

The  
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## Scratch Tracks

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Teaser for Shelburne sitcom debuts on CBC Comedy Coup

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From left, Alex Buchanan, Rob Stork and Ed Trevors during shooting of the Scratch Tracks teaser. (Contributed)

From left, Alex Buchanan, Rob Stork and Ed Trevors during shooting of the Scratch Tracks teaser. (Contributed)

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The Scratch Tracks team, left to right: Darcy Rhyno, Rob Stork and Alex Buchanan. (Contributed)

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What do a failed music producer, a pot-smoking grandma, a savvy teen rocker and a revolving door of hopeful East Coast musicians have in common?

A great idea for a sitcom.

Scratch Tracks is set in small-town, south shore Nova Scotia. The plot: After failing to make it in the music business, Nathan Williams retreats to his grandmother's home and opens a recording studio in her basement.

Granny smokes weed, much to Nathan's chagrin. Bridget Pepper, a young person with an old soul, narrates the teaser.

Filling out the cast of characters are the misfit musicians who mill in and out of Nathan's basement studio, with the idea to end each episode with an original song.

Scratch Tracks — a concept by Shelburne’s Darcy Rhyno, brought to life in a 90-second teaser by Rhyno and production partners Alex Buchanan and Rob Stork — is vying among 285 sitcom projects in CBC TV’s Comedy Coup competition.

Top prize is \$500,000 and a development deal to produce a pilot episode, which will be aired next fall on CBC.

To participate in the process and help projects advance, supporters register on the Comedy Coup website <http://comedycoup.cbc.ca>. Fans earn more votes by completing a new round of fan badges each week.

All 285 teasers debuted on the website on Oct. 2. The top 100 were culled on Oct. 6. Voting for the top 50 takes place Oct. 23-26, followed by another voting period Nov. 6-9 when the top 15 will be chosen. Then the final five projects will advance to Toronto to develop their respective pilot plans.

Of the 11 Nova Scotia entries, nine hail from Halifax. The other non-Halifax entry, besides Shelburne’s Scratch Tracks, comes from Big Bras d’Or.

Scratch Tracks’ three key players brought together complementary technical and creative skills that meshed well together.

Rhyno is a multifaceted writer, teacher and manager of the Osprey Arts Centre.

Buchanan has released two CDs of his own music, produced dozens of other musicians and is owner/operator of HarbourTone Productions.

“Scratch track is a term in the studio that I use all the time,” Buchanan explains. “When a client comes in and starts recording, the first thing that we have to do is create a group of scratch tracks. You can call them rough tracks. You record over the top of those, and eventually those ... get deleted after a while.”

Shelburne newcomer Stork is an Emmy Award-winning writer and producer for the PBS children’s series, Reading Rainbow. His career in film and television writing and production spans over 20 years and includes documentaries, films and programs for Showtime Networks, Discovery Channel, Fox, Disney Channel and PBS.

Scratch Tracks is an idea that Rhyno had been developing for over a year. When he heard about the Comedy Coup competition on Sept. 13, he realized he had just over a week to get the teaser written and produced by the Sept. 21 submission deadline.

Rhyno immediately enlisted Buchanan and Stork. “I really didn’t think it was going to happen in a week,” Buchanan admits with a laugh. “So I said sure.”

Scratch Tracks is Stork’s first foray into prime time situational comedy. It marked a number of firsts for Rhyno and Buchanan, as well.

Stork had a camera he'd never used, and they bought editing software because they had none.

“So we had a camera we'd never used before, editing software we'd never used before, no actors, no locations, no script,” Rhyno says. He wrote a draft script on Sunday, which underwent multiple revisions as scenes were filmed and edited.

“We needed actors, and only two people said no,” Rhyno recalls. “Everyone else said, ‘I don't know what you're doing, but I'm in.’ By Wednesday we had a shoot scheduled. We started at 8 a.m. and ran 14, 16 hours a day for the next couple of days.”

“Alex, who didn't expect to be editing this, took the reins with the software, and in one day, he became as fast an editor as I've ever worked with,” Stork says. “And I've worked with quite a few. That was a real achievement.”

“The three of us worked really well together,” Buchanan adds. “We were always right on schedule. We could comfortably throw ideas out. We had to work that way because it was such a short period of time.”

Such urgency turned out to be blessing in disguise, Stork says.

“Had that (Comedy Coup) competition not come along, the impetus to get together and quickly make something like this, this teaser, would not have been there. So it was a nice happenstance, really, which forced the creation of something that, in and of itself, should be a great marking tool and a great way to expose the concept going forward.”

#### CREDITS BOX:

Scratch Tracks cast and crew:

Nathan Williams – Ed Trevors

Grandma Williams – Mary Lou Keith

Bridget Pepper – Ashley Scott

Double Uke Player – Manitoba Hal Brolund

Accordion Player – Chett Buchanan

Preacher and Pirate – George Thorburn

Johnny Cash Impersonator – Robbie Smith

Woman and Dog – Kathleen Tudor and Sadie

Duck Hunter – Darcy Rhyno

Female Fighter – Alison Stanton

Crew

Creator/Scriptwriter – Darcy Rhyno

Director/Camera – Rob Stork

Sound/Editor – Alex Buchanan

Boom – Alex Buchanan, Miles Redgate

Make-up and costume – Sammi Wamback

Musicians – Sean McClure, Alex Buchanan, Allan Crosby

Social Media – Darcy Rhyno

Shot on location on King Street, Water Street, at the Melansons' and HarbourTone Productions in Shelburne, Nova Scotia.