

The angry, not-so-young woman

Stand-up comedian Radhika Vaz's new show is all about being older and crankier

Two years after her sold-out show *UnLady*-like premiered in Bangalore, stand-up comedian Radhika Vaz was back in town this week with a new show 'Older. Angrier. Hairier.' Over the course of an hour, the 42-year-old Vaz took her loudly appreciative audience through a rambunctious personal journey of ageing, using politically incorrect jokes, miming and stellar physical comedy to bring the



knees with laughter.

Vaz, who lived in Bangalore for many years before she moved to New York, has strong ties with the city because her parents still live here. An economics graduate from Sophia College, Mumbai, Vaz moved to the US many years ago and worked in the insurance industry, while exploring her love of improvisational comedy in New York, the mecca of stand-up. She got into comedy professionally thanks to an Improv class she



VAZ-INA MONOLOGUES: Vaz has a flair for physical comedy

took with a teacher in New York called Holly Mandel. After working with her for a while and performing with her troupe, she took a comedic monologue and sketch writing class, and then started writing her own material,

she told *STOI* in an earlier interview.

In the current show, Vaz tackles subjects that plague many modern women: the difference in expectations from men and women when it comes to doing housework,

the questions a woman has to face for her decision to be child-free, and the pressures on them to stay young and "age gracefully." It wasn't all about heavy-duty existential stuff either; one of Vaz's first gags that brought the roof down was about the kind of ridiculous pressures women put themselves under to live up to some kind of glorified feminine ideal. For instance, pretending that they never have to take a dump.

On ageing, Vaz's views are refreshingly uncool. "I want to tell people who say '40 is the new 30' to shove right off. 40 is not the new 30.... I get what they are trying to say - in the old days a 40-year-old was an auntyji who had back fat, and wore mom-jeans, but today, things have changed and a 40-year-old is different right?" Wrong, according to Vaz. All

that's changed is earlier, you could let yourself go by the time you were hitting 40 - sit around in mom-jeans all day if you wanted to - without having to tweeze and pluck and Botox yourself in order to fool people (who know exactly how old you are) into thinking you were actually younger. "All that we have done is increase the number of years that we are obliged to stay YOUNG," said Vaz.

"Why do we have a rude name like 'cougar' for an older woman who is with a younger man? And what is all this nonsense about women maturing faster, and therefore it's ok for a much older man to be with a younger woman?" Who makes up these rules?" she asked, living up to the audience's expectations of her being "older" and "Angrier." The "Hairier" part is anybody's guess. —TNN