it.

DILLER: No, they can't.

DANA: Yeah.

DILLER: No. If they do, they'll miss. (laughs)

09:41:56

MATZ: Talking again about the role of the female comedian, you really came out swinging in so many ways. I mean, other than hitting them with the good material right off, you would come right out and say -- you know, one of -- one of my favorite one-liners of yours -- "You've heard about the total woman. You're looking at a fraction." You know?

[Diller laughs]

DILLER: Well, my **self-deprecation**. Now during women's lib -- remember that movement? -- those girls got very mad at me, some of them, because they claimed I was putting women down. Hell! I'm making a living. I'm part of the movement. I'm out of the house! That's what they all wanted. But, you see, there are certain people who see it always in a wrong way. But my whole self-deprecation, they say, "Why do you do that?" Because it works. It works! Besides, it puts the audience at a whole different level. It puts them up here, and I'm down here. And -- and that's the way it should be. It makes you feel -- make them feel good! And anyway, those great jokes. Oh, God, all the great jokes about how I had no chest, you know, no chest at all. And -- that's why I had to wear those dresses that didn't show my figure. Because I did have boobs. And I claimed I didn't. And I had so many jokes that I didn't want to lose -- that -- (laughs) Like, you know, "I know why I'm so flat. I wore too much foam rubber. I -- I think I erased them."

MATZ: Yeah.

DANA: (laughs)

DILLER: You know, these are great jokes! And I have a whole page full of flat jokes.

DANA: Well, we want to ask one more -- one more question we've been asking everybody.

DILLER: What is that?

09:45:13

DANA: It's sort of silly, but it's -- it's pungent.

DILLER: OK.

DANA: Was it worth it?

DILLER: Oh, every minute was worth it! It's the greatest thing in the world to work within comedy, as anything, a writer, a -- a dancer -- I love **funny dancing**. Oh, God! They don't have any of those any more. And those two -- two people, where their clothes all come apart! (laughs) Oh, how I -- I used to have an act that I took with me, like that, where she ended up -- You know, he was just torn to pieces. And great dancers!

DANA: Adagio.

DILLER: Yeah, Adagio!

DANA: Yeah.

DILLER: It takes great dancers to do that, you know. Or she'd slide across the stage and miss -- go straight off. And

anything in comedy is worth it. Worth it, worth it. It'll keep you alive, well, and happy.

DANA: Well, we love you, Phyllis.

DILLER: We love you too.

DANA: Thank you, so much.

MATZ: We're glad you're still making us laugh.

DILLER: Thank you.

09:46;26

End of Excerpt from Interview -Phyllis Diller