



The Superstar Divas perform at their 4th Anniversary Show May 1.

Kennedy says. Over the years, Kennedy has been an actor, singer, dancer and director—and has been involved in more than 150 productions.

Ginger Lee, the almost-accidental diva, played by Brian Block, was Carmichael's other obvious choice. Block, who worked as a spotlight operator for Darcelle XV, describes being "roped into" drag in September 2002. The show's coordinator, Monica Boulevard, approached Block and asked him if he'd join the cast. Block hesitated, but Boulevard pressed hard, and he relented. His first rehearsal was two days later, his first show a day after that. "Darcelle and the rest of the cast were very helpful in getting me started," he explains. From there, Ginger Lee emerged, becoming a fixture with Darcelle and company for five years.

After his tenure at Darcelle's, Block planned to hang up Ginger Lee's wigs and take a "much needed break." Bolivia Carmichael had other plans. "Bolivia was relentless and bothersome, begging me to join her," Block recounts, smirking. "I'm teasing, of course. Bolivia attacked—I mean approached—me with an idea to bring on more performers for her show Sunday nights. I was honored that Bolivia picked me out of all the performers she knows. Honey Bea was also on board. We sat down one evening and 'The Superstar Divas' were hatched."

Four years later, The Superstar Divas have routines and roles down pat—Celine dress,

Reba wig, Adele gown. In addition to performances, each diva settles into a defined, practical capacity. "Bolivia is the motivated one, the choreographer—and books guests," Kennedy explains. "Ginger manages us; she books our shows elsewhere. I'm the logical one—the person putting the setlist together each Sunday." One even senses these roles while watching the divas perform—and interact. "We get along really well," Kennedy adds. "The chemistry is such we don't worry about much. I'm not saying we don't have fights or arguments. What siblings don't?"

Elliott adds, "We've certainly had our yelling matches. Sometimes it gets a little spicy." One of the most important aspects of the show, though? The audience—on that point, the divas are in wholehearted agreement. "We bring our all each week," Elliott says. "We feed off our audience. An energetic audience really raises the bar."

The show rarely wants for energy. We'd expect nothing less from three of the hardest-working, most talented performers in the city. The show offers a unique, eccentric mix of songs, skits and performances—material often spans generations and genres. The Superstar Divas Mega Show is a destination, now an indispensable Portland institution. **JO**

Sundays, 8 p.m.-midnight; CC Slaughters, 219 NW Davis St. They'll be off Pride weekend; their Pride kickoff show is Sunday, June 12.

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