



LITTLE THEATRE

Home of the
Southport Dramatic Club
Presents

Diane Samuel's
POWERFUL AND MOVING DRAMA



Kindertransport

An amateur production by arrangement with Nick Hern Books
Directed by David Charters

**24th October -
1st November 2008**
7.45pm

WHEN HER DAUGHTER DISCOVERS SOME OLD LETTERS IN THE ATTIC,
EVELYN IS FORCED TO CONFRONT THE TRUTH OF HER PAST.

Play contains strong language and flashing lights



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Director's notes

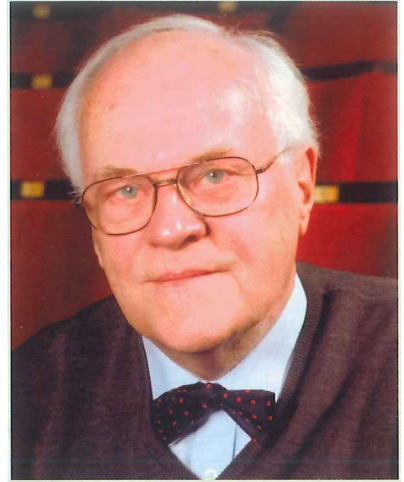
I accepted the directorship of KINDERTRANSPORT, Diane Samuel's powerful, moving drama, as a refreshing challenge, a subject matter so absorbing that it inspired me to read more on the topic. My chosen cast has shown the same enthusiasm and have, I'm sure, benefited from their involvement in this well written and crafted play.

In any production, the finished article relies on others, apart from those "treading the boards", so I must express my appreciation for those who have worked behind the scenes for their dedication in getting us this far.

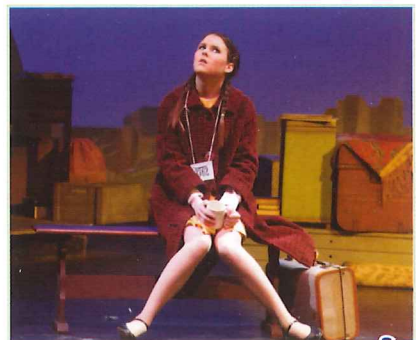
The original design and construction of the set, the effective lighting design, the emotive music and sound, the specific requirement taken on by our properties team complimented by the continuity of the special effects.


And most important of all, is the involvement of you, our audience who make up the fourth wall

David Charters



David Charters
Director





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Author's notes



Diane Samuel
Author

An “almost” local girl Diane Samuel was born in Liverpool in 1960.

After reading history at Cambridge she went on to become a drama teacher and then education officer at the Unicorn Theatre.

In 1992 the call beckoned and she became a professional writer, going on to write plays such as the “The True Life of Mata Hari”, Frankies’ Monster” and “The Bone keeper” as well as “Kindertransport” which won the 1993 Meyer Whitworth Award and played on the West End and off Broadway.

She has also written many radio plays, several being featured on the BBC.

Children and young adults have also benefited from her skills, her youth productions having been shown at the Unicorn Theatre, Theatre Centre and Quicksilver.

She claims the writing process still fascinates her and she holds Creative Writing Workshops for all ages, experience ranges and ability levels.



Background to the play

Three incidents led me to write *Kindertransport*. The first was a discussion with a close friend, in her late twenties and born into a comfortable, secure home, who described her struggle to deal with the guilt of survival. Her father had been on the *Kindertransport* and I was struck by how her parent's feelings had been passed down to her. The second was the experience of another friend who, at his father's funeral, overheard his mother recalling her time at Auschwitz. Until that moment he had had no idea that his mother had been in a concentration camp. The third was the ashamed admission by a fifty-five-year-old woman on a television documentary about the *Kindertransport*, that the feeling she felt most strongly towards her dead parents was rage at their abandonment of her, even though that abandonment had saved her life.

In 1989, I was a young mother with a one-year-old son and pregnant with my second child when I saw this TV documentary. I was struck at once by the ways in which parents and children struggled to deal with this desperate parting. I never intended to write *Kindertransport* as a modern history play. I wanted to explore the universal human experience of separation of child from parent, of refugee from the source of their culture or 'motherland'. I let this theme mull, up to my ears in nappies and baby milk, for a while longer.

In 1991, I wrote a scene between two German Jews. A mother hovers over her nine-year-old daughter and hands a new coat to the child. It is too big because it must last for 'next winter too'. She gives the girl a button and some thread and then coolly instructs her how to sew the one onto the other. By this time, my young sons were not yet one and not quite three. Artists are often drawn to the extremes of human experience in order to reflect also upon what is ordinary. 'Kinder', now in their seventies and eighties, have, on seeing the play, asked me, 'How can you possibly understand my experience so deeply?' I reply that as a young mother myself I couldn't

help but be touched by what had happened to them. I was compelled to get to the heart of the dilemma. Ask a child if they would prefer to be sent away to safety if their family is in mortal danger, and he or she will, in most cases, say that they'd rather stay and die with their parents. Ask a parent what they would do in the same situation and most would say that they'd send away their child to be safe. To be a parent is to live with this hidden contradiction. I wanted to try to face it.

In 2007, when the play was revived for a national tour of the UK, my eldest son was eighteen and left home to go to university. How *Life* reflects *Art*. I found myself watching actresses in auditions read the scene in which English Evelyn loads her daughter Faith with crockery for her student flat. Then I went home and hours later loaded my boy with mugs for his student flat. I wonder at how I could understand Evelyn's suppressed heartache at Faith's departure when my children were still so young and at home with me. But many parents, from the second their child is born, know too well that here begins the road to seeing their offspring on their way. The bittersweet task is to prepare their child to manage entirely without them.

Past and present are wound around each other throughout the play. They are not distinct but inextricably connected. The rerunning of what happened many years ago is not there to explain how things are now, but is a part of the inner life of the present.

I interviewed a number of the 'Kinder' as part of my research. They were all very open about their lives and feelings. Many of their actual experiences are woven into the fabric of the play. Although Eva/Evelyn and her life are fictional, most of what happens to her did happen to someone somewhere.

I used to dedicate this play to those 'Kinder' and the rest of the 10,000 who left Europe over seventy years ago. Now I see that, by entering



Background to the play

the exceptional experience of those children who caught the trains to safety when many of them, like Eva, were too young to bear it, a crucial connection can be made with the clinging child inside us all that never wants to let go, no matter what. So, now I dedicate the play also to those fortunate children who have the opportunity to leave their parents when they are ready. And to the parents who raise their children to take that leave. No child, as Evelyn must struggle so painfully to accept, can be 'my little girl', or boy, forever, if they are to thrive.

DIANE SAMUEL
London, 2008

Thanks

Many thanks to Libby Mason; Mark Ravenhill; Jack Bradley; Abigail Morris; Soho Theatre Company; Rena Gamsa; Dawn Waterman; Naomi Fulop; Erica Burman; and particularly to Ben and Jake.

Special thanks to the 'Kinder' who were interviewed as part of research for the play; Walter Fulop; Bertha Leverton; Paula Hill; Vera Gissing and Lisa who talked at length about their journeys and their lives.



Unveiled in September 2006, the bronze sculpture, designed by the renowned Israeli artist and former Kindertransport refugee Frank Meisler, will be surrounded by 16 milestones each bearing the name of a city from where the Kindertransport departed.

In 2006, Frank Meisler was commissioned to erect a bronze memorial sculpture of the "Children of the Kindertransport" outside Liverpool Street Station in "Hope Square", London. It commemorates 10,000 children who were admitted in small groups by the British Government embarking from cities in Germany & Austria between Kristallnacht 1938 and the outbreak of the War in 1939. Frank Meisler has designed a group of children who like most others arrived at Liverpool Street Station and were never to see their parents again. As a child of the Kindertransport himself, the sculptor feels a strong commitment to this project. The full-size sculpture now erected is 1.7m (68 inches) high, standing on a stone pedestal 60cm (24 inches) high. In September 2006 at Guildhall, he was bestowed with the Freedom of the City of London.

Image from www.frank-meisler.com





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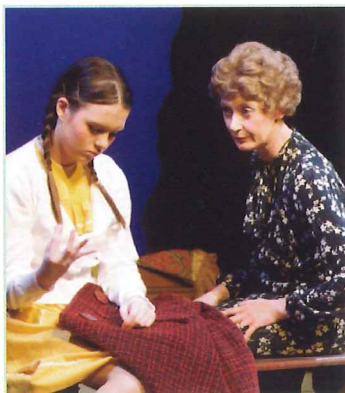
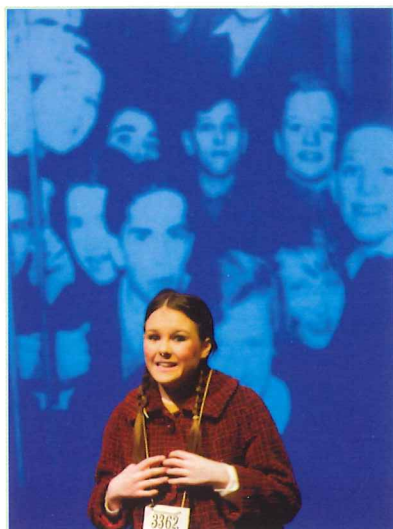
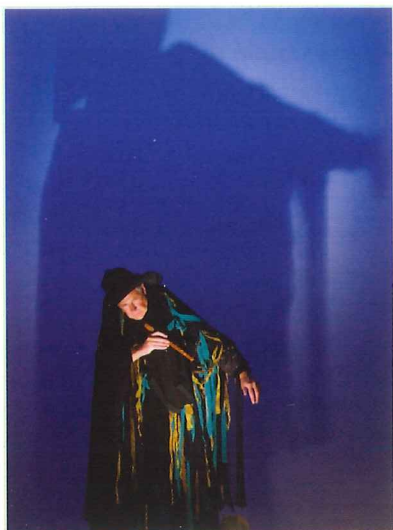
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Kindertransport





Kindertransport

By Diane Samuels
Directed by David Charters

Cast

in order of appearance

EvaFrancesca Rimmer

HelgaPoppy Flanagan

EvelynHelen Bennett

FaithNatalie Fletcher

LilPat Ball

The Ratcatcher (De Rattenfänger)

Brian Bentley

The play takes place in a spare storage room in Evelyn's house in an outer London suburb in recent times and various locations recollected by Evelyn.

The play is performed in two acts with a 20 minute interval between the acts.

Why not beat the rush and pre-order your drinks in the bar?

The Music

Pre-curtain music - Chopin's, Nocturne in C sharp minor

Under scoring selected from John Williams' film music

Ratcatcher's pipe music composed by Dr. Brian Hodge and played by Suzanne Hodge



Staging

Stage Manager Chris Ratcliffe

Assistant Stage Manager
(Book) & Assistant to
David Charters Jean Watkinson

Assistant Stage Manager Ann Tweddell

Set Design Syd Coley

Lighting Design
and Operators Tony Berry
Phil Hutchinson

Sound Design Brian Hodge

Properties Sandy Threlfall
Pamela Rowleston
Colin Hardwick

Wardrobe Cast members &
SDC Wardrobe

Images for overhead projection

Design Philip Charters
Operator Stephen Moran

Rehearsal Swing Margaret Hodge

Set construction SDC Production Team

Scenic Artist Bob Jessamine

Photographs Neil Hickson

The Little Theatre - Home of the Southport Dramatic Club.

The SDC wishes to ensure that all our patrons enjoy a comfortable, enjoyable and safe visit to our theatre. We should be grateful for your cooperation in helping us to achieve this. Please note the following:

- Should you arrive after the performance has started, you will be guided to your seats when a suitable opportunity occurs.
- At the end of the performance, exits will be open at both the front and back of the auditorium.
- First Aid assistance is regularly provided by volunteers from the St. John's Ambulance Brigade. Should you require help, please advise our stewards on duty in the Foyer.
- Patrons with hearing impairments should note that the auditorium has an Induction Loop System for your assistance. Hearing wands are also available from our stewards.
- Cameras and recording equipment may not be operated during performances
- **KINDLY ENSURE THAT YOUR MOBILE PHONE IS SWITCHED OFF.**

Thank you.

DESIGNATED PREMISES
SUPERVISOR, ALAN
NEWPORT



History Behind The Play

On 7th November 1938 A young Jew enraged by his family's expulsion from Germany walked into the German Embassy in Paris and shot dead a junior diplomat. Three days later, an anti Jewish orgy of co-ordinated destruction broke out in cities, towns and villages throughout the Third Reich

Kristallnacht – The Night of Broken Glass – saw the destruction in a single night of synagogues, the ransacking of Jewish shops and homes and more than 30,000 Jewish men rounded up and taken to concentration camps.

The result of which Britain conducted an extraordinary rescue mission, opening it's doors to 10,000 children at risk from the Nazi regime – ninety per cent of them Jewish. These children were brought by train and boat from the continent and taken into foster homes and hostels in Britain, expecting eventually to be reunited with their parents.

Most of them never saw their families again.

In a BBC broadcast launching the Lord Mayor of London's fund for Jewish refugees reaching Britain, Lord Baldwin, a former Prime Minister, said

“Thousands of men, women and children despoiled of their goods, driven from their homes are seeking asylum and sanctuary on our doorsteps, a hiding place from the wind and covert from the tempest”.

Baldwin added “They may not be our fellow subjects but they are our fellow men. Tonight I plead for the victims who turn to England for help”.

The Witnesses

Abrascha Gorbulski was placed in a Jewish orphanage in Hamburg at the age of seven where he remained until he graduated from high school. He was one of the first to leave Germany on the Kindertransport following Kristellnacht.

Since he was sixteen when he arrived in England, he was arrested in June 1940 when the British Government ordered the internment of refugees between the ages of sixteen and seventy.

Bertha Engelhard had her sixteenth birthday at Dovercourt camp, shortly after she arrived in England with her brother, Theo. A family in Coventry took her in to be their maid. Eventually the family also took in her brother and younger sister.

Lori Grünenberger was born in Breslan. At fourteen she was selected to leave for England on the Kindertransport but, at the last minute, her father could not bear to part with her. At the end of 1941, she and her parents were deported to Theresienstadt, where she was confined before being separated from her parents and sent to Auschwitz. When she was liberated, she weighed fifty-eight pounds.

Kurt Füchel was born in Austria and at seven his parents sent him to Norwich, England on the Kindertransport where he stayed with a Jewish family until the age of sixteen. In 1947, Kurt was reunited with his parents in France where he continued to live until 1956 when he emigrated to the United States.

Vera Diamant and her older sister Eva were rescued by a Kindertransport organiser. Vera was about eleven when she arrived in England, where she lived with several families before she joined the Czech school in Wales. Both her parents died in the Holocaust. After the war, she returned to her home town in Prague.

The Parents

Marian Cohen took Kurt Füchel into her family during the war. She has enjoyed regular visits from Kurt ever since.

Franzl Grossman followed her daughter from Vienna to England where she and her husband worked as a domestic couple during the war.



History Behind The Play

The Rescuers

Sir Nicholas Winton was a 29 year old London stock broker. He encountered in Prague in December 1938, the desperation of thousands of Jews. He was so moved it prompted him to try to save the children when he returned to London. In the nine months before the war he was able to bring 664 Czech children to England.

Sir Nicholas Winton is now 99 years old and still meeting his "children" after being re-united with them by Ester Ranson on her television programme some years ago.

Norbert Wollheim was twenty five years old when he began organising the Kindertransport in Berlin. An escort for several of the transports, he returned each time to Germany to continue his work, which ended with the outbreak of war. He and his wife and three year old son were deported to Auschwitz.



*Jewish refugee children
- members of the first Kindertransport*



Kindertransport - Cast

Francesca Rimmer – Eva

Francesca has appeared in several of our Youth Theatre productions, and was last seen in the Bar Production of “*Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street*”, where she played the Beggar Woman. This is her first main season production playing the part of Eva, which she has found to be very challenging, as she has had to learn some German dialogue. (Welcome to the SDC/ Francesca. Ed.)



Poppy Flanagan – Helga

Although it is two years since Poppy was on stage at The Little Theatre in “*Pack of Lies*”, she has been busy acting and directing at Formby Little Theatre. She is delighted to be back at SDC and in the cast of this moving play; a beautifully told story of separation, evacuation and heartbreak. She says it puts the credit crunch into perspective.



Helen Bennett – Evelyn

Helen last appeared on stage at ‘The Little’ in last season’s production of “*Snake in the Grass*” by Alan Ayckbourn. Her previous outings on stage here have included the farces “*Run for your Wife*” and “*Caught in the Net*”, the melodramatic “*Gaslight*” and the black comedy “*The Anniversary*”.

She is enjoying the challenge of taking on the complex character of Evelyn in “*Kindertransport*” and is sure the audience will enjoy this thought-provoking and moving play.

Helen says she is ‘sincerely’ grateful to the SDC wardrobe department for providing her with yet another glamorous and flattering costume.



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Kindertransport - Cast

Natalie Fletcher – Faith

Natalie is really pleased to be performing again with the SDC after a short break while she finished her degree in ‘Drama, Physical Theatre and Dance’. She is also a member of the National Youth Theatre of Great Britain and was working with the company in London, during the summer. Natalie is delighted to be playing the part of Faith and has learned much about the holocaust and the effects of this heart rending story.



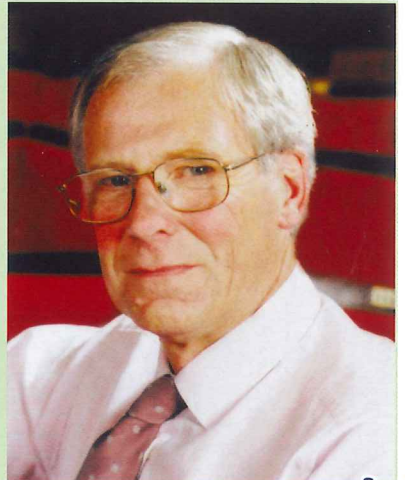
Pat Ball – Lil

Pat is delighted to be working with David Charters again. This time she doesn't have to lose a leg as she did when he last directed her in “*After the Lions*” in Ronald Harwood's play about Sarah Bernhardt.



Brian Bentley – The Ratcatcher (De Rattenfänger)

Brian says playing the ‘Ratcatcher’ is more of a challenge than waving the conductor's baton, as in “*Brassed Off*”, his last appearance at SDC. Brian says although he was rushed into the cast of “*Kindertransport*” almost at the last minute, he is enjoying multi-tasking, to the amazement of his wife.





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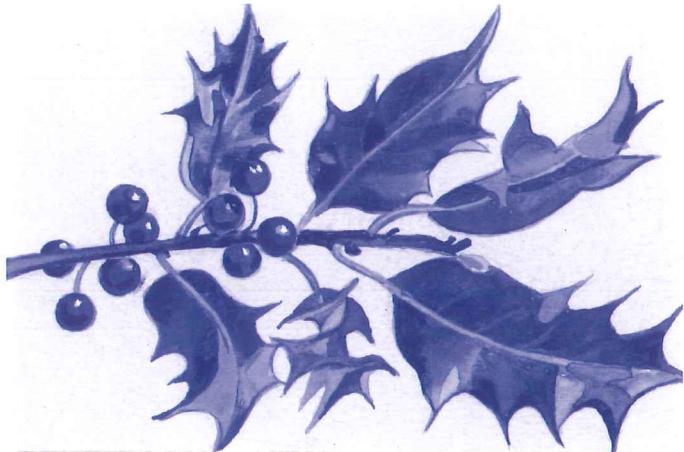
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