

# q feature: ALL THAT GLITTERS

John Duff's sparkly new single pays tribute to Liberace and all men who have everything in the world that they can desire... except for love. BY JACK BARRY

John Duff's newest single is an unabashedly theatrical-R&B-patter-song and his most Mariah Carey, Babyface inspired piece yet. It starts with a traditional piano intro that builds into a lush piano accompaniment riddled with seventh chords and dramatic turnarounds and ends with a soaring octave-jumping climax. Titled "Give a F\*ck," it is about unrequited love and although packed with word play, there is no hidden message. It's opening lyric refers to Duff's disdain of masturbation and desire for connection.

"I wish I was sexually promiscuous," John Duff admits from his LA home. "That doesn't jive with my value system. I need some real attachment in order for me to feel comfortable in a physical scenario."

"The song is basically a proclamation of my own self-worth," he continues. "Like most guys, I have an animal nature to f-ck, but I used to leave hook up scenarios feeling emptier than I did before I got there. I've come to realize that I don't get anything out of casual sex. The occasional exchange of fluids with a stranger in a stairwell is fun, but even then - I need to feel some sort of fire."

Duff has also come to understand that on a spectrum, he probably falls closer to asexuality than he does to homosexuality. "It's complicated, but identity always is, so to make it easy on the people - I'm gay. If I found the right situation, I'd love to give a million f-cks. Until then, I'm good just singing. I think the kids call me demi-sexual. I'm a hoe for love, exclusively."

For the song's video, he wanted to present the "man who has everything except for love" archetype, and in the pulling of images and locations it dawned on him to pay tribute to Liberace. "I love incorporating a little homage in all of my videos, as there really isn't anything left that is wholly original," he explains.

Directed with Brad Hammer - who also worked with Duff on his previous single, "Hokie Pokie", the video is a collaboration of some of the most fabulous queer artists Duff could find. His creative director is Grant Vanderbilt from the House of Avalon. Art direction is by Aurora Sexton. Kiki Xtravanganza styled the costumes, many of which are custom. Michael Brambila (Lizzo) created the mint tuxedo. Ton Iniguez (Carrie Underwood) made both pink suits. Marco Marco (Britney Spears) designed the purple pajamas and The Disco Daddy - Vincent Michael customized the zebra speedo and the gold jacket.

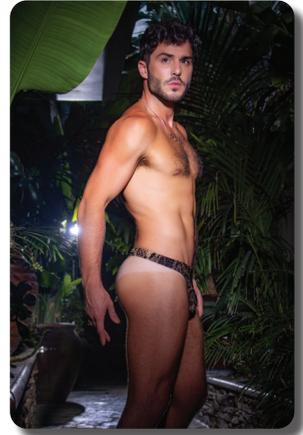
John Duff grew up in a suburb outside of Baltimore, Maryland, the youngest of two sisters and a brother. He studied musical theater at Syracuse University and after graduating college, he made his way to the bright lights of New York City where he competed on the nationally televised competition show, The X Factor.

"It was the most degrading and humiliating experience of my life," he recalls. Simon Cowell and Paula Abdul laid into him with criticism that had little to do with his talent. "It was because I was unapologetically gay," he confirms. "Simon even implied that I should consider a sex change."

"They wanted me to tone it down and I get it. The mainstream big label record execs are pretty much all straight white men and they don't see how I fit. I can't be mad because for a long time, I didn't see how I fit in either."

He says "Give a F-ck" and all of the songs from his upcoming visual EP are true reflections of himself as an artist. "I'm not attached to my success. I'm simply making music and visuals that I want to see in the world. I hope that maybe this song helps listeners feel empowered by their own desires, worth, and boundaries. That would be hot."

John Duff's "Give a F-ck" is being distributed independently and is available on Apple Music, Spotify and all digital platforms. Its video is available on YouTube.



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