



Catherine Zeta-Jones is a new star of "Prodigal Son" Tuesday on Fox.

coverstory
BY JAY BOBBIN

Catherine Zeta-Jones finds a TV home in 'Prodigal Son'

It's common for television shows to add regular cast members as they go along.

Adding someone of the stature of Catherine Zeta-Jones? That's not as common.

The "Chicago" Oscar winner and "A Little Night Music" Tony recipient hasn't been a stranger to TV in recent years, having appeared in the movie "Cocaine Godmother" and the series "Queen America" and "Feud: Bette and Joan," but it's still major news for her to join "Prodigal Son." The Fox drama introduced her in its early-March midseason finale, and she's fully present as it resumes its second season Tuesday, April 13. She plays psychiatric-hospital doctor Vivian Capshaw, whose new association with serial killer Martin Whitley (Michael Sheen) — alias "The Surgeon" — generates unease and danger.

"I was a fan of the show," Zeta-Jones explains. "I gravitate to the kind of nuance of what I think is so different and powerful about 'Prodigal Son.' It's pretty good family drama, and it's a dark family. And Michael Sheen (who grew up near Zeta-Jones in Wales), I'd never met before but I've admired from a distance. Even though we are the same age and we have all of these mutual friends, we'd never crossed. My mom and dad know his dad, so that was, of course, a huge pull for me. And the character was intriguing to me."

The arrival of Zeta-Jones has been a big deal for "Prodigal Son's" continuing stars, including Lou Diamond Phillips, who also directed the episode that brought her into the show. "You don't always know what you are going to get," he admits, "and she is so gracious and so warm and so inclusive of everyone. From the moment she stepped on set, it was as if she'd been a part of the ensemble from the beginning. She came to play."

Zeta-Jones has not been the only member of her household to return to home screens lately, since her Oscar-winning husband Michael Douglas also has done it with Netflix's "The Kominsky Method." She reasons, "Historically in film and TV, family dramas are very powerful. Every family can relate to something in there."

As it happened, Whoopi Goldberg played a part in Zeta-Jones entering "Prodigal Son," since the fellow Academy Award winner gave the series an impromptu rave review on ABC's "The View" just as Zeta-Jones was mulling joining the drama.

The latter recalls, "She just randomly gave it this incredible thumbs-up, and I'm lying there going, 'That's what I'm talking about! She knows.' Michael (Douglas) was there, and he went, 'Did you know they were going to say that?' And I went, "No. Great minds think alike, baby.' That was, like, the stamp of approval that came from nowhere."

Guide to the TV grids

PA: Parental advisory
DVS: Descriptive video service
EI: Educational/instructional
D: Dialogue
L: Language
S: Sexual situations
V: Violence

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'Y': Young children
'7': Children over 7
'14': Children over 14
'PG': Parental guidance
'M': Mature audience only

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