

2 Women, 2 Stories
Review
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*Two solos exploring transitions women experience as they age with power, dignity (and a little bit of what the f**k?). What's Wrong with a Mouse? and What's My Age Again? reveal life transformations through innovative, humorous, and dramatic story-telling.*

In *Two Women Two Stories*, two one woman shows that focus on family, love, and healing, Vicki Dello Joio and Merry Ross illustrate two sides of the California coin: peppy and sunny, spiritual and thoughtful as we meet their families and find out what is important in their life's journeys.

Merry Ross's *What's My Age Again?*, detailing the perils of entering peri-menopause, and what it means to be approaching "fif...fiff...fifty! Gasp!" is hilarious and touching. Ross is so likeable, so relatable, after the show I wanted to give her a big hug and buy her a drink. In her half of, *Two Women Two Stories*, she brings a great, goofy energy and poignancy to the stage with her true to life – yet broad – portrayals of the women in her life.

Her glamorous grandmother, cigarette in one hand and martini in the other, who locks herself in her room when her world changes; her adorably raspy voiced and bossy daughter; her gorgeous super active mother (who was in the audience) all are presented with great love and affection, while poking fun simultaneously. Best is her portrayal of a hot tub incident where she tried to show off for "fellow 30 year olds," because she still feels 30 on the inside, and literally fell on her ass.

The other half of *Two Women Two Stories*, Vicki Dello Joio, is a wonder. In her half of the show, *What's Wrong With A Mouse*, she relates how her famous composer father, a misogynist who rejected her for rejecting him, or so he felt, for not putting men first, for not being a "good Italian daughter, a virgin or a mother," came to an understanding with her only at the end of his life. Her pain is clear, but more importantly so is her struggle to find connection. To face rejection with compassion and empathy, and keep on keeping on, giving kindness and love, is a great lesson for us all. Her physicality is so fluid, so graceful, Dello Joio reminded me of a cross between Martha Graham – a family friend from among the many luminaries in her childhood – and Marcel Marceau.

Eloquent and gifted at characterizations, she gives a thoughtful performance. Kind beyond words to the people in her life, even the ones who hurt her the most, Dello Joio is inspiring.

I was secretly thrilled to see that both these talents are fellow Bay Area women! Their sunny and spiritual California dispositions are so welcoming, so joyous, it was great to spend an evening getting to know them through this thoughtful and hilarious show.

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