



## Liza Minnelli: A star reborn in prime time

By [Katie Leslie](#)

4:30 p.m. Friday, June 18, 2010

"Hiya honey," Liza Minnelli gushes into the phone, her syrupy voice instantly recognizable.

She has 10 minutes to talk in between rehearsals for her latest concert tour. Luckily, no need to spend the whirlwind interview catching up on her recent adventures, because Minnelli, now 64, has become more visible than ever.

In the past few years, the queen of cabaret has once again emerged in pop culture and mainstream television. It began with her stint on "Arrested Development" some seven years ago, and continued with recent appearances on shows including "Drop Dead Diva," "Kathy Griffin: My Life on the D-List," "Saturday Night Live" and prime-time commercials.

She's now making waves with her cameo performance of singer Beyonce's "Single Ladies" in film "Sex and the City 2," delighting die-hard fans who know Minnelli mastered Bob Fosse's style long before Beyonce was born.

Indeed, Minnelli is on fire, an A-list star once again in orbit. She stops in Atlanta on Friday, July 2 to perform songs from her latest album, "Confessions," which is expected to be released this September.

But the woman with enormous successes has few words, especially when it comes to talking about herself. When asked about her renewed popularity in prime-time TV, she cheerfully says: "I think it's fun."

She's equally humble about what she's most proud of in her varied career.

"I guess I'm most proud of the songs that have been written for me," she says warmly. "Like 'Cabaret' and 'The World Goes 'Round,' and 'Liza with a Z.' They're quite wonderful."

The daughter of Judy Garland and Vincente Minnelli was born into the business, appearing in her first film as an infant and working steadily since. She long ago reached icon status onstage and in song, winning her first Tony at age 19 for "Flora the Red Menace" in 1965 and an Oscar for "Cabaret" in 1972.

Her dreams for her career were simple, she says: "I just wanted to be on Broadway."

As the muse of songwriting duo John Kander and Fred Ebb, Minnelli made her name on The Great White Way and in Hollywood, but eventually became known for tabloid headlines as much as talent.

Like her mother, Minnelli has a well-documented battle with alcoholism and addiction. In the early 2000s, she suffered a debilitating bout of viral encephalitis. And just as it seemed she had regrouped, came that inexplicable and short-lived marriage (her fourth) to a concert promoter named David Gest.

But the singer-actor with the saucer-sized eyes never really stopped working.

Minnelli demurs when asked how she's managed a career that has spanned stage, film and television and garnered her every coveted award known to entertainment including four Tonys, an Oscar, Grammy, two Golden Globes and an Emmy.

"I just look forward to getting up in the morning and seeing what is going to happen. I stay curious," she says. "I just keep going, I guess."

Even when she can't. Minnelli explains that her latest album was recorded while she recuperated from knee surgery, bored to bits with her immobility.

"I [was] going crazy doing nothing, going bananas," she explains. "I said to Billy Stritch, my dear friend and my piano player, do you want to do something? He said sure ... And so we sang all of the songs we really liked. I couldn't move. I had to do it in my bedroom. And he had to do it on a piano in my bedroom. It was very intimate and all the songs that I really love."

At exactly ten and a half minutes, Minnelli politely ends the call to rush back to rehearsals.

"I gotta go, honey," she says. "I hope I wasn't too boring."

## **IF YOU GO**

Liza Minnelli with The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. 8 p.m. Friday at the Delta Classic Chastain Park Amphitheater, 4469 Stella Drive, in Atlanta. Tickets run \$25-\$89, available at [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com) or by calling 404-733-5000.