

# Need a Sholom expert ... better call Saul!

BY ADAM CAILLER

**S**AUL Reichlin is hoping that, at 77, his latest show on the life of Sholom Aleichem — the man behind *Fiddler on the Roof* — will land him with more theatre work.

For the Johannesburg-born actor has spent the latter years of his career recording audio books and appearing in television adverts.

But his biggest successes have always been on the stage.

It was 15 years ago that his first show about Sholom took the theatre world by storm.

*Now You're Talking* performed to sold out venues in 36 cities across eight countries, including the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and Off Broadway.

He also won outstanding reviews for his plays *Roots Shmoots* and Isaac Bashevis Singer's masterpiece, *Gimpel The Fool*.

But now he's back as Sholom for a four-week run of *Sholom Aleichem In The Old Country* at London's Lion & Unicorn Theatre from Tuesday until November 25.



STAGE STAR: Saul Reichlin

He said: "My last show was adored the world over, but I became tired of touring.

"In recent times I had some serious health problems and I thought my working life was over, if not my actual life.

"Having recovered, I thought I really must make use of the time I have left and do something useful that I value very much.

"Spreading the word of Sholom Aleichem is important and of great value. Nobody else does it —

others think of it as being too niche.

"*Fiddler on the Roof* was turned down by eight producers for that very reason."

Beyond the iconic tale of Tevye the milkman, Sholom wrote a myriad of stories and plays, full of unforgettable characters, which Saul brings to life, along with Aleichem himself as he

## His mother's curses in Yiddish

revisits his roots in Kasrilevkeh, then-Russia.

"It's Sholom's own personal journey," he said. "The show brings about his warmth and humanity in times of trouble.

"He will always find some way of smiling during bad times.

"When people were talking about the pogroms, he would say it was too depressing and ask to talk about more pleasant things such as the 'cholera in Odessa'.

"He immediately makes fun of

something hideous and makes a poignant take on something that is morbid without getting upset or sad about it."

With the story taking place in the late 1800s-early 1900s, a lot of his life story was spoken in Yiddish. Or not.

Saul joked: "It's 99 per cent English, with cursing in Yiddish.

"Nobody wants to hear me curse in English. We don't curse for fun in English, unlike Yiddish.

"His first published book was an alphabetical list of his mother's curses in Yiddish. He really took the subject and ran with it."

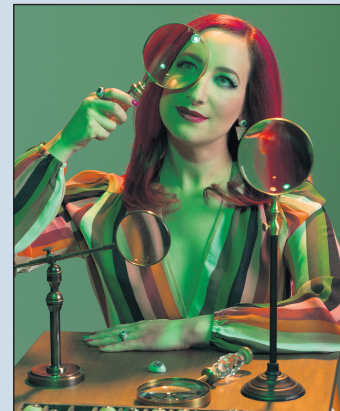
Saul is also hoping that the four week run turns into something longer, but is waiting on invites from around the country.

He said: "I don't know if I'm going to get the sort of response to this show like I did with my previous one.

"I have an agent who only puts me up for adverts or small film parts, but I really want to do more theatre.

"I hope someone would think I'm OK and that my career does not return to narrating audio books and appearing in adverts."

■ saulreichlin.net



## Rachael sets her sights on new album success

RACHAEL Sage, pictured above, has made a name for herself with her piano-based songs.

But her latest album, *Myopia*, sees the focus switch to the guitar — although the New York singer still includes plenty of piano playing.

She came up with the title of the album because she is legally blind without her glasses.

"The idea of things coming in and out of focus, depending upon what lens you might be looking through, seemed especially provocative right now," she said. "... I started to think about nearsightedness on a much more macro level."

Rachael founded her own label, MPRESS Records, two decades ago, and has released a dozen albums.

Her music is regularly featured in reality television show *Dance Moms*.

She has toured extensively with an eclectic list of artists, including Beth Hart, Ani DiFranco, Eric Burdon, Judy Collins and Howard Jones.

The album — which features contributions from Hoboken-based guitarist James Mastro, as well as long-time collaborator Kelly Halloren, on violin — includes the track *Umrú Mayne*, in which Rachael shout-sings in Yiddish over punk rock guitars.

"I had never sung in Yiddish before, but this song just really spoke to me and then somehow when we recorded it I channeled a bit more Patti Smith than Mandy Patinkin," she said.

The song had previously featured on an EP she released in December which also included Chanukah songs *Tchatchkes & Latkes* and *Hanukkah in the Village*, alongside a cover of *Joy to the World*.

*Myopia* also includes *No One is to Blame*, a cover of a Howard Jones song.

■ rachael.sage.com

## Arek couldn't face seeing Auschwitz gas chambers during documentary filming

HOLOCAUST survivor Arek Hersh could not face visiting one of the gas chambers at Auschwitz when he went there for a forthcoming documentary.

*Hitler's Holocaust Railways* on Sunday (9pm) on Channel 5 sees television presenter Chris Tarrant accompany Leeds-based Arek to Poland.

Tarrant and his cameraman went on their own, early one morning, to the gas chamber.

"I thought I was going to throw up," he said. "It was spine chilling."

The idea for the programme came when Tarrant filmed in Lithuania about a train which took Jews to labour camps in the Soviet Union.

Arek, who now devotes his life to telling his story at schools and on the March of the Living, shows him the orphanage in the Lodz Ghetto where he lived as a child, and the journey from there to Auschwitz.

The 90-year-old lost 80 members of his family in the Holocaust and only 40 Jews survived from his home town of Sieradz.



SPINE CHILLING: Chris Tarrant at Auschwitz with Arek Hersh

## DIGEST

### Israelis write TV drama

▶ THREE Israelis have created a new Italian-German co-production.

*German Moon* — written by Israelis Nadav Schirman, Ron Leshem and Amit Cohen — is inspired by true but untold stories of German families and former Nazi-scientists, who are behind NASA's first manned mission to the moon.

Shooting of the television series is due to start next year.

Cohen and Leshem created and wrote several successful drama series, including *Allegiance*, while Cohen also created *False Flag*, which has become the highest-ever rated launch of a

scripted prime-time show in Israel.

Leshem is executive producer of HBO's forthcoming show *Euphoria*. As head of content and drama for Keshet, Leshem picked up and oversaw the development of *Prisoners of War*, adapted as *Homeland*.

### Rock giants join forces

▶ TWO Jewish rock guitar giants have joined forces to record Israeli folk song *Mayim Mayim*.

Yossi Sassi and the Oriental Rock Orchestra performed the song with former Megadeth guitarist Marty Friedman.

It was a special collaboration between the Israeli embassy in

Japan and Japan's 'JWAVE' Radio for the "Japan-Israel Cultural Bridge" project.

Friedman is a huge star in Japan, having lived in the country for 15 years, so he was the obvious choice for former Orphaned Land guitarist Sassi.

The pair have performed together a number of times.

■ Visit [YossiSassi.com](http://YossiSassi.com) and listen to it at [youtu.be/70mudYCW4\\_U](https://youtu.be/70mudYCW4_U)

### Festival cancels award

▶ THE Cairo International Film Festival has cancelled its planned award for French Jewish director Claude Lelouch.

Earlier this month, CIFF

announced that it would be honouring Lelouch, 80, with its Faten Hamama Honorary Award for lifetime achievement in film.

After a backlash, the festival — which will run from November 22-29 — called for the public to submit "any document containing a political position declared by Claude Lelouch against the Palestinians".

Dubai-based *Gulf News* reported that CIFF's original decision "triggered an outcry among the country's cinema industry for his alleged backing of Israel".

On Saturday, the *Egypt Independent* reported CIFF was cancelling the award.

### Israeli show adapted

▶ YET another Israeli television series is to be adapted for international audiences.

*Beauty and the Baker (Lihiyot Ita)* will be shot as a pilot.

It was shown in the UK on All4 in 2016 and was then bought by Amazon Prime last year.

The pilot will be directed by David Frankel.

### Screening in Iraq

▶ ISRAELI film, Yona Rozenkier's *The Dive*, will be screened in Iraq at this week's Duhok International Film Festival.