

HOW DID YOU GET THAT F\*&%ING AWESOME JOB?

## A Question for Dan Finnerty

by Evan Ratliff

“Once upon a time I was falling in love, now I’m \_\_\_\_\_ falling apart.” If you’ve heard the musical stylings of Dan Finnerty, the voice behind the all-girl-song cover group the Dan Band, there’s only one way to fill in that blank. Finnerty spewed his profanity-laced version of “Total Eclipse of the Heart” in his first screen appearance as the front man of a wedding act in the 2003 movie *Old School*. Then came the unforgettable *Starsky and Hutch* cameo in which he belted out an inappropriately sexy version of Roberta Flack’s “Feel Like Makin’ Love” at a bat mitzvah. With Finnerty’s snarling delivery, set to high-drama choreography, the Dan Band delivers a diva-inspired performance that is equal parts camp and earnestness. Now Finnerty, a sometime actor who lives in L.A. with his wife (actress Kathy Najimy) and daughter, has turned a joke into a phenomenon. The band’s first live CD is due out in September, followed by a concert film—directed by McG of *Charlie’s Angels* fame—that will be released on Bravo and on DVD in October. No longer the best kept secret of comic filmmakers, Finnerty is living the dream: the wedding band that hits the big time.

**ReadyMade: Hi Dan. How did you get that f\*&%ing awesome job?**

**Dan Finnerty:** Sadly, it was beer and karaoke.

**RM: Start from the beginning.**

**DF:** After college a bunch of my friends went to New York City to audition for the European tour of *Hair*. We drove up to New York four days after graduation, and all of us got it—which is crazy. So I was on a bus through Europe for a year. We were all little Gap college kids pretending to be hippies. Then I stayed in New York City auditioning, and got *Stomp*. Which is [also] crazy, because I can’t dance and I can’t play drums. So I kind of lost respect for them when they cast me.

**RM: Where did the beer and karaoke come in?**

**DF:** We were on tour, in Toronto for the summer, and the only bar down the street from our hotel was this karaoke bar. We would go and just get wasted and sing. I was drunk enough once to think that singing “I Am Woman” would be funny. And it was to some, and for the others I escaped quick enough. But my friend who was there had a band in L.A., and she said, “Oh



### VITAL STATS

**Age:** 34

**Residence:** Los Angeles

**First job:** Bagger at a grocery store

**Best job:** Front man for the Dan Band

**Greatest obstacle:** Starbucks

**Salary during 20s:** \$30,000-100,000

**# of personal assistants:** None

my God, sing ‘I Am Woman’ and a few other songs and you can open for me.” So I added “You Light Up My Life” and “Flashdance,” and did it. Then some guy said, “Hey I’ll book you at the Opium Den if you have some more songs.” So I got a makeshift band and started playing once a month. Then it just started spinning out of control.

**RM: How did the *Old School* thing happen?**

**DF:** The director, Todd Phillips, came to see the show in L.A. My whole show is all “f\*&%”s in every song. But when I first got to the studio and started recording, I didn’t know I could swear. So I did it straight one time through and he was like, “Yo man, dude you’ve gotta say the ‘f\*&%’s.” And I was like, “Oh thank God.”

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For *Starsky and Hutch* he wanted me to sing “I Feel Like Makin’ Love,” and I just swore through the whole first take. He said, “Actually we can’t say ‘f\*&%’ in this movie because it’s PG-13.” I was, like, castrated. I tried “frick.” [Sings] Mother-fricker. It’s so weak. “Mother-fricker” isn’t as potent.

**RM: What’s changed since the movies?**

**DF:** We had a pretty good following in L.A., and then *Old School* expanded the demographic into young frat guys. When we’d play a place like the Viper Room, there was always the transformation watching the guys—you know, guy guys—thinking, “Is he singing girl songs? I’m going to kick his ass.” And then four Zimas later, they’re like, “Abba’s cool! I love Wilson Phillips!” They are bouncing to “Hold On.” We’d always win them over. But now the curtain opens, it’s 22-year-old, backwards-baseball-cap, beer-funnelers who want to rock out to the lady songs. I never know if half of them are aware that we sing girl songs past “Total Eclipse.” But whatever, at least I know that I’ve broadened their horizons.

**RM: What should people expect at a Dan Band show?**

**DF:** A whole lotta girl songs, a lot of swearing, and a whole lot

of sweat. It’s like a Gallagher concert. People get drenched. Bring a tarp.


**RM: Do you consider yourself a diva?**

**DF:** I feel the diva juice every once in a while. You know “Tyrone,” by Erykah Badu? We sing that song, and from that we go into “No More Drama,” by Mary J. Blige. You can’t help but feel the power. It’s about all the men that did me wrong.

**RM: So is this your permanent career?**

**DF:** I started off as an actor, and I came to L.A. because I wanted my own TV show. Who doesn’t? Except that TV sucks. And actually last year, I got it. We did *The Dan Show* on ABC. And everybody kept asking me, “Now are you going to quit?” But even while we were filming I was still doing the Dan Band shows every two weeks. I can’t shake it.

**RM: What happened to the TV show?**

**DF:** It died for good in December. Believe me, it’s a good thing. But the Bravo special is going to be great. We want to launch a series from that. It’ll be a *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, but for a cover band. 



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