



9/21/08

Nikki at night in NY

Long Island native Nikki Blonsky leaped from working in a Cold Stone Creamery store in Great Neck to a starring role in the movie musical "Hairspray" opposite John Travolta.

But she had to travel the world before she could perform live in New York City. The 19-year-old singer and actress makes her cabaret debut at Feinstein's on Tuesday through Oct. 4.

"I call the show 'Coming Home,' because I've been singing at premieres for 'Hairspray' all around the world," says Blonsky. "The only city where I've not been able to do my singing is my home city."

She has done just about everything else. After starring as plus-sized dance queen Tracy Turnblad in the 2007 film version of the hit Broadway musical, Blonsky has starred in an indie film shot in her old high school, played an overweight homecoming queen in a Lifetime TV movie called "Queen Sized," sung the national anthem at a NASCAR race, traveled the globe, made plans to perform in Atlantic City with Regis Philbin, begun work on a solo album of original songs, made the gossip pages and even tried out her cabaret show on a cruise ship.

"I was working on some songs and seeing how the audience responded. We had a lot of fun on those cruise ships," says the 4-foot-10 dynamo. "I hope we can take what we did on the crazy seas and bring it to Feinstein's."

No one will be surprised if Blonsky opens with "Good Morning Baltimore," the opening number from "Hairspray." But while she keeps most of the 20 tunes she'll perform under wraps, she divulges that one will be Bonnie Raitt's "Something to Talk About."

Blonsky's private life has lately given gossips something to write about. This summer, she and her father



Blonsky (with John Travolta, l., in the movie version of "Hairspray") will be doing a cabaret show Tuesday through Oct. 4 at Feinstein's.

got into a surreal airport tussle with one-time reality contestant Bianca Golden ("America's Next Top Model"). And Blonsky's former managers are suing her.

Blonsky, who still lives at home, doesn't want to talk about those distractions and hopes people realize "movie stars are just normal people."

Besides, she says she has been too busy to have any real drama in her life — or even a boyfriend.

"To be honest with you," says Blonsky, "my career and my family are way more important than a boyfriend. The songs are going to be about the love I have for my family, not for being in a romantic situation. God knows I've been too busy, and hopefully I'll remain too busy. I'll wait till I turn 20 in two months, and then I'll get a boyfriend."

Michael Giltz