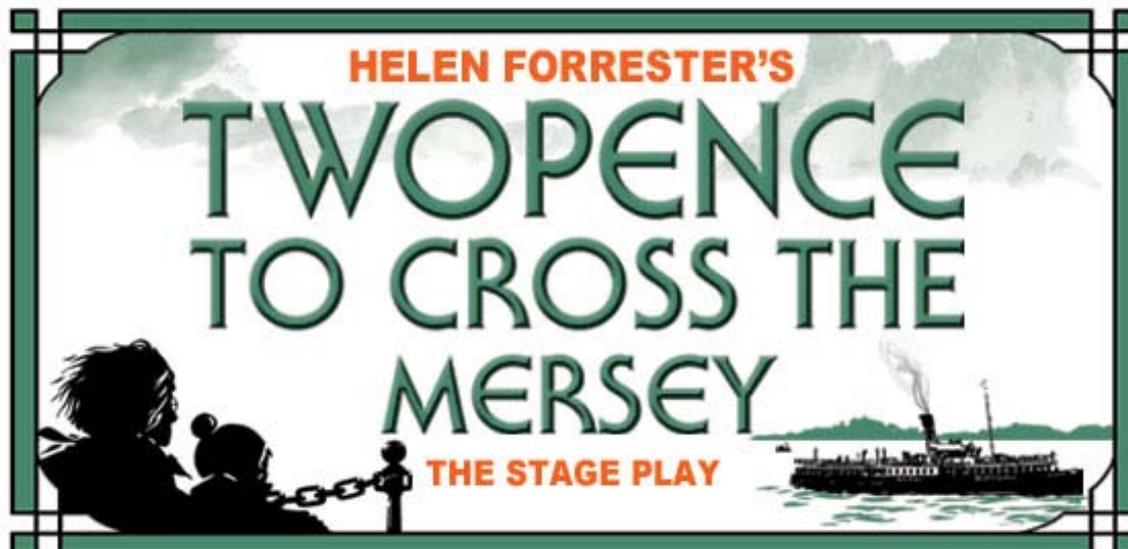


PRESS RELEASE | BILL ELMS ASSOCIATES on behalf of **THE EPSTEIN THEATRE**

Mon 24 November 2014 | For immediate release

Pulse Records Ltd in association with Bill Elms presents



OPEN AUDITIONS TO FIND STAR ROLE IN TWOPENCE SPRING TOUR

Open auditions have been announced for the **new stage play** production of **Helen Forrester's Twopence To Cross The Mersey**. The new play will visit **four Merseyside theatres** during its **Spring tour** when it takes to the road between **10 March** and **23 April, 2015**.

The tour opens with a three-week run at Liverpool's **Epstein Theatre (10 to 28 March)**, followed by visits to **Southport Theatre (9 to 11 April)**, **St Helens Theatre Royal (14 to 16 April)**, and concludes with a trip across the River Mersey to the **Floral Pavilion in New Brighton (19 to 23 April)**.

Helen Forrester's Twopence to Cross the Mersey tells the true story of a young girl and her formerly wealthy family suddenly thrown into poverty during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Leaving behind the nannies, servants and comfortable middle-class life in the South of England, they uproot their shattered lives and choose Liverpool as the place to start again

to rebuild their dreams and fortune. Unbeknown to them however, a terrible shock awaits them.

Open auditions for the key role of young Helen Forrester (HELEN) will take place on **Tuesday 2 December**, at the **Epstein Theatre** on Hanover Street. **Registration will open at 10.30am.**

The production team are looking for the successful female actor to perform throughout the Merseyside tour.

Actors need to be aged 18 or over to play the role of a 13/14 year old; 5ft 2in (maximum); and petite build. No exceptions will be considered. The actor will be required to deliver a two-minute monologue which should include a very well-spoken English accent. During the audition process those short-listed will be given a scene to perform from the play.

In its earlier format, a musical adaptation of the show had five hugely successful runs at Liverpool's Empire Theatre, firstly in 1994, and then returning in 2004, 2005, 2007 and 2009.

The new stage play version has again been written by **Rob Fennah** and will be produced by **Pulse Records Limited** in collaboration with co-producer **Bill Elms**. They are joined by **Liverpool director Bob Eaton**.

During an illustrious career spanning more than 40 years, Bob has directed more than 80 professional productions in regional theatres across England, London, New York and Hong Kong. Bob has also written and co-written over 20 plays, musicals and musical adaptations – and most recently won praise for the return of Lennon the musical to Liverpool.

Producer and stage writer Rob Fennah said: *"Twopence To Cross The Mersey is such a poignant true story and, although based in the 1930's, it tackles many scenarios people can still relate to today. It's the main reason why it has remained so popular. The new 'Helen' will be following in the footsteps of three other wonderful actors who have played the role in previous productions so our expectations will be very high. I strongly recommend that those thinking of auditioning should do their homework and read the book."*

Co-Producer Bill Elms said: *"As well as auditioning some well-known actors, both myself and Rob feel there is a wealth of talent here in our own region and this is a wonderful opportunity for any budding or trained actor to come along to audition. Finding the right person to play Helen Forrester is key in this popular production, and whoever is selected will work alongside a professional team of cast and creatives. It is a great role that demands a powerful performance, we are all very excited to find our new Helen."*

A full all-star cast will be announced soon. For enquiries please contact info@billelms.com.

Follow on **Facebook/TwoPenceThePlay** or **twitter @twopenceplay**

www.twopencetocrossthemersey.com.

PERFORMANCE DETAILS

TWOPENCE TO CROSS THE MERSEY – The Stage Play

Epstein Theatre,

Hanover House, Hanover Street, Liverpool, L1 3DZ

Tue 10 - Sat 28 March 2015

Eves: Mon-Sat 7:30pm

Mats: Wed and Sat 2:30pm

Ticket prices: From £15.50

How to Book: Booking Hotline **0844 888 4411**, visit www.epsteinliverpool.co.uk or book in person at the theatre box office (Open 2-6pm Mon-Thu & 12-6pm Fri & Sat) or via **TicketQuarter** on **0844 8000 410** | www.ticketquarter.co.uk or in person in Queen Square, Liverpool City Centre

Southport Theatre

Promenade, Southport, PR9 0DZ

Thu 9 April – Sat 11 April 2015

Eves: Sat 7:30pm

Mats: Sat 2:30pm

Tickets prices: From £15

How to Book: Booking Hotline **0844 871 3021**, visit www.atgtickets.com/southport or in person at the theatre Box Office.

St Helens Theatre Royal

Corporation St, St Helens WA10 1LQ

Tue 14 April – Thu 16 April

Eves: 7:30pm

Mats: Thu 2:30pm

Ticket Prices: From £18

How to Book: Book in person at the **Theatre Royal Box Office** (Mon – Sat 10am – 5pm). Alternatively, call **01744 756 000** or visit www.sthelenstheatreroyal.com.

Floral Pavilion

Marine Promenade, New Brighton, Wirral, CH45 2JS

Sun 19 April – Thu 23 April

Eves: Sun 6:00pm, Mon-Thu 7:30pm

Mats: Wed 2:30pm

Ticket Prices: From £15

How to Book: Booking Hotline **0151 666 0000**, visit www.floralpavilion.com or in person at the theatre Box Office (Mon-Sat 11am-6pm, Sun 12pm-4pm)

-Ends-

For more information, interviews, images, review or competition ticket requests please contact Bill Elms at Bill Elms Associates on 0151 245 0135 or bill@billelms.com.

EDITORS NOTES

PRESS NIGHT: Wednesday 11 March 2015 @ 7.30pm

More about Helen Forrester

Helen Forrester was born June Huband in Hoylake, Cheshire (now in Merseyside), the eldest of seven children of inept, socialite, middle-class parents who lived on credit. When her father was made bankrupt during the Great Depression, the family was thrown into poverty. Evicted from their comfortable home in an English market town and with nothing more than the clothes they stood up in, the large family took the train to Liverpool where they hoped to rebuild their lives. While Forrester's father searched unsuccessfully for work, the family were forced to live together in a single room. As the eldest child, the 12-year-old Helen was kept away from school to look after her six younger brothers and sisters. For the next few years the family were forced to rely on meagre hand-outs from the parish, and the kindness of strangers. At the age of 14 Forrester rebelled against her life of drudgery and her parents agreed to allow her to attend evening classes to make up for her missed years of education.

Throughout her teenage years, Forrester worked for a charitable organisation in Liverpool and Bootle, which provided background for her novels *Liverpool Daisy*, *A Cuppa Tea and an Aspirin*, and *Three Women of Liverpool*. After surviving the Blitzing of Liverpool and losing two consecutive fiancés to the Second World War she met and, in 1950, married Dr. Avadh Bhatia; her life with him in India provided background for *Thursday's Child* and *The Moneylenders of Shahpur*. The couple travelled widely, eventually settling in Edmonton, Canada, in 1955, where Dr. Bhatia became the director of the Theoretical Physics Institute at the University of Alberta. He was a pioneer in electronic transport theory and the study of diffraction of light by ultrasonic waves. The best-selling memoir of her childhood was *Twopence to Cross the Mersey*. It was later turned into a successful musical. Living in Alberta provided background for Forrester's novels *The Latchkey Kid* and *The Lemon Tree*. *Yes Mama*, which takes place mostly in late 19th and early 20th Century Liverpool, also includes a section about Alberta. She died on 24 November 2011 in Edmonton, Alberta.



JAMIE CLARKE IN A PREVIOUS VERSION OF TWOPENCE TO CROSS THE MERSEY - 2007

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