



Courtesy of Bob Mahoney/Lifetime Entertainment Service, LLC

Guest star Josie Loren with Josh Stamberg and Brooke Elliott in a new episode of 'Drop Dead Diva,' airing Sunday, July 24, at 9 p.m. on Lifetime.

Feel-good 'Drop Dead Diva' returns with new episodes

The title may not sound like it, but there are very few shows on television right now that are as feel-good as Lifetime's "Drop Dead Diva."

"You have a show like this that's very empowering to women, empowering to humanity. It gets people excited," Josh Berman, the show's creator/executive producer told me recently. "And that's a unique experience for me."

Here's the concept if you've never seen it. A vain model, Deb, dies and due to a mix-up in Heaven, finds herself back on Earth in the body of Jane (Brooke Elliott), a brilliant plus-sized lawyer. The only people who know Jane's true identity are Deb's best friend and her guardian angel.

The key to the show's feel-good style is that it is able to so effortlessly combine humor and drama.

"There aren't that many hour-long shows that can make you laugh as hard as 'Diva' or make you cry as hard as 'Diva,'" Berman said. "Within the same scene we take people from the highs to the lows, and I feel like life is a lot like that. You don't really know when you wake up in the morning what your high point and low point are going to be. And like that, 'Drop Dead



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Diva' is kind of a slice of life in the sense you never know what's going to happen next."

Having seen this Sunday's excellent episode, "The Prom," I actually do know what's going to happen as Jane takes on a school board who won't allow a lesbian couple to attend prom. The story was inspired by Constance McMillen, a Mississippi teenager who was denied access to her prom because she is gay.

"I was really touched by hearing her story," Berman said. "I just feel like this is such an important episode. I hope it gets out there."

Like most "Diva" episodes, "The Prom" will make you yell, laugh and cry all during the same hour. There are also great guest stars including Wanda Sykes, Lance Bass, Michael Gross and Amanda Bearse. Plus, Clay Aiken plays a part like we have never seen him play before.

"We're a cable show, and we

shoot in Georgia, but actors are willing to go out of their way to be a part of the 'Drop Dead Diva' family," Berman said.

A member of the "Diva" family familiar to those of us in the Tri-State is Ashland native Richard Boggs, a hairstylist on the show, for whom Berman has nothing but praise.

"It's not hard to say lots of nice things about Richard," Berman said. "He always goes beyond the call of duty and makes our actresses feel like divas even on their down days."

Boggs told me the episode was a lot of fun. "It was good to be able to add our glamorous 'Diva' touch for such an important message," he said.

"The Prom" episode of "Drop Dead Diva" airs Sunday, July 24 at 9 p.m. on Lifetime.

For more from Berman, including the inspiration for the show and what's coming up for the second half of the season, be sure to visit my blog.

Angela Henderson-Bentley writes about television in her "Stay Tuned" blog at www.herald-dispatch.com. Contact her at ahendersonbentley@hotmail.com.