



Lisa Lipkin performance

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[Annabel Goldstaub reviews Lisa Lipkin's extraordinary performance at Belsize Square Synagogue on Monday 20th November](#)

From the moment Lisa Lipkin steps on stage, you know you are in for a treat. Honey haired and voluptuous (a kindred Danish lover, I wonder?) she exudes an inner glow and owns the stage like few people can. She has the 200 strong audience at BelsizePark silenced for over an hour, and, as we all know, that's no mean feat.

I had expected a watered-down Bette Middler with a sharp tongue and razor wit. Don't get me wrong, Lisa has humour the size of Brent Cross, but her delivery is warm and wise and very gentle. She respects that her audience is made up of survivors and second and third generation and that emotionally many of us are raw inside, despite outward appearances.



The daughter of a Holocaust survivor her Hungarian mother survived Auschwitz and emigrated to the States in 1945 Lipkin has made it her life's work to keep the memory of our murdered six million alive. She has toured Europe and the States with her one woman show *What Mother Never Told Me: Reminisces of a Child of a Holocaust Survivor*. She writes books, lectures in schools. Her energy is endless, her desire to teach and inform, clearly unquenchable.

She entertains and educates through inspired story-telling and leaps like a whirling dervish from one mesmerising tale to another. One minute she's a little girl in Queen's New York, sitting at the table with her survivor relatives (Mooshie, Tooshie, Nitzy, Pitzy. Hungary's answer to the seven dwarves perhaps?), eating, eating eating..(a symptom, she believes, of being a camp survivor and never knowing whether you'll eat again); the next she's walking with her mother past a factory in Queen's, the chimneys bellowing acrid smoke. Her mother tightly squeezes her little hand. Too tightly. Why the tight grip? Lisa wonders, as any child would. As an adult she now knows the chilling answer but as a child everything was unspoken. A look. A gesture. Something in the air.

The young Lisa imbibed by osmosis the horrors that befell her mother and survivor aunts - "The Gabor sisters of Hungary," chuckles Lipkin, - in that most notorious of Nazi death camps. And yet, she has turned all this into a positive, not a negative. "We can be victims or we can celebrate our strength," says Lipkin, who is a beaming advert for choosing the latter.

She praises her mother for never mentioning the years she spent as a camp inmate. But she could see the pain in her mothers face; "A face that was hollow and fearful all the time," recalls Lipkin.

A divorcee, sadly, Lipkin has no children of her own and bravely admits that this may be because of her tainted upbringing. Now in her early 40s she says this is the first time she has felt ready for that challenge. Please G-d. She would make a wonderful mother.

To see photos of this event click here <http://www.2ndgeneration.org.uk/photogallery.php>