

I Remember Mama

2011 Toronto Fringe Review

By Mira Saraf



I Remember Mama is one-woman show is Julia DeSotto's tale of the three women that influenced her life and character the most – her Italian grandmother, her Estonian mother, and her Scottish Mother-In-Law.

It conveys how these relationships shaped the people she and her children are today. Sprinkled with song and dance, and plenty of impersonation, she makes us laugh, clap, tap our feet, and occasionally tear up.

There is something about the honesty of nonfiction that makes

the smallest things funny, sweet or moving. A passion for food and cooking is a theme she returns to a few times over the course of the presentation. Many of us have learned to cook from our older female family members.

What I liked about this show is that DeSotto could have just sat there and told us the different anecdotes she had collected about these women. But she slipped into and out of the skins of each, acquiring and shedding accents, outfits, song lyrics and dance moves.

These people really came to life for me, and I came to wish I had known them – these women were colourful and powerful personalities.

The other major theme it touches on is the fact of aging – and how hard it can be on both the individuals who are going through it, and their families. It is hard to watch people you used to look up to grow frail and more and more helpless. In a sense they become children. We have all had an aging relative we can think of (and in some cases more than one).

A beautiful hour of love and laughter – you will come out cherishing the strong women in your family.