

Dimino's "Scared Skinny" Simply Scrumptious At Fringe Festival

By Andrew Martin



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Even those who've known actress/comedienne Mary Dimino personally or professionally for two decades (or even longer), can't help but feel as though they are at long last staring directly into the recesses of her marvelous mind, with her presentation of her one-woman show *Scared Skinny*, part of the New York Fringe Festival at Tom Noonan's Paradise Theatre on East 4th Street.

This is no mere homage to an overweight Italian girl from Queens who wants to be in better shape after spending most of her life at a level of obesity, rather, the homage belongs to Dimino and Dimino alone, as one who overcame not only the barricades of striving towards weight loss, but the barricades of ingrained fear on the part of her family and several friends, and is sensationally riveting. In point of fact, the Fringe Festival should by no means serve as the final resting place for an evening so indisputably magical, it would be an abject tragedy to see a show of this type not embark on a national tour and then be transformed into a mainstream cable special. Yes, it's just THAT fantastic.

Dimino takes us down a brilliantly-illustrated parade of earlier existence in Ozone Park, replete with family members and friends (and a fair amount of boyfriends and various paramours) all of whom seem to profess to know better than she does about how she should be living her life. As they all seem to die off one by one and/or disappear from her midst, they become farther removed from her goal of ultimately both losing her virginity and losing the weight she feels is preventing her from doing that and more. In the midst of this truly guilded journey, the audience becomes acquainted with her family, besides childhood friend Dorothy (an authority, it seems, on just about everything there is to know regarding every single subject in the history of civilization). There's also an absolutely miserable parade of near-lovers, ranging from Nino when she was seventeen, who gave Dimino her first kiss with the promise of cookies after school in senior year (even though he probably might have been the stupidest man on earth), to a nameless gentleman who managed to coax her into whipping him while he was proudly donning a dog collar.

The audience as a whole is believed when Dimino begins to embrace the true life outside her door, even while trying to keep misery at bay, first by several hilarious instances in which she purchases exercise equipment ("as seen on TV," none of which work), and then grabbing the bull by the horns and deciding that she'll simply start by taking a walk around the block. That walk turns into a walk several times around the neighborhood, then a spinning class at World Gym, and after the urging of her friend Rose ("the single most glum events planner that ever was"), who invites her to a singles party, where she meets the man of her dreams who ultimately becomes her husband. Dimino is the first to point out to the audience that even though she was married in a size-six dress, she's not that size at present. This, however, needs no mention for how far she's come, or how far she's not come; we are by that point, so enraptured by her that we couldn't care less. She's there in front of us, she's brilliant, she's beautiful and she literally emerges a goddess. And deservedly so. If readers of this article are fortunate enough to have the privilege of seeing Mary Dimino in *Scared Skinny* before she and the show move on to bigger and better things, it couldn't be more highly recommended to do so. End of story.

The Scared Skinny Website: <http://scaredskinnyaonewomanshow.com/>