

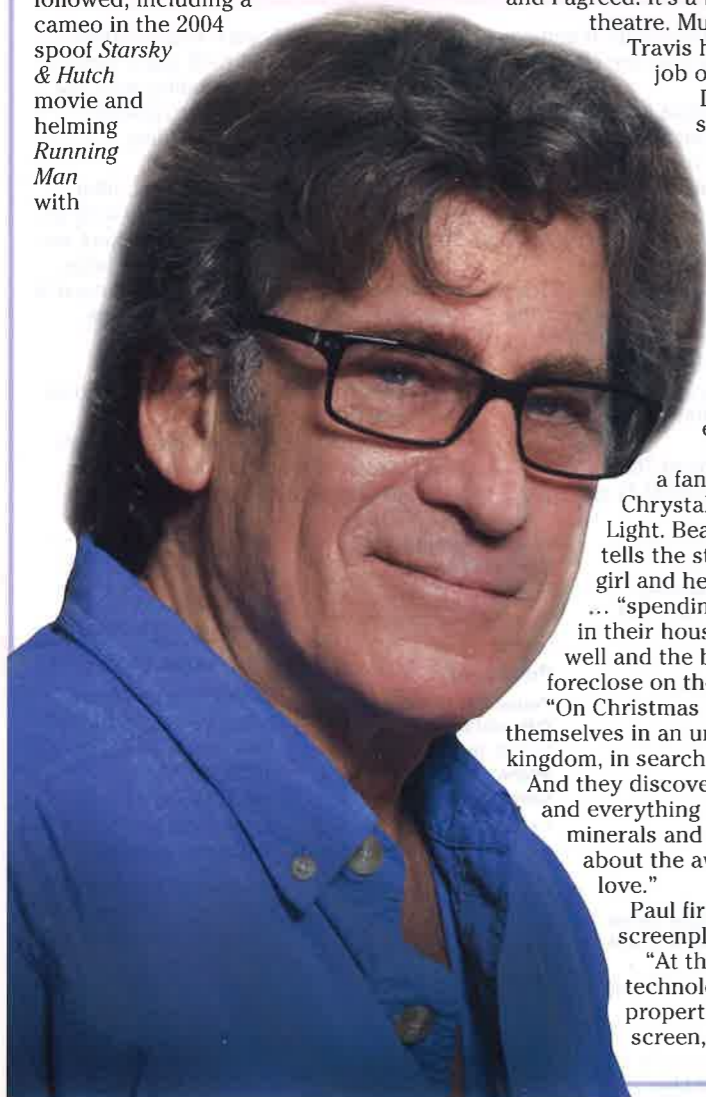
# From screen to stage

Gina Baksa talks to actor Paul Michael Glaser ahead of his role as Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof* in Bath

In the mid-seventies, the whole world was in love with *Starsky & Hutch* – Paul playing the sexy, wise-cracking foil to David Soul's sensitive 'Hutch' in the cult US cop series. Now 70, he doesn't want to talk *S&H*... "That was a long time ago," he drawls, his voice even deeper. "A lot of people still love the show though, so I don't mind being most known for it."

Yet only a few years before the cardigans and iconic Gran Torino, Paul played studly suitor Perchik in the 1971 Oscar-winning movie version of *Fiddler on the Roof*, alongside Topol's career-defining Tevye. Talk about life coming full circle.

Many acting and directing credits followed, including a cameo in the 2004 spoof *Starsky & Hutch* movie and helming *Running Man* with



Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Today, Paul is on a six-month UK tour with *Fiddler*.

The musical, with hits *If I Were A Rich Man* and *Matchmaker, Matchmaker*, is set in 1905 Tsarist Russia. He plays the village milkman, a man with traditional views that clash with his forward-thinking daughters.

"It's a great iconic role, full of whimsy and sadness and great humour. Tevye is forced to deal with dramatic changes in his life. We can all empathise with that."

*Strictly's* enfant terrible, Craig Revel Horwood is directing. "He's got me dancing and everything," Paul admits. "I enjoy Craig a lot."

So how did he get involved?

"The producers contacted my agent and I agreed. It's a brilliant piece of theatre. Musical director Sarah

Travis has done a fantastic job on the score."

Does he prefer the stage or film?

"There's a definite technique involved in movie acting, but it's not as gratifying. When you go on stage you're telling a story to the audience, so there's an interchange of energy and tension. It's a wonderful experience."

Paul has also written a fantasy children's book, *Chrystallia and the Source of Light*. Beautifully illustrated, it tells the story of a 13-year-old girl and her ten-year-old brother ... "spending their last Christmas in their house as their mum is not well and the bank is about to foreclose on their home."

"On Christmas Eve they find themselves in an underground medieval kingdom, in search of the source of light. And they discover that every being and everything they see is made of minerals and crystals. It's a story about the awesome power of love."

Paul first wrote it as a screenplay 14 years ago.

"At the time there was no technology to show the properties of light on the screen, so I wrote a book



instead, and I've recorded an audio version."

The allegory clearly reflects his well-documented personal tragedy. Paul lost his first wife Elizabeth, and later their daughter Ariel, to Aids, after she received an HIV-infected blood transfusion during childbirth. Their son Jake, 29, also contracted HIV in utero, but thankfully remains in good health.

"Yes, you could say *Chrystallia* is a metaphor for my own life," Paul agrees.

"I wanted to share what I'd learned about loss and helplessness, which has totally changed me. So I decided to write a book to the child in all of us."

So what is the book's message?



"Questioning the purpose of fear in our lives ... and our tendency to identify ourselves with our feelings: 'I am scared, I am sad'. That's not really what we mean. We mean a part of us is scared."

"So what is that part of us that can make the distinction between when we're scared and not scared? That's our consciousness."

Is this our true nature?

"Absolutely. It's what we really are – consciousness. And when we remember that and acknowledge our fear of helplessness – the biggest fear of all – we

can let it remind us of this awareness we have."

"And from that place we can choose to have compassion for ourselves for having the courage to go on. And when we find compassion for ourselves, we find compassion for others."

"Our ability to love is our truest power, our greatest power as human beings."

*Fiddler On The Roof* is at the Theatre Royal, Bath, from Monday, November 25 to Saturday, November, 30.

Visit [www.theatreroyal.org.uk](http://www.theatreroyal.org.uk) for further information.

“Our ability to love is our truest power, our greatest power”



## Dance master

The large cast of musicians and actors appearing in *Fiddler on the Roof*, who perform the magnificent orchestral score live on stage, also features Karen Mann as Golde and Jon Trenchard as Mote.

Director and choreographer Craig Revel Horwood is well-known on television in the UK and across the world as a judge on all ten series of BBC1's multi award-winning *Strictly Come Dancing*.

His numerous credits as a director and choreographer include, most recently, three *Strictly Come Dancing Live* tours – the UK tour of *Chess* and subsequent transfer to Toronto; and *The Witches of Eastwick* at the Watermill Theatre.

His extensive West End credits as a director and choreographer include *Miss Saigon*; *West Side Story*; *Spend Spend Spend!* (Olivier nomination for Best Choreography); *Sunset Boulevard*; *My One and Only*; and *The Beautiful and Damned* (Olivier nomination for Best Choreography).

Also a published author, his new book *Tales from the Dance Floor* follows his best-selling autobiography, *All Balls and Glitter*. In 2014, he is set to direct and choreograph the new UK stage tour of *Happy Days*.

## Win tickets

This week we have two tickets to give away to watch *Fiddler on the Roof* at Monday night's opening performance. Just answer the following question, put your answer on a postcard with your name and telephone number and send it to *Fiddler on the Roof Competition*, The Bath Chronicle, Westpoint, James Street West, Bath BA1 2DA. The first correct answer out of the hat on Monday morning will get the tickets for that night's show. The question is: who wrote the music for *Fiddler on the Roof*?