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Open Hearts

JULY 15, 2011 BY LARRY BANGS • 2 COMMENTS

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Miriam Kulick is a mensch. Now I probably should not be using that term for a woman because I think it's supposed to just be used for men. But here is the relevant definition as far as I'm concerned: "a person with the qualities one would hope for in a dear friend or trusted colleague." Miriam Kulick is a mensch – a real human being, refreshingly without pretense. A breath of fresh air wafting through a profession littered with broken dreams and wounded egos.



Miriam Kulick

Apparently frustrated with the lack of decent roles written for mature women in the theatre, Miriam has taken it upon herself to write something she can perform. One actress, six characters, 45 minutes. She makes it all simple and very sweet, and I truly mean that in the most complimentary way possible. Her one-woman show is sweet and light, sometimes funny and often poignant, without being saccharine.

No one gets made fun of or debased in any way. There are no jokes at the expense of someone's nationality or sexuality or personal preferences. There is real, honest dignity and also a story of sorts built around character Sadie who is about to turn 90 years old. Miriam transforms seamlessly from Sadie to Henrietta, a British lesbian who loves dance, just saw Mikhail

Barishnykov (oh joy of joys!) and has a relationship with Sadie's daughter, Debora (I think I got that right). Henrietta has a very sweet story about how she discovered she was a lesbian.

From Henrietta, we move, seamlessly once again, to Sadie's granddaughter, who misses her mother very much (Sadie's now deceased other daughter) and would like to fly. She is very, very sweet and innocent. Then there is the Hispanic handyman/building manager who takes great joy in knowing how to fix everything but has now lost his job — very poignant and touching in a quiet, unassuming way.

I won't go through the rest of the characters because that would spoil your fun. Miriam takes us for an effortless ride sharing a variety of ordinary people willing to be sweetly vulnerable and, in being so, tugging away at our heart strings. By the end of the show, my heart was quite unexpectedly and not necessarily with my conscious permission...opened. As Sadie says, so matter-of-factly, as things draw to a close: "I'm ready for the inside." I came away with a sense of inner peace and contentment that remained with me even on the crowded, stuffy Metro ride home.

There are not many theatrical performances of any kind that put you in touch with your heart... and keep you there. This one does and for that we should be thankful that Miriam had the chutzpah to write this show and take it on the road. She is also a very good actress but that is almost secondary to the kind of human being she shares so generously with us through her expertly drawn characters. Bravo! Now, could you just make it last a little longer?

Open Hearts has 4 more performances at the Goethe Institut – Mainstage, 812 7th Street NW, Washington, DC.

[Tickets](#)



Larry gives this our top rating, making it a Pick of the Fringe.