

ENTERTAINMENT

# Women rock in 'Band Ladies'

Comedy series stars Newfoundland actress Dana Puddicombe

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There's the stuff women talk about in real life, and then there's what they talk about on film. The two are often drastically different.

That's not the case with "Band Ladies," a comedic web series of six 10-minute episodes that premiered on Highball TV Wednesday night.

"We do well on the Bechdel test on this one," laughs Dana Puddicombe, the show's co-creator, co-producer, co-writer and star.

Puddicombe, who grew up in Roaches Line but now works in Toronto, is referring to a test that measures the representation of women in media.

"(Band Ladies) is just women talking about themselves, and what they want — it's amazing that our ears aren't tuned to it. It's a new frequency."

The series explores the lives of five women on the cusp of middle age who turn their boring book club into a punk band. However, when a video of their first impromptu, drunken performance makes the news, the women are forced to be bold, and dive into decisions they otherwise might never have made.

That idea of making a brave change is one of the takeaways



A scene from "Band Ladies," featuring characters (from left): Cindy (Vicki Kim), Chloe (Lisa Michelle Cornelius), Penny (Dana Puddicombe), Stephanie (Kirsten Rasmussen) and Marnie (Kate Fenton). CONTRIBUTED PHOTO BY SAMANTHA FALCO

Puddicombe hopes viewers think about after watching the show.

"We take ourselves so seriously, and we get so caught up in the path that we're on, or the things that we can't do, and this is just a really great scenario of something (that) happens, and these women have an opportunity where they're like, 'Well, we opened this door. Should we do it? And then they just do."

"And you see the ramifications of it. It's not easy, and there's certainly some consequences to all of that that we explore, but just open up the door, and go."

**EMBRACING NEWFOUNDLAND**

It's a mantra that Puddicombe seems to employ in her own life, as she describes her move to Toronto, and pursuing an acting career.

She recalls when she first made the move, and someone told her that she should work on diminishing her Newfoundland accent — advice she was never comfortable with, so Puddicombe instead decided to embrace it as a strength.

She said her Newfoundland upbringing influences her work, calling it "the beating heart of everything."

"It's definitely a huge part of my perspective. And, the arts — the way you grow up in this province surrounded by the type of work — especially when I was coming up, Codco, all of these things, and at such a time when there was such a resurgence of pride in Newfoundland."

And every few years her work brings her home.

Puddicombe has appeared in "Republic of Doyle," and more recently, "Hudson and Rex," both filmed locally. She's also worked on "Murdoch Mysteries," "Baroness Von Sketch" and "The Handmaid's Tale," among others.

She said creating "Band Ladies" with co-creators Molly Flood and Kate Fenton was, in

many ways, an introspective look at their own lives, and the experiences of their friends. As actors, they could see the kind of roles they were offered change as they aged.

"It's almost like as you start to gain your voice as a woman, and start to make those decisions about what you want, and how you want to live your life, and you start to become clearer, then it's almost like the microphone is pulled away from you in society a bit because you're not a 20-year-old young thing looking at the world bright-eyed. And so, we wanted to play with that idea."

Despite some of these more thoughtful themes, the show offers up hearty laughs, a wild ride and empowering punk songs. The lyrics were written by the women themselves, and the show's album, "Angry All the Time," is available on iTunes and Spotify.

"Hopefully it'll inspire people to throw some paint at the wall, and just see what happens," says Puddicombe.

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Newfoundland actress Dana Puddicombe (right) in a scene from "Band Ladies" in her role as Penny, a self-made millionaire struggling with infertility. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO BY SAMANTHA FALCO

TRAFFIC

## Parked trucks struck as motorist jumps driveway

BARB SWEET  
THE TELEGRAM

A family on Middleton Street off Newfoundland Drive in St. John's was woken up Thursday to a worrisome yard in their own driveway.

Two trucks belonging to the family, who don't want to be named publicly for fear of retribution, were pushed together after one truck was slammed by a passing motorist who veered off Newfoundland Drive.

They say the man took off, but came back, perhaps to collect belongings from his vehicle.

The father and son detained the man until police arrived.

According to the duo, the man had no insurance and the vehicle was not registered.

Around 4 a.m., the father was awakened by his wife, who had dozed off on the sofa.

She had heard the vehicle slam into the trucks.

When they got outside, the driver was revving the engine and then took off, they said.

When he came back, they said, all he had to say for himself was that he didn't know what happened and he must have lost control after hitting gravel, though there did not seem to be any around.

"You're not safe in your bed," said the dad.

"In your own driveway," clarified the son as the two cleaned up the mess Thursday afternoon. "What can you do?"

"The only way to keep your vehicles safe is to take them to bed with you," the father replied.

They were also shaken because just the night before they had been in the garage playing cards into the wee hours and wondered if they would have been struck if the incident happened then.

As a project, the father and son had rebuilt a 2006 Toyota Tacoma, putting in a new engine and reconstructing and hand-painting the chassis.

It was to be the son's truck, but he hadn't insured it yet, as with COVID-19 restrictions and typically high rates for a young driver, he was holding off because he wasn't driving it anywhere until the pandemic is over.

They had spent about 1,000 hours on the project together in their garage, they said.

"We spent the whole winter rebuilding that truck," the father said.

"From the ground up," added the son.

Both vehicles are in remarkable shape, with little or no rust and spottless interiors. The 2005 GMC pickup was



Two trucks on Middleton Street in St. John's were parked in a driveway when struck by another vehicle early Thursday morning. BARB SWEET/THE TELEGRAM

insured. "The two trucks were wrote off," the father said, adding that despite their near-pristine shape he will get only a couple thousand dollars or so for the one that is insured.

"There are a lot of people going around without insurance, I tell you that... It's f---ing wicked."

They said the police let the man go on.

provide any information about the incident as of deadline.

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