

**About the Performance:**

Marleena Barber's one-woman cabaret show tells the story of her life growing up legally blind from a genetic condition called Albinism, and how music played a vital role in her journey to self-acceptance. The show is an inspiring piece that reaches out to all ages, encouraging audiences, through a variety of musical styles (Broadway, Disney, Jazz, Country, and Contemporary Pop), to live their dreams despite the challenges they face. Having been told she would not be a successful stage performer due to her appearance and visual challenges, Barber shares her personal story of overcoming adversity. A former music teacher for the blind, Barber also stresses the importance of encouraging youth to find the gifts that make them unique, so they may find confidence in who they are; not to be defined by their disability. The show was featured at the 2010 International VSA festival—a festival on arts and disability—produced by the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., and since then, has served as a motivational speaking performance piece at various conferences and festivals throughout the country.

**About Marleena Barber**

Marleena Barber is an active performer, educator and disability advocate. She has performed in various musical theater productions in Southern California (the Witch in *Into the Woods*, Maggie in *A Chorus Line*, Percy in *Spitfire Grill*, Sally in *Follies*), and as a solo artist at festivals and concert venues throughout the country. Barber has served as a keynote and motivational ambassador at various disability related conferences across the country, and has also performed on Capitol Hill for Congress as part of National Arts Advocacy Day alongside guest speakers John Legend, Kerry Washington and Peter Dinklage. Barber holds a B.A. in Music-Vocal Performance from Whittier College and an M.A. in Arts and Culture Management from the University of Denver. She is the former children's choir director for Braille Institute (2005-2016) where she developed music and theater arts programs for K-12 blind and visually impaired youth. She is currently the Director of Orange County Arts and Disability in partnership with the Orange County Department of Education where she is a Visual and Performing Arts Consultant. She serves on the Board of Directors for Arts Orange County and is a member of the Sound of Music Chapter for the Segerstrom Center for the Arts' Guild to support Studio D - School of Arts for All Abilities. As a person with a disability and, having worked with students with disabilities, Barber has witnessed, first hand, the impact arts programming has had on this population and is passionate about continuing to make the arts accessible for people of all abilities. For more information about Marleena please visit: [www.marleenabarber.com](http://www.marleenabarber.com)