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Moorestown's Dena Blizzard goes for laughs at New Hope Playhouse

By Sally Friedman, correspondent



Courtesy Feldscher Horwitz Public Relations

"'One Funny Mother' is suited to anyone who is a mom, has a mom, or is married to a mom," says Dena Blizzard.

She wasn't all that noticeable as a young kid or even in high school, says comedian Dena Blizzard. She was, in fact, a cinch to miss back in Runnemede, New Jersey.

"I was a band geek who played the glockenspiel. The glockenspiel."

But that all changed — and dramatically — when this Moorestown resident expanded her own focus beyond music at Rowan University, where she earned a degree in biology after she had mastered classical music at what was then Trenton State College.

But comedy? No way.

That is until Blizzard entered the Miss New Jersey Pageant, with her talent being comedy, and won that title. She had found a part of herself, she admits, she didn't even know was there.

Indeed it was. That side blossomed and ripened as she and her husband became parents of three children — Dean, 17, and daughters Jacqueline, 14, and Brooke, 12.

"One Funny Mother," Blizzard's one-woman show onstage Thursday through March 12 at the Bucks County Playhouse, has delighted audiences off Broadway and around the country on the premise that, yes, motherhood is funny. Marriage is, too.

Its development from a modest comedy/parody of real life into a side-splitting burst of affirmations that, yes, real life itself is hilarious, has validated a tried and true maxim of what audiences want. It's as simple as their ability to relate.

"As I was developing the piece, I would get comments after the show about what people loved, and not just women-people," emphasizes this spirited, naturally hilarious woman.

Capturing the smallest, yet most familiar nuggets, Blizzard "gets it." She gets it that you, too, often are not the sainted and beloved "I Remember Mama" you thought you might be.

In 80 minutes of Blizzard's stage sass, audiences go with her on a day in her life as she readies herself for a girls night out.

The premise began working in small clubs, then larger ones, then in the Big Apple world, as she constantly asked herself about whether she had simply gone crazy since motherhood entered her life.

All the while, this actually bright and thoughtful woman has observed others, listened to their stories and found a way to capture — and hold — the commonality of it all.

Things have moved quickly, with venues and audiences getting larger, along with the buzz. Kickstarter promotions and lots of attention have catapulted Blizzard's show from a cottage industry into a phenomenon organized and run by an all-woman staff, even including the star's proud parents.

One of her signature explanations for the growth is as simple as this: " 'One Funny Mother' is suited to anyone who is a mom, has a mom or is married to a mom," she says.

What Blizzard loves to hear most is, "Your show made me feel normal."

Her résumé swells with credits that include serving as warm-up comedian for Anderson Cooper, hosting gigs on NJ 101.5 and hosting of corporate conferences and keynoting them.

And, yes, looking back, Blizzard also credits her Miss New Jersey crown with building her confidence in ways she could not have imagined.

But her main credential, this funny but humble lady explains, is her real life.

"I'm anything but perfect. I can be foolish and definitely I can be flawed. Just ask my family!"

And perhaps that's the point. Making the ordinary extraordinary is a gift that this Moorestown wife and mother has shared with audiences.

"I am who I am," says Blizzard. "This I know — having a husband and kids has made me funnier. The inspiration doesn't come from some remote place. It comes from my own home."

And that, perhaps, is precisely the point.

"One Funny Mother" runs from Thursday to March 12 at the Books County Playhouse, 70 S. Main St., New Hope. Tickets: \$30 to \$45, plus fees. Information: 215-862-2121; bcptheater.org.