



# Compelling Drama . . . . . An Acting Dream!

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Alton Little Theater will present the Docu-drama, KINDERTRANSPORT, by Diane Samuels, on January 14th through 23rd at the Alton Little Theater Showplace. The play has been hailed as a "Modern Classic" and a "powerful contribution to Holocaust literature" by the New Yorker and Chicago Tribune. Director, Lee Cox, first saw the production in an early version in Chicago ten years ago and was drawn to the emotional clarity and intricate layers of bonding the play represents. Cox says, " Diane Samuels has written the best play about the pain and passion of mother/daughter relationships.... so I went out and found the best actresses I could to commit to this project."

KINDERTRANSPORT begins in 1938 and the outbreak of the war, when almost 10,000 children, most of them Jewish, were sent by their parents from Germany to Britain. Ten-year-old Eva ends up in Manchester...When Eva's parents fail to escape Germany, the child changes her name and begins the process of denial of her roots. It is only when her own daughter discovers some old letters in the attic that Eva is forced to confront the truth about her past and realize the cost of loss and transformation.

Sarah Hasse, Debbie Maneke, Donard Minard, Casey Turner, Julia Frazier and Linda Nevlin take on the challenging roles of portraying mother and daughter over four decades with added flair from ALT newcomer, Tanya Fox, who hails from London England. Cox said that "Tanya appeared at auditions and was an anchor to a vision ..... she understands this play on a personal level in that her father is German and a Holocaust survivor....the cast may struggle a bit with English and German accents but she's the real deal!" Also in supporting roles are British -born David Boase, and Jane Hill, Rileigh Bellito, Sydney Shansey, Lauren Harders, Jamie Heil and Jean Heil.

ALT's production of KINDERTRANSPORT was inspired by the play's references to the German Version of the "Pied Piper" - leading children into the "abyss" and Mrs. Heil provides a haunting viola accompaniment to movement through time. The play unfolds as a memory and growing consciousness and the set looks like something right out of Grimm's fairy tales; an expansive multi-layered "art" piece designed by Cox carries the viewer to Germany, England, trains and boats, interiors and exteriors from 1938 to 1973. Local artists, Tosha Harris and Joe Bellito helped bring Cox's vision to life and the cast has had the advantage of working on the set from the beginning of rehearsals on December 5th. Mrs. Judy Howald, a former German teacher, has coached some of the young actors and Mr. George Spooner, a speaker from the St. Louis Holocaust Museum, and a Kinder-youth himself, has shared his story as the cast prepared their research. Mr. Spooner will be speaking at the Theater on January 16th at 1:15 pm before the matinee performance to set the context of the production for those particularly interested in theater and true-life drama. There is no charge for this "pre-show" and Director Cox hopes that many students in High School and College will attend the production, and that teachers may consider giving extra credit for attendance. Student tickets through college are just \$6(with ID); adult tickets are \$14 and Reservations are now being taken at 618-462-6562.

KINDERTRANSPORT is now being produced in London by Nick Hearn and is lovingly presented at Alton Little Theater with a timely message in the days of immigration arguments about the importance of "saving children if we are to save our world", say Director Cox. She continues, "I know that right now everyone wants to enjoy the holidays and have a good time but sometimes it's good to remember the best and worst of days." KINDERTRANSPORT is an adventurous choice for Community Theater - but a theatrical journey that is so worthwhile in taking. Check out the ALT website [www.altonlittletheater.org](http://www.altonlittletheater.org) for more information about all the upcoming productions for the 77th Season.