

DIGEST

Shiri on Broadway

► **ISRAELI** singer Shiri Maimon will take on the role of Roxie Hart in the Broadway show *Chicago* from September 21.

Maimon made the announcement after she appeared in New York's Times Square as part of Israel's 70th anniversary celebrations.

"Choosing me to play a leading role in *Chicago* on Broadway is proof that dreams are meant to be fulfilled," she said.

"I'm proud to bring an Israeli presence to Broadway. This is an incredible opportunity for me . . . and it will be a challenging and exciting time in my life."

Maimon first shot to fame in Israel on televised talent show *HaKochav HaBa* in 2003 and two years later finished fourth at the *Eurovision Song Contest*.

Maimon won't be the only Israeli on Broadway, as Sasson Gabai will take on the starring role of Tawfiq in *The Band's Visit*.

On target for TV

► **RISE and Kill First**, a book about Israel's targeted assassinations by *Yediot Aharonot* reporter Ronen Bergman, will be turned into a mini-series by HBO and Keshet.

The book, which was published earlier this year, details Israel's history of successful and failed Mossad and Shin Bet assassinations.

It includes accounts of Israel's attempts to kill Yasser Arafat, Hezbollah leader Imad Mughniyeh and Hamas' Sheikh Ahmed Yassin.

The series will be filmed in Israel and produced in English.

Bergman has written many other books, including 2008's *The Secret War with Iran*.

BY SIMON YAFFE

AUTHOR Abi Silver used her legal knowledge to pen her first book, *The Pinocchio Brief*, which was published last year.

And the two main protagonists, lawyers Judith Burton and Constance Lamb, are back in her new legal thriller, *The Aladdin Trial* (Lightening Books, £8.99).

It tells of an elderly artist who plunges 100 feet to her death at a London hospital — and the police sense foul play.

The hospital cleaner, a Syrian refugee named Ahmad Qabbani, is arrested for her murder.

Leeds-born Abi, a lawyer, told me: "I wanted to write an engaging story with interesting and strong characters."

"Judith is an experienced-but-acid-tongued lawyer and Constance is more the determined, cautious type."

"I also wanted very much to be current in the themes that I covered, so there are issues about hospital funding and the terrible pressures they are under."

The refugee crisis was at the top of the news agenda when Abi initially had the idea for the book in 2015.

"I wanted to explore how the media treat a Syrian and how vulnerable he would be in a court system, with English not being his first language," she said.

"There was also a link with refugees for me, as my grandparents were born in Ukraine, Poland and Russia."

"They arrived in the UK as children."

"I remember talking to them about what they went through and the difficulties they may have experienced as refugees, so it really brought the subject home to me."

Growing up, Abi was fascinated with reading, but she also had a love for the law, which originated with the Granada Television series *Crown Court*.

Law background helps author to thrill her readers



LEGAL MIND: Abi Silver

And it was that career route she chose, reading law at Girton College, Cambridge, and working for major international law firms.

However, while on a career break, Abi wrote *The Pinocchio Brief*.

Abi returned to Leeds in February to address guests at the Milim literary festival.

Her debut book is on the shortlist of five for the prestigious Waverton Good Read Award, with the winner to be announced at the end of the month.

The Aladdin Trial has gained interest, too, having made it into *The Times'* June Crime Club picks.

Raised in the Roundhay area of Leeds, Abi's father, Sidney Fineberg, was headteacher at the Morris Silman Middle School, while her mother, Jacqueline, was a teacher.

After her father died, her mother moved to Hertfordshire to be closer to her daughters.

Abi's aunt and uncle, Anita and Harold Finlay, still live in Leeds.

In 2000, Abi and husband Daniel, who had married at Leeds' Beth Hamidrash Hagadol Synagogue, moved to Ra'anana as her husband was working for the British Gas Group.

She recalled: "They had a find of gas offshore in Gaza, so it was politically sensitive, but they opened a new office in Israel and wanted someone to go there."

"It was a fantastic and wonderful opportunity and I had just had my first child, Noah, so I was on maternity leave, anyway."

But their move to Israel coincided with the outbreak of the Second Intifada.

"It was difficult and frightening," Abi said. "People started to avoid public places and, during that time, people from the UK didn't visit as much."

A further two children, Nathan and Aron, were born in Israel.

In 2005, the family returned home, as their kids were coming

up to school age.

Abi eventually returned to law in 2010, specialising in litigation, but, in 2014, she decided that she wanted a break from being a private practice lawyer.

Now working as a freelance private law practitioner, the 50-year-old's interest in artificial intelligence also sees it play a part in *The Aladdin Trial*.

Abi added: "There is a spellbinding courtroom confrontation in which they grapple with all-too-possible

Explore how media treat a Syrian

developments in artificial intelligence.

"In April, the government announced that it was going to spend nearly £1 billion on promoting artificial intelligence across difference industries, but the House of Lords also issued a report as they want to regulate AI."

"There are lots of people who think that there should be a structure in place when it comes to what we want robots to do and not do."

Abi has already started work on a third Burton and Lamb novel, which is due for publication next year.

Yngwie to give Israel masterclass

GUITAR master Yngwie Malmsteen, pictured right, will not only be performing in Israel later this year — he will also be hosting a masterclass.

The Swedish rock star will host the class and the show on September 11 and 12, respectively, at Reading 3 in Tel Aviv.

Also heading to Israel are British klezmer fusion band Oi Va Voi, who will perform at the Rishon leZion Live Park on July 4.

Oi Va Voi, making their fourth trip to the country, will be joined by Israeli singer Zohara Niddam.

Meanwhile, British punks The Stranglers and South African hip-hop duo Die Antwoord are rescheduling their Israel dates.

Die Antwoord were due to perform on August 2 in Rishon LeZion, but have changed other European dates.

"Ninja and Yolandi look forward to rescheduling their appearance and to once again perform in front of their amazing fans in Israel," the pair said.

They last played Israel in 2016, performing in front of 20,000 fans.

"Everyone be getting their f*****



panties in a knot, because like 'Why you going to Israel? Don't go to Israel!'" Ninja said on stage at the time.

The Stranglers have postponed their Tel Aviv show from June 20 until October 16 for "logistical problems".

Last week, Israel's music fans were entertained by Leeds rock band Alt-J at the Tel Aviv Exhibition Centre, supported by indie rockers Warpaint, from Los Angeles.

"We came a few years ago and coming back is beyond belief," Alt-J singer Joe Newman told the sell-out crowd. "Let's do this again sometime!"

Top prize for chronicling recovery from divorce through the Talmud

ILANA Kurshan has won the 2018 Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature for her book *If All the Seas Were Ink: A Memoir*.

The \$100,000 prize, announced Tuesday, recognises emerging writers who articulate the Jewish experience, as well as the author's potential to make significant ongoing contributions to Jewish literature.

Kushan was among five finalists for the prize. Sara Hirschhorn, author of *City on a Hilltop: American Jews and the Israeli Settler Movement*, was picked as the Choice Award winner.

The remaining finalists — Yair Mintzker, Shari Rabin and Chanan Tigay — also received small monetary prizes.

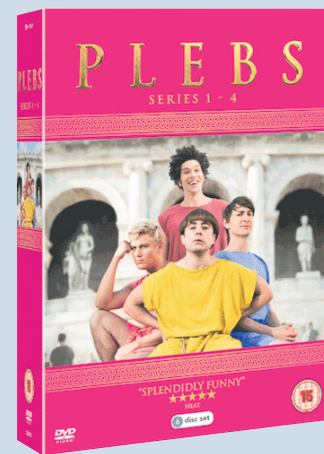
Kurshan's memoir details how she recovered from her divorce through the study of the Talmud.

She organises the memoir in loosely chronological fashion, arranging the story by Talmud tractates, enabling her to draw connections between her personal story and Talmudic anecdotes.

"I hope that my book will inspire more people to study Jewish texts and to take part in the ever-evolving Jewish literary tradition," Kurshan said.

Hirschhorn's book is an account of American immigrants to Israel who, in settling Jewish communities in territories captured in the Six-Day War, regarded themselves as progressive idealists rather than right-wing extremists.

Tigay, whose book *The Lost Book of Moses: The Hunt For The World's Oldest Bible* is about the mystery surrounding a Dead Sea Scroll, is a former reporter for the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.



WIN

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