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comedians whose repertoire of characters featured more drag than a month's worth of shows at Darcelle XV.

But beyond the gender-bending humor and the Monty Python-esque situations, *TKITH* had one thing that no one else had: an openly gay member writing and performing gay comedy sketches. Sure, *Saturday Night Live* had a token gay man for a brief time, but Scott Thompson was both flaming and dignified, whether holding forth as barroom quipster Buddy Cole or impersonating the queen of England as she dithered about her royal family. The other Kids fearlessly joined in, blurring sexual boundaries and genders with equal aplomb.

A&E has recently begun releasing *TKITH* in full-season DVD boxed sets. The discs feature uncensored footage, including skits that even HBO was too skittish to run a decade ago. There are also best-of compilations with commentary, documentaries and early live performance footage of the group pre-TV.

The first season features the introduction of Buddy Cole and his complaint that "I don't hear anyone touting the superiority of faggots!" Be sure to watch the rare bonus pilot for Buddy's real debut. Elsewhere, enjoy straight men discussing their longing to share womanhood, secretaries gossiping about whether the new guy in the office is gay, and the Wild West parody "Running Faggot." Thompson

also makes it very clear in one segment that he's angry at his parent for having him circumcised, then offers an alternative to foreskins.

The second season upped the queer quotient exponentially, including Buddy Cole's lesbian softball team, a gay vampire with a taste for rough trade, star-stalking uber-geeks Weston and Virgil, and a nellier-than-thou Broadway star playing it straight. Thompson also debuts his Queen Elizabeth impersonation and faces a crisis when he realizes he's not gay after all. (Watch for a previously censored ending.) A brilliant returning character, Chicken Lady, also premieres on these discs.

The only tough call you'll have to make with the hilarious *Kids in the Hall* DVD sets is whether to give them as a gift...or keep them for yourself.

—Andy Mangels

The Dame Edna Experience: The Complete Series 2

The Dame Edna Experience: The Christmas Specials

Imagine Charlton Heston as an apron-wearing houseboy, Mel Gibson trapped naked in a sauna and Imelda Marcos chased by a Great Dane for her shoes. "The devil made me do it," they might say, but this devil is Dame Edna, who orchestrated these and many more hilariously camp scenarios on her various TV shows.

Edna is the purple-haired, self-consumed "megastar" who hobnobs with the stars and advises world leaders—when she isn't busy skewering superstardom. That's her shtick, and nobody can match her. And why not?

Creator Barry Humphries—who, shocking to say, is married with four kids—has been refining this character since 1956, when she first appeared as his satire of a pretentious, egomaniacal Melbourne housewife. Two recent DVD releases feature the Dame in all her glory.

The Dame Edna Experience: The Complete Series 2 features the second season of her parallel-world talk show from the late '80s. Guests include Dolph Lundgren, Grace Jones, Ron Reagan Jr.,

Chubby Checker, Dusty Springfield, Lauren Bacall and others trying not to falter under the Dame's dish. When she isn't terrorizing the guests or upbraiding her mute sidekick, Madge, Edna talks about

her husband's medical problems ("his prostate filled up half the house!") and her son Kenny and his "flatmate" (who are "looking for Miss Right together"). This two-disc set also contains a live show, her music video "Disco Matilda," a chat with Whoopi Goldberg and an interview with Barry Humphries playing himself.

The Christmas Specials contains another live show, "Dame Edna's Christmas Experience," the scandalous "A Night on Mount Edna" and her droll "address to the commonwealth." This is a must-have if only for the sight of the Dame pawing a naked, nervous Mel Gibson and screaming at her "houseboy"

Charlton Heston for spilling fondue on Julio Iglesias. 'Nuff said?

—GM JM



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