

## **Cabaret concert for Lyla's birthday**

**By Gary Smith**

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Some people blow out candles. Some open presents. Some get serenaded with a chorus or two of Happy Birthday.

Lyla Miklos is giving a cabaret concert.

"There will be cake," she laughs. "And lots of great songs. I'll even tell some stories on myself. It's going to be a wild affair."

Who would expect less from the woman who is turning 40 and singing all about it.

"Forty? It's just a number," Miklos says. "And I've put together some really embarrassing photos of myself to show. I'll get to sing all the songs that mean something special to me. I'm going to challenge myself and even sing opera."

Those who know Miklos as a singer, actress and activist know she can be pretty outrageous. She's not afraid of getting in your face. She's out there and she doesn't care who knows it.

"What can I say? I came out on the front page of The Hamilton Spectator. My parents were in shock for weeks."

Miklos was born in Frobisher Bay where her dad owned an inn and her mom was waitressing when she wasn't reporting news on air for CBC Radio.

Moving to Hamilton in 1982 Miklos grew up a Jehovah's Witness.

"At Linden Park School my teacher stopped by my desk and said, 'You have a really good voice.' I thought, well, she's the teacher she must know. So I joined the choir."

Later the principal called her parents and suggested they find a voice teacher to give voice lessons to young Lyla.

"My dad said, 'Really, then you pay for them.'"

Miklos' grandparents did find her a teacher.

At Cardinal Heights Elementary School, Lyla sang in the choir. They wanted her to be the lead in a musical called Teen.

"It was about dating, kissing, having boyfriends. I had to drop out. I wasn't allowed to sing songs about that." Later, at Hill Park Secondary School Miklos met drama teacher Bill Cook. She stepped back from performing and worked backstage.

"I was stage crew," she laughs.

She did play a neighbour woman in Big River, though, the musical about Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn.

"Somewhere around this time I discovered I liked girls," Miklos says. "I mean really liked girls. I knew then my religion didn't fit who I was. Demure, passive and well-behaved I wasn't."

Miklos became a Star Trek humanist. She went to all the conventions. She even sang a duet with Scot singer-actor John Barrowman (Dr. Who, Torchwood).

"It's still on YouTube," She laughs "I double-dared him and we did it."

Because she still has beliefs in something more, Miklos joined the Unitarian Church. As a lay chaplain she will soon be officiating at marriages, weddings and funerals.

"Unitarianism suits me," she says. "It's about being able to ask lots of questions. It's a faith about questions. That just fits."

Miklos joined Hamilton Theatre Inc. after high school.

"I was so green and naïve," she says. "But I loved being there because I was with adults and the shows were so disciplined back then. It was about working hard. It made me up my game.

"I don't see myself as a great actress." She laughs at the thought.

"I can play a part if it's not too far from myself."

Fine performances in The Laramie Project, Falsettos and The World Goes Round would seem to prove different.

"I wanted to be a CBC reporter. Didn't happen. I worked as a programmer for Space Channel and Alliance Atlantis. They were swallowed up by big fish and I was gone. Now I'm a data administrator for Hamilton Wentworth Board of Education. And yes I'd still like to sing on Broadway."

She follows this announcement with a throat-wracking, head-rattling laugh.

"Am I happy? I don't know. I'm not quite satisfied with life yet. Too much still to do."

For starters there's Lyla Miklos in Concert. "Shhh don't tell anybody but I'm going to sing Rock Me Gently from my college days."

You go girl, you go.

Gary Smith has written about theatre and dance for The Hamilton Spectator for more than 30 years

**LYLA MIKLOS ONE WOMAN CABARET**

What: Songs For A 40th Birthday Starring Lyla Miklos

Where: The Staircase Theatre, 27 Dundurn St. N., Hamilton

When: Oct. 15 at 8 p.m.

Tickets: \$20 cash only

Call: 905-529-3000 or [staircase.org](http://staircase.org)