

IN REALITY: Shiri Appleby as a reality-show producer in *UnREAL*

Writers like how Jewish anti-hero has changed

BY LINDA BUCHWALD

IN the television world, Rachel Goldberg is a rare character — a Jewish, female anti-hero.

She's the main character in Lifetime's *UnREAL*, a drama about the behind-the-scenes world of a *The Bachelor*-type reality show called Everlasting.

Rachel is played by Shiri Appleby, best known for her lead role as Liz Parker on *Roswell*.

More recently she played Adam's nice Jewish girlfriend, Natalia, on *Girls*.

UnREAL, which started its second series last week, smacks of authenticity — that's because one of its co-creators, Sarah Gertrude Shapiro, spent three years as a producer of *The Bachelor*.

Appleby, who directs one of the episodes in the second series, has an Ashkenazi father and a

Sephardi mother.

"I grew up going to Hebrew school," she said. "We celebrated all the holidays. I was batmitzvah. My parents are involved in the temple. Judaism has been a huge part of my life."

"We still celebrate everything. I still have a Jewish identity."

Appleby says she doesn't "actively seek out Jewish roles", but she can relate to them.

She believes her *UnREAL* character was always intended to be Jewish, even before she landed the role, "but I don't think it was for her to be as Jewish as she's become," she said.

"I think that has a lot to do with me just improvising and throwing things out, and the writers liking it."

I became foreigner to my own parents

BY ADAM CAILLER

AUTHOR Boris Fishman's second novel, *Don't Let My Baby Do Rodeo* (ONE/Pushkin Press, £12.99), is about an immigrant family in New Jersey that adopts a feral boy from Montana, but, he said, writing a novel in the modern world is a "pointless, idealistic quest".

He told me: "I want to reach people and have a silent, invisible and distant conversation about belonging, heritage, what makes us who we are and how we reconcile what the world gives us versus what we want."

"Nothing is more gratifying than hearing from a reader who, regardless of liking or disliking it, has connected with the book on some form."

"Those readers can now reach you in a way they couldn't before, but for an author how do you write a book about consequence when the meaning of consequence has changed and the audience has dwindled?"

"At the end of the day, I can't and I'm not going to come up with a different project in response to that because that would be pandering in a way that wouldn't feel good to me, but the reality of it is sinking into the back of my head."

Don't Let My Baby Do Rodeo, which comes out on Monday, is written from the view of the adoptive mother because Boris wanted to "get away from my own view of the world".

He explained: "The book is very Jewish, but Jewish between the



GREAT GIFT: Boris Fishman

lines. It is set in a place that is totally foreign to Russian-Jewish immigrants, as it is to Jews in somewhere like New York.

"I wanted to remind the readers that a whole other world exists outside of our own."

"As the reader gets further into the book, they will realise it isn't about the boy, but is actually about the mother who gave up a crazy life to be a mother and a wife."

"It's not specifically modelled

on my mother, but it is modelled on her generation.

"It is really a fantasy about a woman getting her groove back."

Boris, himself an immigrant from Belarus but who now speaks with a very strong American accent, used his personal experiences throughout the book.

He continued: "I use them in a metaphorical way. Midway through writing the book, I realised that the boy called Max felt like a bit of a kindred spirit."

"My family gave me this great gift in freeing me from the Soviet Union and giving me that opportunity to make something of myself."

"The ironic cost of that is that I became foreign to them as they stayed Soviets in America and I became an American in America."

"I'm not adopted, but sometimes I do feel that way."

The title of the book doesn't have much to do with the story but, Boris feels, it will "help it to stand out on the shelf".

He added: "The reality of marketing and publishing these days can not be too far from one's mind when you're working."

"I hope that my writing leads people to be less guarded about their failures and doubts."

"I find that authors will write books that are more honest than they are in real life."

"Nothing excites me more than true disclosure."

"I invite the readers to open up more."

■ ONE also published Boris' debut novel *A Replacement Life*.

Vivien is going coconuts for Kid Creole

BY SIMON YAFFE

IT has been three decades since music scribe Vivien Goldman first interviewed 1980s chart-topper Kid Creole.

And now, 32 years since Vivien penned *Kid Creole and the Coconuts: Indiscreet*, she has teamed up with the calypso group's creator, real name August Durrell, to pen the musical *Cherchez la Femme*.

It has recently finished its run at New York City's LaMaMa theatre — and Big Apple resident Vivien is determined to bring it to the UK.

She said: "We are looking for investors. We had a fabulous response from our run at LaMaMa and we really want to put it on in the UK."

"It is not a musical in the typical jukebox musical sense or about a story told in between a string of Kid Creole's hits."

"The story is about a guy looking for a lost love and, along the route, raises a lot of questions about family, identity and even race."

"It is all done in a screwball, madcap comedy way."

Kid Creole and the Coconuts, who enjoyed hits such as *Annie, I'm Not Your Daddy, Stool Pigeon and I'm a Wonderful Thing, Baby*, were at the height of their fame when



MUSICAL: Vivien Goldman, left, with Kid Creole and Eva Tudor-Jones

Vivien first interviewed them for *NME* magazine in 1984.

She recalled: "We struck up a friendship. They were quite an unusual band at the time because they had a lot of women in the group."

"I thought there was a great community feeling there and I became part of it as I befriended

August's then-wife Adriana Kaegi, who co-founded the band.

"We all hit it off and we kept in touch throughout the years."

Vivien was born in London — her Berlin-born father Max escaped the Holocaust, while her Frankfurt-born mother Erna came from a distinguished German-Jewish family called the Feuchtwengers.

After reading English and American literature at Warwick University, Vivien landed a job as a secretary with an offshoot edition of *Gramophone* magazine.

A job with Transatlantic Records followed where she worked with jazz and folk musicians, before landing a PR position with Island Records. That was where her career took off.

As well as contributing stories to *NME*, Vivien was assigned to look after Bob Marley and The Wailers.

Vivien's experiences and knowledge led her to write *Soul Rebel, Natural Mystic*, the first biography on Marley.

Towards the end of the 1970s, Vivien co-founded The Flying Lizards. They scored a huge hit with a cover of Barrett Strong's *Money*.

Vivien shared a flat with The Pretenders' singer Chrissie Hynde.

Last month, nine tracks Vivien wrote over the years were released on the reissue of her LP *Resolutionary (Songs 1979-1982)*.

It covers Vivien's time as a member of The Flying Lizards, as a solo artist with her single *Laundrette* and as half of duo Chantage with Eve Blouin.

Vivien, an adjunct professor of punk and reggae at New York University's Clive Davis

Department of Recorded Music, describes *Cherchez la Femme* as a "musical journey".

Its executive producer is August's wife Eva Tudor-Jones.

The show's title refers to the song recorded by Dr Buzzard's Original Savannah Band, a group August formed with his brother Stony Browder.

"The dream of writing a musical never vanished," Vivien explained.

"August and I met up in London a couple of years ago. We had enormous fun and laughs writing a first draft."

"Then the recession hit and everything went into a tale spin."

Luckily, finances picked up and *Cherchez la Femme* was the first musical to be staged at LaMaMa.

August knew Vivien was Jewish the first time he met her.

"He said, 'Ah, Vivien Goldman — an English Jew'," she recalled. "August grew up in Brooklyn, so Jews have always been a part of his life."

"Many of his earliest girlfriends were Jewish, as were lots of people in music he has worked with."

"There is even a little bit of Yiddish in the show."

■ If you can help Vivien bring the musical to the UK, email vivien.goldman@gmail.com

PICTURE: JANETTE BECKMAN