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'PT&A Mom' showcases first-rate comic talent

By ANTHONY DEL VALLE
REVIEW-JOURNAL

It doesn't take long to realize that Carole Montgomery knows from stand-up.

Seconds into her 60-minute BackStage Theatre performance -- titled "Confessions of a PT&A Mom" -- the 45-year-old Brooklyn native wins your confidence. Her timing, her audience rapport, even the way she handles a water bottle, suggest the years of experience that have taught her how to effortlessly command a stage. You never worry if her next joke is going to bomb. You're too busy enjoying being in her company.

Dressed casually in jeans and tennis shoes, with only a stool as a set, Montgomery recounts her childhood, her sexual awakenings, her early days on the road in the '70s ("we didn't have Pamela Anderson back then as a role model"), and finally, her experiences as a parent. ("I moved to Vegas to raise my son," she says. "How (expletive) up is that?")

Her act is more smiles than belly laughs, and, curiously, is most effective when she turns serious. Her description of an abusive relationship, as well as the joy she felt after having her child, come across as deeply felt, never manipulative and wonderfully human. You get the feeling you're in her living room swapping stories with a friend.

You can sense director Sue Lawless' strong hand. There's a consistency to the performance and material, a dramatic arc, that unfolds like a full-length play. When you get to the final lines, you feel as if the "play" has completed its journey.

The material -- written by Montgomery and hubby Todd -- does feel a bit dated. You have to be awfully good to make growing-up-Jewish-in-Brooklyn jokes sound fresh. The act occasionally needs the infusion of a 20-something's passion.

But the evening is an opportunity to see a first-rate comic talent share not

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What: "Confessions of a PT&A Mom"
When: 7 p.m. Nov. 13 and 20; 8 p.m. Dec. 2, 3,9
Where: Community College of Southern Nevada, 3200 E. Cheyenne Ave., North Las Vegas
Tickets: \$5-\$8 (651-5483)
Grade: A-
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only her jokes but her perspectives. They're both worth listening to.

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