

Laugh Tracks

Laughter Rings In The New Year When Comedians Bob Zany And Zan Aufderheide Perform At Minervas

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If you're looking for a zany kick-off to 2013, that's exactly what you will get at veteran comedian Bob Zany's New Year's Eve show in Yankton.

In addition to some good old Zany, you'll also get some extra Zan — as in Zan Aufderheide, an up-and-coming female comedian from Indianapolis. After doing individual sets Monday at Minervas, the two will join forces on stage as "Zan Vs. Zany."

"We go back and forth and do Sonny and Cher-like banter without the music," Zany said during a recent phone interview with the Press & Dakotan. "But we are working on a song!"

Zany has been in the comedy business for more than 30 years. He got the showbiz bug after appearing on "The Gong Show" in 1977 at age 15. It was his first performance in front of a crowd.

"They paid me \$125.98," Zany recalled. "In 1977, that was a lot of money for a kid."

"There is nothing outside of comedy that I've ever wanted to do," he continued. "I've been fortunate to accomplish almost everything I want to do. I've starred in movies. I've done every TV show imaginable almost. I've done sitcoms and hosted my own show. I've co-hosted the Jerry Lewis telethon for years."

Zany has appeared on television staples like "Roseanne" and "The Drew Carey Show," and he had a role in Steven Soderbergh's 2009 film, "The Informant!" Additionally, he does his weekly "Zany Report" on "The Bob and Tom Show."

Zany also starred in a documentary about his career called "Close But No Cigar," which was recently released on DVD.

In 2013, he plans to unleash his own as-yet-unnamed podcast upon the world. Aufderheide will co-host.

After all these years, Zany said comedy still provides him with a thrill.

"There is a real high to getting laughs," he stated. "I always say comedians aren't paid to perform. We're paid to do whatever leads up to the performance — travel, writing, publicity, etc."

Working with Aufderheide, Zany is finding new things to explore.

The two comedians met in Indianapolis when Zany was headlining a show. Aufderheide was the MC for the event, and part of her job was to pick Zany up from the hotel. In Zany's words, they hit it off.

"He didn't have a big ego," Aufderheide recalled. "He was cool and wanted to talk. By the time we got to the club, we were in some deep philosophical conversation."

They ended up working together on several occasions.

"I felt comfortable enough to heckle him from the crowd," Aufderheide said. "It got a huge laugh, so we built stuff on top of it. We decided to travel with it."

During 2012, they took "Zan Vs. Zany" across the country, and it included a successful week in Las Vegas at The Laugh Factory.

"I think it helps to travel with a friend on the road," Aufderheide said. "The joke is, 'It's nice to travel with a friend on the road, and when I can't travel with a friend, I travel with Bob.' But that's just a joke. He is a great friend."

Zany said he likes to think of himself as a mentor to Aufderheide, who is relatively new to the comedy circuit.

In addition to touring, she has a radio segment aired across the country called "A Moment of Zan."

"Why I do comedy is to turn the negatives in life into positives," Aufderheide said. "Laughter has always been my defense mechanism and my coping mechanism. I can laugh off anything."

Having a love of nature and comedy, Aufderheide combined the two in a television pilot being shopped around called "Shockingly Geographic." Zany collaborated with her on it.

"It was cool for me because I was more behind the camera and got a different point of view," he said.

Added Aufderheide, "I started putting jokes to the stuff I learned from science years ago. I would do those jokes at bars or open mics and they would die a terrible death. But I believed in them and thought, 'This is not the venue for them.'"

She hopes that with "Shockingly Geographic" that humor will find an appropriate audience.

When the comedy duo play at Minervas Monday, it will mark the first visit to Yankton for either of them.

"I get to put a new pin on my map," Zany said.

However, he is no stranger to South Dakota in general.

"Sioux Falls made it 'Bob Zany



Bob Zany, who has been a stand-up comedian and actor for more than 30 years and can be heard regularly on "The Bob and Tom Show," will play two shows at Minervas in Yankton on New Year's Eve. Appearing with him will be Zan Aufderheide, a young comedian from Indianapolis. After individual sets, the two join forces to do a routine reminiscent of Sonny and Cher — but without the music. (Courtesy Photo)

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