

Testimonials from the Audience: THE PASS - Denise Marsa

St John's in the Village was honoured to host Denise Marsa's first New York City performance of her show THE PASS at Revelation Gallery on 26 November 2019. The audience and I were as delighted by her emotive, expressive, and powerful voice as by her rich professional and personal narratives, to which we all, in our different ways, could so readily relate. Denise's performance was engagingly entertaining, seductively warm, and poignantly candid. Her songwriting is both musically and textually accomplished. Tracy Stark, piano, is an exemplary accompanist and sensitive backing vocalist and the ensemble between the two performers was well-rehearsed and delicately nuanced in performance. The show received a standing ovation from a musically and culturally discerning audience. – **Fr Graeme Napier, Rector, St John's in the Village**

DENISE MARSA ROCKS THE HOUSE – On Tuesday night, Denise Marsa gave a performance in a small space that was all Broadway and Big Lights. Her storytelling mixed with music was unique, fresh, and full of life. Her songwriting and storytelling ability were matched by her incredible voice that ranged from pop to Gospel to R&B. This was a rare and brilliant performance that wowed the audience for two hours, taking us all on the musical roller coaster of Marsa's life journey. Look out for Marsa's one of a kind brand of story and music; you don't want to miss this. – **Stephen Preziosi**

Seeing the show in London recently, I was again struck by the depth of Denise Marsa's talent. Denise is an excellent singer songwriter, with a catalogue of phenomenal songs worthy of any great artist. Realistically, no matter how talented or good you are, so many factors need to be in place if you are to succeed as a recording artist. One of the personal challenges is to keep your inspiration and faith against all odds, as the music industry can be notoriously ageist, image conscious and exploitative. Denise has maintained extraordinary resolve throughout her career. During the show she revisits her past, sharing some of her adventures and miss-adventures along the way. The show is entertaining, touching, poignant – but most of all passionate. Accompanied excellently on the piano by Tracy Stark, Denise sings her heart out! A class act with an original and authentic voice. Definitely, a moving, musical night out. Personal favourite song: Underneath. – **Julia de Peyer – Performance Coach**

What a joyful evening! The story of Denise's life...in song. Brilliant. She brought me through a full range of emotions, from joy, to sorrow, and then back again! That's the gift of a true artist. – Mark Reiter

November 26, 2019 was an Invigorating, scintillating Evening to Remember, and I don't mean just because it was my mother's birthday in heaven. Denise Marsa's one woman show had panache, gumption, wisdom, maximum talent, and heartfelt personal touches. Very ably accompanied by Tracy Stark on piano, Denise knocked the ball out the park and licked clean the entertainment plate. I understand she has applied for a grant from NY Women's Theatre Fund, to be awarded next March. Denise Marsa richly deserves it. Go, Denise!" – John Early

Denise Marsa presented a dramatization of critical times in her life as a songwriter and performing artist. Every song was written by her with a beauty and deep meaning that developed from one song to the other describing the direction of her life as it was shaped and pulled. Her songs are beautiful and varied, the lyrics are strong, clear and lucid. She performs them with depth, deep feeling and impeccable skill and understanding. She knows intuitively how to bring the emotions right to the listener. The culmination of all the songs was so dramatic and touching that it left one hoping for the next to come. – ShiZ'ka & Edmund Arkus

The Pass is absorbing, transporting, witty, moving and inspiring. Denise Marsa, she of the notorious mystery voice on the hit record Lucky Star pulls up a barstool centre stage and pitches us immediately into a vividly shocking account of her childhood initiation into an acting class. From the very first instance there was a palpable sense of being in safe hands with this seasoned performer. The Pass is a lesson in courage and tenacity which, on the night I attended seemed to chime with people of varying generations. Certain episodes Denise endured as a young woman at the start of her career, and the resolute spirit with which she coped seemed to strike a powerfully apposite note in this era of the MeToo movement. Marsa's voice is as strong and beautiful as ever, her evocative songs reflect her experiences with warmth, humour and sometimes heartbreaking candour. The song dedicated to her much loved cousin whose life was cut short by HIV is powerful. Denise has written and continues to write beautiful songs, it's a wonderful treat to hear them interwoven with her story in this intimate setting.

There is something for everyone in this delightful, thought provoking piece. The Pass is a rallying cry to anyone who's contemplating pursuing a career within the creative arts and feeling a little trepidation about plunging in. With her infectious humour and energy Denise also entreats those of us who've somehow managed to have a career in the arts to pause and reflect with gratitude and a little wonder. Most importantly though the clarity, heart and wit in these songs and stories simply encapsulate the key turning points in one woman's life. Denise Marsa is an artist through and through, in a matter of moments she moves us and makes us laugh about her experiences, but as with all good narratives there is plenty to find within it that resonates with our own life stories. - [*Sandra Butterworth FRSA – Voice And Dialect Coach*](#)

“The stage was dimly lit and atmospheric. An audience of excited Marsa fans murmured expectantly when suddenly that beautiful, strong, evocative voice came out from the shadows as Marsa strolled out. I have heard her sing for more than twenty years and had never heard her in better voice.

The rest of her solo show lived up to that first moment. A mixture of Marsa's songs and spoken vignettes of her life, 'The Pass' delivers an evening of her fabulous music and great charm. This gifted New York artist has created a show that builds on her apparently unstoppable creativity. Her energy is tangible as she weaves her own tapestry of songs and stories. Marsa's songs have stay-in-your-head, hum-for-days melodies and lyrics that reflect her gift for finding the poignant and original in even the most relatable situations. Her spoken anecdotes of her life in and out of show business are told with wit and honesty. Refreshingly (and rarely!) that honesty has charm and delicacy, whether she's making you laugh or cry. 'The Pass' is one woman's reflection of a life in the music business, told through her wonderful music with humour and wisdom. It makes a bloody good evening. Go see it!” – *by Jessica Sully, Indie Journalist/Author*

“The Pass is a truly wonderful piece of work.. ..especially for some of us artists who can identify with a similar path of their own..from the days gone by ..Uplifting and full of hope to carry on and follow that inner path..Elton John's “I'm still standing” comes to mind ..and so you are ...better than ever ..fully self expressed with that strong voice and those powerful songs of life's experiences ..diving deep into the emotional ..An inspiration to us all ..Hope to see you going on

tour with it in the UK...wishing you lots more success with it!" – *Susan Black, London Cabaret Performer*