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A holiday hater's cabaret

Fed up with Christmas? Here's a show just for you

Tara Bradbury · Reporter | Posted: Dec. 27, 2019, 8:55 p.m. | Updated: Dec. 28, 2019, 6 a.m. | 3 Min Read



Local singer/songwriter Evelyn Jess (with her cat, Mimsy) understands what it's like to be fed up with Christmas and is inviting you to join her as well as Colleen Power, other musicians and comedians for a holiday-hater cabaret, "Merry Pissmas 2," happening tonight at Quidi Vidi Brewery in St. John's. - Contributed

ST. JOHN'S, N.L. — Maybe it's the stress of shopping in a crowd of people. Maybe it's the nightmare of enduring prying questions around the dinner table from relatives you hardly ever see. Maybe it's the fact you have to work during a week when most people do not.

Last year was the first for “Merry Pissmas,” and saw a full house despite a snowstorm. The name came from a favourite saying of Jess’s partner, Bridget (“Oh, piss!” as an exclamation of disappointment), but the idea was borne out of friendship ... and maybe a bit of Yuletide nausea.

“My musical sidekick Jordan Young and I were contemplating the obligatory Christmas show, and we couldn't really stomach the idea of singing ‘Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer,’” Jess said. “We were about to scrap it all when we saw our friend Sarah Walsh, the comedian, had posted a picture of her Christmas tree decorated simply with the four letters PISS, and the idea was born.”

Reaction to last year’s event was incredible, says Jess.

“Everyone there was in on the joke,” she says. “We've all had that feeling of being done with family time, done with busy-ness, done with stressmas, done with presents, and want to just get down to a nice pub like Quidi Vidi Taproom and have a few beers and have a laugh and indulge in Newfoundland's national sport: complaining.”

Jess, a native of Musgrave Harbour and last year’s Amelia Earhart Songwriting Competition winner, is known for her meaningful folk songs as well as her activism: an LGBT+ activist, Jess has worked to promote diversity and inclusivity in the local music scene.

Jess earned national attention in the spring of 2018 for “Paint the Crosswalk,” a parody of RuPaul’s “Sissy That Walk” she wrote and posted online in response to the Springdale town council’s repeated denial of a request from high school students for a rainbow crosswalk in honour of the LGBT+ community.

Jess plans to perform some original music at this year’s “Merry Pissmas” event, along with songs like Joni Mitchell's 1971 Christmas folk song, “River” (“The world’s saddest Christmas song,” she says), Loretta Lynn's "To Heck with Ole Santa Claus" from 1966, and Dropkick Murphys’ festive ode to dysfunctional families, “The Season's Upon Us.”

Joining Jess will be her band The Hot Mess (Young and Becca Spurrell), The Colleen Power Band and comedians Sarah Walsh, Chris Bruce, Veronica Dymond and Liam Small, who will each do a 15-minute standup set.

“They all have a bag full of salty hot takes on the holiday season,” Jess says.

online at <http://tinyurl.com/merrypissmas2>.

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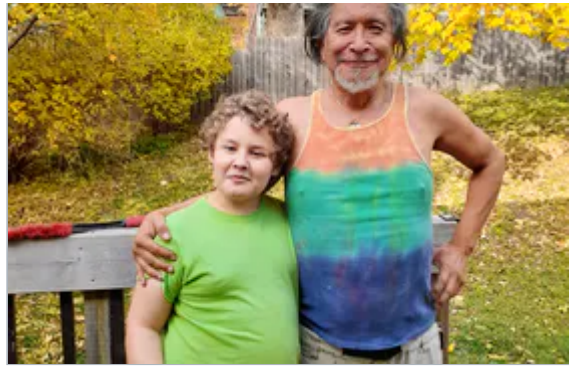
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