



# THIS MOM ROCKS

Lead singer of local band Mad Libby and BVNW Parent perseveres past stereotypes of women in rock and recently opened for rock hall of famers Joan Jett and the Blackheart and Heart.

BY JENNA WEYFORTH

*Design by Ben Hobbs*

**C**heers are heard as red smoke explodes into the dirty blonde hair of the lead singer and BVNW parent, Jennifer Roswold. As her guitar blasts and the drumsticks slam to the heavy rock beat, Joan Jett and the Blackhearts are backstage, preparing to perform.

Roswold plays guitar and has been a part of the Kansas City based band, Mad Libby, for the last eight years. The band plays rock and roll and features original songs written by Roswold, with help from the band members, including “Tell” and “Four Leaf Clover.”

“This band is all original,” Roswold said. “We throw in a couple songs

people know every once in a while, but for the most part, we play all originals.”

Drummer Dana Scott said Mad Libby’s music style sounds like Joan Jett meets the Foo Fighters with Beatles harmonies. Scott said she and Roswold both grew up listening to Joan Jett, and Jett’s attitude and passion were inspirations for their band. This

connection, she said, brings them full circle as they now get to open for Joan Jett and the Blackhearts as well as Heart, led by Ann and Nancy Wilson.

“You’ve got Joan Jett and the Blackhearts and then you’ve got Heart, both two iconic female-fronted bands that are both in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame,” Scott said. “That’s kind of a big deal to us, to be able to say, ‘Hey, we opened up for these two rock icons;’ it [was] probably our biggest show so far.”

Joan Jett, the female rock singer and songwriter, became immensely popular throughout the 1980s with nationwide hits “I Love Rock ‘N Roll” and “Bad Reputation,” as a part of Joan Jett and the Blackhearts. Continuing to release songs and perform around the country, Joan Jett and the Blackhearts were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2015.

“[Jett and the Wilsons] were trailblazers for women of rock and roll and we’re continuing the fire.” Scott said. “We’re keeping the trail hot. They’re the real deal.”

Mad Libby’s project manager, Daphne Timberlake, first found the band during one of their sets at a gig, and said she was instantly drawn in by their stage performance. Soon after, she started managing the band and planning gigs for them to play.

“Joan Jett has been kind of an idol of the band for years, so when I heard that Joan was coming into town, I reached out to Starlight and asked if we could play,” Timberlake said. “They originally turned me down, and then he called me about a week later and asked if we could still play. Let me check my calendar. Yes!”

The four-piece rock band is made up of Roswold, Scott, lead guitarist Rob Adams and bass player Alisa Jefferson. As Roswold said, rock has been stereotyped as a genre created by and catered to men, and said their band has faced some adversity with having three female members.

“[Rock is] tough as a woman,”

Roswold said. “It has gotten a lot better, but it’s kind of cool to surprise people. It really shouldn’t make a difference though; if you can move your fingers, sing or whatever, it doesn’t matter whether you’re male or female.”

Although the current members of Mad Libby came together slowly throughout the years, Roswold said they have been lucky to receive the success they have. Since they formed, they have received numerous Project Backstage

Music awards including No. 2 Rock Band in the Midwest in 2012.

“They really like to make an impact on the audience so that they’ll want to come back,” her daughter, junior Emily Roswold, said.

“They always want to make it a different experience and talk to the audience to

make it more personal.”

Emily, who is a part of the theater and choral programs at BVNW, said everyone in her family is passionate about music, so they can appreciate the music and the courage it takes for her mom to perform original songs.

“Genetically, we both are very creative people, and I always have found it very inspiring that she writes all of her own songs and how quickly she does it,” Emily said. “When I found out she had been writing her own songs, that’s when I kind of started writing

mine. So I’ll sit at the piano and that’s my inspiration, right? For her it’s like the guitar.”

Roswold said her relationship with her daughter is similar to a typical teenager, so she doesn’t often give her input, but loves listening to her play and create songs.

“I think she really likes rock, but she’s not [going to] ever admit to it.” Roswold said. “I can see her in the future being the lead singer of a band. I’m pretty proud of all the stuff she was doing. But, I let her go and I don’t play a huge part in that because I don’t think right now she wants to hear my input.”

Performing a few times with Mad Libby as a child, Emily said she had extreme stage fright at first, but her mom helped her to engage in music and become more comfortable performing.

“I’m a little bit more logical, practical, and she’s more emotional and follow-your-heart type thing, but when we come together I think we bring out the different parts in ourselves.” Emily said. “Even though we have different points of view about things, when we come together, we have a great dialogue.”

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—JENNIFER ROSWOLD

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*Left: Jennifer Roswold raises the microphone into the air while performing at Starlight Theatre Oct. 8. Roswold said opening for Joan Jett has been a dream of hers. (Photo by Rachel Sarff)*

*Below: Junior Emily Roswold (right) sits with her mom, Jennifer, and older sister Zoe in 2004 (Photo Courtesy of Emily Roswold)*

