

House cracks up On the Waterfront

By Rick Conrad
Entertainment Reporter

Newfoundland's Amy House brought her very dark but very funny one-woman show to Dartmouth Friday night to open Eastern Front Theatre's nine-day On the Waterfront Festival.

This version of Cracked is a segment of House's larger work of the same name.

Set in a psychiatric hospital in Newfoundland, Cracked focuses on two women, each of whom is locked up for committing a violent crime.

In the first scene, a woman with a Newfie Acadian accent spends most of the time on her knees in cuckoo conversation with God.

She shares with the Almighty her opinions of how Catholicism is losing its influence, while securing His OK to blow up the Newfoundland legislature.

She believes the government is controlled by Protestants.

You know, the MINISTER of finance, the MINISTER of education, the health MINISTER.

"Not a priest among dem!" she says. "Da government is Protestant organized crime!"

Funny stuff. The audience lapped it up.

The second scene features House as an old woman in a wheelchair with bandaged hands.

She engages in some clever wordplay about menstruation, menopause and hysterectomies.

Then House masterfully, gradually turns the scene into something darker.

The old woman tells us more about herself: how all her children have moved away and how she's had to care for her stroke-af-

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flicted husband alone.

Cracked must be breathtaking in its full form. This production is still pretty darn good.

Cracked plays tonight and Sunday at 7.

Amy House performing for Celebrations

By EDWINA BATEMAN
The Gulf News

Her stand-up comedy, her unique characters, her command of the stage and the audience, always makes for a remarkably entertaining and fun event —and she's performing at the Bruce Bullet 100 Reception.

Amy House, a one woman show, will be giving a 45-minute performance, at the Bruce Centre, that will compliment the celebrated Centennial event. Her extensive background in writing for theatre, television and radio yields an ability to create characters and situations tailor-made to entertain at any event.

Amy has written and performed her own one-woman shows, and toured nationally and internationally with several shows, some of which she has written herself or with co-writers. Her one-woman shows, *The Seven Faces of Amy* and *'Tis Not Human*, have received rave reviews of hilarity and side-splitting humor. She creates her own characters, of which she has several. These outrageous and sometimes brazen Newfoundland characters have been performed in theaters, hotel salons, and church halls.

One of Amy's most recent and outstanding successes would have to be a play she co-wrote with partner Berni Stapleton called, *A Tidy Package*. This play, about the plight of women in Newfoundland and Labrador caught up in the Cod Moratorium, won national and international acclaim. *A Tidy Package* is a riveting emotional roller coaster which takes you from belly-laugh humor to tears of sorrow.

Members of the Bruce Bullet 100 Committee think Amy's the perfect choice to host the event, and are pleased to have her, along with the Bel Canto Singers, to entertain an expected large gathering.



Amy House as herself

Amy on her Own

A Power House

A large woman she is not, but she packs a wallop in a variety of tidy little packages all by herself. Recently Amy House formed her own entrepreneurial venture for one-woman comedy shows to entertain at conventions, luncheons, meetings and other events. Her stand-up act deflates political pariah and great aunts alike with a sharp dash of common sense and even sharper wit, satirizing the stereotypically sacred - the bingo card, the open line, and the youngsters.

The many caricatures of Amy - the great aunt, the open line caller/distraught mother, the plant worker, and one of the girls going 'out to the club' - represent the variety of characters of Newfoundland and Labrador. There is an element of truth in all of her acts, and that's why she can make us - and the rest of the nation - laugh. Amy says "It's a good time to be a Newfoundland comedian. Newfoundland comedy is the catchword across this country right now. You've got 22 Minutes, you've got Snook, you've got Buddy Whasisname and the Other Fellers. It's everywhere in the country people know it, they love it and they're ready for it."

And it's good that the rest of the nation is coming to



left: In character, "Tis not human"

below: Amy House, as herself



understand and appreciate this province's signature style of humour. Until recently, theatre/comedy weren't considered to be wise career choices for those who wanted to stay in Newfoundland. In a radio interview following an award-winning high school performance, Amy says "I was shocked at the question - they asked whether I was considering pursuing a professional acting career. I almost didn't understand it, let alone assume I actually could pursue a career in theatre or comedy. I didn't think you could be an actress if you were from Newfoundland. I thought you'd have to be from the States."

This wide-eyed "Here in Newfoundland? Wha?" theory is one of Amy's favourite jokes. Amy says, "My mother instilled that in me. She taught me not to expect too much from myself because that way you wouldn't be disappointed. It's a hard line to cross to say, this is it, I'm going for it."

This decision to perform and operate independently explains why Amy and her longtime colleague and friend Bernie Stapleton are no longer a performing duo. Amy says, "Bernie and I worked together very closely for a long time, and we were also best friends. There comes a time when you have to break away from each other, if just to find out who you are again. I have to find out what I can do for myself and by myself." By herself, Amy is a powerhouse of energy sparking jokes, igniting laughter that energize her further. The most challenging part for Amy on her own is literally, Amy on her own, "The hardest part for me is stand-up comedy - in my own dress and my own shoes. I have a great time doing it, just standing up and talking, but I'd die if they didn't laugh at me. That's where the energy comes from."