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Off-Broadway Blitz

One man's idea for a stage show may turn into the next reality show on television. From concept to creation, Frank Russo's Rock Chicks is hitting New York like a tornado.

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Late January finally showed the first signs of an unforgiving winter. Even the bright lights and vibrant night life of the West Village couldn't distract people from the vapor ghosting out of their mouths. But on this particular night at the Players Theater on MacDougal Street, history was in the making, and it was called "Rock Chicks."

Producer Frank Russo is the man behind the ladies, and it all began with seeing New York favorite LOURDS on the roof of the Gershwin Hotel. A film premier was being held there for the film "And She Was," and the band was performing a song that singer Lourds Lane wrote for the film. Russo was instantly floored by the band, especially by Lane's explosive stage-personality.

"She's a musical genius," Russo said of Lane. "Her intuition for music is incredible."

Russo asked LOURDS to perform at his first "Rock Chicks" production at the Laugh Factory in Times Square last August, and he ended up needing a music director like Lane, whom he refers to as a "music impresario," to mold "Rock Chicks" into an unstoppable force.

"Frank is a great guy with a lot of heart and vision but needed a music director to focus the production," Lane said. "I told Frank that I would put together an amazing cast of female rockers, including a hard-hitting all female band and some of the most kick-ass front-women in NYC."

Lane became music director in a heart beat. With all her connections and knowledge of female-fronted bands from doing the annual Medusa Festival the past five years in a row, Lane

managed to choose some of the most dynamic yet varied women in New York to front the all-star "Rock Chicks" band.

"A lot of the cast I chose because they blew me away by their performance at Medusa Festival," Lane said.

Julia Preotu of Me Talk Pretty, Meg Wolf of New York No Stars and Melanie Krahmer of SIRSY took turns singing for the Rock Chicks band, which consisted of Jennifer "JennCity" Arroyo (formerly of Kit-tie, but better placed in Brooklyn-based Suicide City), Yael on Drums, Rachel Tricarico on guitar and Lane on keys and back-up vocals.

"They're high-energy, tenacious ladies that don't take no for an answer," Russo said of the rock chicks. "They're out there, they're in your face and they believe what they're doing."

Imagine CBGB in a theater and that's what Rock Chicks feels like: the vibrant, glowing spirit of New York as only a group of relentless, ballsy females could present it. It's not just about how hard these girls can rock, because that's a given. It's more about seeing how far they can take it. Lane and Russo both expressed interest in getting celebrities to join

the cast, and Russo hopes to get a "Rock Chicks" tour or even a television show to happen.

There are big plans for the future of "Rock Chicks," but for now it's something electric and exciting, like the beginning of an explosive storm. Witnessing enchanting performances from powerful women will never be a bad idea, and we haven't heard the last of Frank Russo's Rock Chicks.

"Sharing music and playing on-stage with



THE MAIN ACT: The band LOURDS at the players Theater.
(PHOTO BY: Michele Santomauro/Kingsman)

someone is a bond that runs extremely deep for me," Lane said. "For one night, I was in a band with all the best female rockers in NYC and that's an unbelievable feeling."