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## THEATRE

with Josh Loeb

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**W**hy is it that words sound so much more romantic when you roll them off your tongue in the confident Austrian accent of the 1930s? And why was it that such a high number of women who grew up in that decade and left the old country as refugees went on to become such indomitable matriarchs?

Libby Skala (pictured), has the answer – or part of it – as will be seen at **Pentameters**.

Libby, who grew up in New Jersey, knew her grandmother Lilia, an Oscar-nominated actress, from household get-togethers as well as from movies such as *Flashdance*. But she was also aware of the younger Lilia – the woman who fled to the United States

following a short career as an architect in her country of birth.

“She was a larger than life character,” says Libby. “In this show I play both my grandmother with her Austrian accent and myself from four years old until 20-something.”

The play recounts moments from Lilia’s long life (she died in the 1990s, aged 98), such as when she made her decision

about who to marry by requesting writing samples from her many suitors, acted in a Shaw play in Hitler’s Germany and took jazz dance classes while in her 80s.

● *Lilia!* is at Pentameters Theatre, 28 Heath Street, Hampstead, from October 26-November 13. Call 020 7435 3648.



PHOTO: TARA WHITTAKER