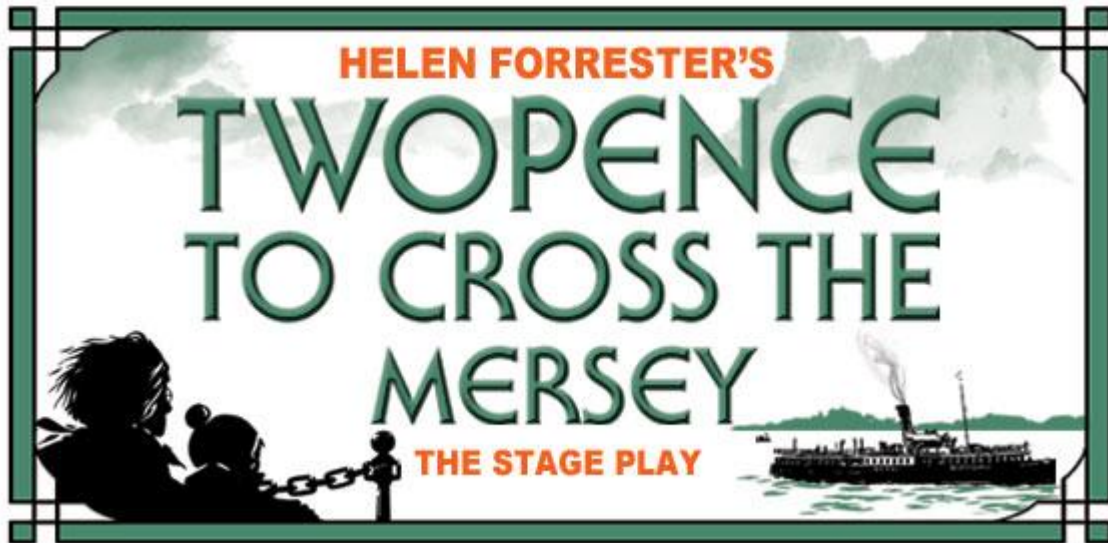


Pulse Records Ltd in association with Bill Elms presents



NEW TWOPENCE PLAY PREMIERES NEXT MONTH

It is now just over a month until the **new stage play** version of Helen Forrester's hit musical **Twopence To Cross The Mersey** embarks on a six-week tour of four **Merseyside theatres**.

The Merseyside Spring tour will visit **Liverpool, Southport, St Helens** and **New Brighton** between **10 March** and **23 April**.

The new ensemble production features eight cast members, including a number of faces familiar to Liverpool theatregoers, namely **Eithne Browne, Jake Abrahams** and **Emma Dears**.

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

The full cast line up is **Emma Dears** (*Judy & Liza, Les Miserables*) as Mother, **Christopher Jordan** (*Moving On, Coronation Street*) as Father, Young Helen is played by **Maria Lovelady** and with Young Alan played by **Daniel Stephen Davies**, all of which make up the Forrester family. **Eithne Browne** (*Brookside, Brick Up The Mersey Tunnel*), **Jake Abraham** (*Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels, Game of Thrones*), **Roy Carruthers** (*Night Collar, Tales from Haunted Liverpool*) and **Brian Dodd** (*Tony Teardrop, Treasured*) all take on lead roles, as well as supplementary characters throughout.

In its earlier format, the musical version of the show had four hugely successful runs at Liverpool's Empire Theatre, firstly in 2004 and then returning in 2005, 2007 and 2009, with **Rob Fennah** and production company **Pulse Records Ltd**.

The new version is being staged by **Pulse** in collaboration with producer and stage writer **Rob Fennah** and new co-producer **Bill Elms**. They are joined by 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: *“This is a new stage play adaptation of Helen’s book and follows our very successful musical version, which Helen came to see nearly 21 years ago when premiered at the Empire theatre in Liverpool. In fact, the performance on April 9th will mark the show’s coming of age! But I must point out, everything about this production is different; new set, new script; new director. Together with the strong and talented cast we have found to tour this Spring, taking the play across Merseyside theatres and introducing more theatregoers to Helen’s fascinating story is something we are all looking forward to.”*

Helen Forrester’s Twopence to Cross the Mersey tells the true story of a young girl and her formerly wealthy family as they are suddenly thrown into poverty during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Leaving behind the nannies, servants and comfortable middle-class life in the South West 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.

Theatregoers also have an **extra incentive** to catch the show following a collaboration with Merseyrail – they can travel by train to selected performances at two Merseyside venues for **just two pence**. And according to the organisers, this is the first time that people have been able to cross the River Mersey for just 2p since 1948.

The specially priced train tickets will be available for **people travelling into Liverpool** for the **Epstein Theatre’s matinee and evening performances** (2.30pm and 7.30pm) on **Wednesday 18 March**. This will be followed on **Wednesday 22 April**, for theatregoers travelling across the Mersey to **New Brighton** for the **Floral Pavilion’s matinee and evening performances**.

PLEASE NOTE: The travel will be for a return off-peak journey for up to four people from anywhere on the Merseyrail network (Northern and Wirral lines only; City line not included).

Ticket holders can register for a ticket online via the Merseyrail website using www.merseyrail.org/twopencemarch or www.merseyrail.org/twopenceapril links. The 2p will be collected at the theatre on arrival and will go to the production charity partner North West Cancer Research.

Merseyrail passengers can also enjoy a £2 discount off their Twopence To Cross The Mersey tickets for any performance at any of the tour’s four venues (the offer is available via promotional material available at stations across the Merseyrail network – Northern & Wirral lines only – and upon production of a valid Merseyrail ticket).

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

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: 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

Eve: 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 or via **TicketQuarter** on **0844 8000 410** | www.ticketquarter.co.uk or in person in Queen Square, Liverpool City Centre

Floral Pavilion

Marine Promenade, New Brighton, Wirral, CH45 2JS

Sun 19 April – Thu 23 April

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

Mats: Wed and Thu 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) or via **TicketQuarter** on **0844 8000 410** | www.ticketquarter.co.uk or in person in Queen Square, Liverpool City Centre

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

CHARITY PERFORMANCE: Tuesday 10 March 2015 @ 7.30pm – Epstein Theatre

PRESS NIGHT: Wednesday 11 March 2015 @ 7.30pm – Epstein Theatre

Production Partners: Liverpool ONE, Hard Days Night Hotel, TicketQuarter, Pulse Art, Bill Elms Associates Ltd.

Charity Partner: North West Cancer Research

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.