

Someone's in the 'Kitchen' With Shira

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So, what are they serving up in "Bubby's Kitchen"?

Pots full of smarts, says Shira Ginsburg.

"A lot of it," she says proudly of her family, "other people's wisdom."

Someone's in the "Kitchen" with Shira -- her bubby and five other family female members -- in this six-pack of a party that is so laden with happiness and tears, Golda herself reportedly saw it in *Anatevka* five times.

American shtetl sideshow? "Bubby's Kitchen" is the main attraction, as Syracuse U. grad, professionally-trained actress and New York cantor Ginsburg, 33, dishes and delivers, bringing her one-woman show and a multiple of tidbits to Congregation Beth Am Israel in Penn Valley www.bethamisrael.org, the evening of May 7.

Untie the apron strings and sit a spell, gestures Ginsburg, even as she reties them to her own past, including what it means to be the grandchild of Holocaust survivors, whose roles as renegades -- foraging in the forests of Poland as resistance fighters -- provides irresistibly rich anecdotes.

The show's creation is a story unto itself: "I actually created it as part of my thesis at cantorial school," recalls Ginsburg, who began service to East End Temple in Manhattan six years ago as a student cantor.

Two years ago, she became bimah-ready full-time. Shofar, show good? Yes, she avers, good as gold.

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Which is also what she could say about her bubby's rugelah, a regular star itself during Shira's summer-camp days, where it was worth its weight in gold.

It had great trade value, she remembers.

Not that Shira would trade it then -- or now: Indeed, "Bubby's Kitchen" isn't a trade-off of her past as much as an appreciation, in which Ginsburg, as the six very different women in her family, kibitzes, kvetches and carries on at the table, making for a kitchen cabinet of characters many in the audience allegedly identify with.

Including her own congregation, which premiered "Bubby's Kitchen" as a benefit at New York's Museum of Jewish Heritage -- a Living Memorial to the Holocaust two years ago.

And what do audiences get to nosh on for 75 minutes? A little bit of this -- Yiddish music; a little bit of that -- show music and liturgical tunes; and a cart of kosher comedy.

It is all done with a sense of adventure. But, hold the capers? No, intones the cantor; after all, it all takes place in a kitchen.

And just why the kitchen? What better place for a Jewish table of contents, she says, recalling her own Bubby Judith Ginsburg's sylvan setting at the family dairy farm, where stories were churned out grandiloquently.

After all, in so many homes, "Food is love; food is life." And here, on stage -- it is all food for thought.