



Kindert transport

by Diane Samuels



Tuesday 20 –
Tuesday 27
January 2026

altrincham
garrick
studio

Introduction

Hello and Welcome...

...to the Altrincham Garrick Studio, and our production of Diane Samuels' compelling play of extraordinary emotional resonance: one that quietly but powerfully asks what it means to survive, to belong, and to remember. First staged in the early 1990s, it has lost none of its urgency or impact. Indeed, in many ways, its relevance has only deepened with time.

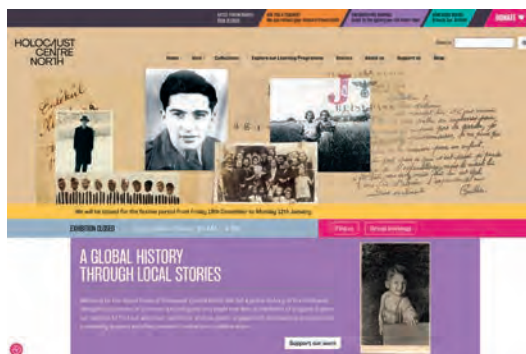
Like many others outside the Jewish community, although I had heard the word *Kindertransport* I had no deep understanding of what had taken place. So many of the children who made new lives in the U.K. and beyond stayed silent for many years about their pasts. The playwright herself had no knowledge of *Kindertransport* until the 50th anniversary in 1989.

Diane Samuels has stressed that this is a play about parenthood, about mothers and daughters and the pain of separation. She has insisted that this is not a play about the Holocaust. But, of course, that unspeakable obscenity is the historical backdrop to the play.

The *Kindertransport* programme rescued nearly 10,000 predominantly Jewish children from Nazi-occupied Europe in the months leading up to the Second World War, and the play explores the experience of displacement through the eyes of one child and the adult she becomes. Eva, sent alone from her German home to the safety of England, is spared the horrors that befall those left behind. Yet survival, Samuels reminds us, is not a simple or painless gift. The play examines the long shadow cast by trauma, separation, and the loss of language, culture and family, tracing how the past persists in the present, often in unexpected and unsettling ways.

This production coincides with Holocaust Memorial Day, a moment each year when we are invited not only to remember the six million Jewish people murdered in the Holocaust, but also to reflect on the wider consequences of prejudice, hatred and indifference. *Kindertransport* aligns profoundly with the spirit of that day. Rather than presenting history as something distant or abstract, it brings the personal cost of intolerance into sharp, intimate focus. It asks us to consider how ordinary lives are fractured by extraordinary events, and how memory itself can be both a refuge and a burden.

There is a line in the play, "*Your suffering is personal - mine is monumental*". Diane Samuels' great achievement with this work is to have made a monumental crime deeply personal and thereby enable us to feel a true and affecting empathy with those who have suffered its consequences.



We are hugely grateful for the support we have received towards this production from **Holocaust Centre North**, who have engaged with us by coming to rehearsals and sharing their knowledge and understanding about the *Kindertransport* programme. They will also be



present at every performance with information and donation options, and have agreed to contribute to the Q&A session after Sunday's performance.

There are three more vastly different plays to come in our Studio Season of productions with a Manchester theme, details of which can be found on page seven of this programme. Not everything will be to everyone's tastes, but that is part of the joy of having a themed season, where challenging dramas by relatively new playwrights can sit alongside classic plays from the last century. I hope that you'll choose to come and experience all three! And at the start

of February, in the main auditorium, we're staging James Graham's "*Quiz*" – a brilliantly funny play from the author of "*Dear England*", "*Ink*" and TV's "*Sherwood*" and "*Brexit: The Uncivil War*" about the Millionaire 'Coughing Major' scandal, complete with audience interaction and the chance to be on-stage as audience members and jurors... I urge you not to miss it!

Thankyou for coming to this production, and supporting Altrincham Garrick. Have a safe trip home afterwards, and we hope to see you again very soon.

Joe
Joseph Meighan

Artistic Director, Altrincham Garrick Playhouse.

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The Great Escape

How 10,000 children were saved from the Nazis.

It's an innocuous sounding word, *kindertransport*. You'd be forgiven for thinking there was something cute about it. Like *kindergarten* and *Kinder Surprise* eggs, it seems to suggest happy childhood pursuits and innocent times. The German word translates as the transportation of children, and there'd be nothing untoward about that if it weren't for the specific reason any children needed to be transported in the first place. Today, *kindertransport* means one thing: the escape and rescue of 10,000 children from the Nazi regime before the outbreak of the Second World War.

The immediate cause was the escalating level of violence against Jews in Hitler's Germany. Over two nights in November 1938, the Führer's paramilitary forces arrested 30,000 Jewish men, destroyed Jewish businesses, burned synagogues, schools and private homes, and killed at least 91 people. Known as *Kristallnacht* - or the Night of Broken Glass - it was a terrible indication that the appeasement of Hitler by British prime minister Neville Chamberlain was doing nothing to rein in the dictator and his anti-Semitic agenda. Chamberlain's claim, earlier that year, to have achieved "peace in our time" was sounding worryingly hollow.

That's why, in the nine months before September 1939, when Britain declared war on Germany, the Inter-Aid Committee launched the Refugee Children's Movement with a view to rescuing Jewish children from Nazi-controlled Europe. Germany was complicit in this. In this pre-Holocaust period, the country had made attempts to expel its Jewish population rather than to kill them (many thousands emigrated to Palestine, for example). Most countries, however, were reluctant to accept any refugees, which meant German Jews were powerless to act as the Nazis stripped away their rights and increased their persecution.

Groups such as the Inter-Aid Committee and its allies in the churches made the case for rescuing Jewish children even if their parents could not be saved. It was an offer the UK was alone in taking up. *"Here is a chance of taking the young generation of a great people, here is a chance of mitigating to some extent the terrible suffering of their parents and their friends,"* said foreign minister Samuel Hoare.

The efforts of the Inter-Aid Committee focused on Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland, where it had a mandate to rescue both Jewish and "nonAryan Christian" children. The Home Office agreed to get rid of the red tape at border control that had previously made it difficult for unaccompanied children to enter the country. Germany laid down the conditions: no adults would be allowed to travel with the children and no ports could be blocked by the evacuations. For their part, the refugee agencies agreed to find homes for the new arrivals and, believing the arrangement would be temporary, to guarantee £50 each to cover the costs of their eventual return to Europe.

On 2 December 1938, the first trainload of 196 children, most of them rescued from a torched Berlin orphanage, landed at Harwich. Before

war broke out, they would be joined by over 9000 more refugees, ranging from toddlers to teenagers, who would find new homes with relatives, foster parents, boarding schools and hostels all over the UK. When they were put on the trains in Germany, they and their parents were instructed by the Nazis not to show any emotion on penalty of being refused permission to leave.

They would leave at midnight on ordinary commuter trains and take the boat from Holland to England, having no idea what lay in store for them. Alongside Jewish groups, the Quakers were especially active in the rescue programme, campaigning for government support, raising money, greeting the children on their arrival and welcoming them into Quaker homes and boarding schools.

The parents of Richard and David Attenborough were among those who took in these new arrivals. Helga and Irene Bejach, aged 10 and 12, turned up from Germany, frightened, thin and unhealthy, in August 1939. Their father had been taken away by the Nazis, later to be killed



Above: Children from a *Kindertransport* after their arrival in Waterloo Station in London, February 2, 1939.

at Auschwitz, and their house had been smashed up. It had taken them three days to complete the journey from Berlin and they could speak almost no English. The boys welcomed them as sisters. They would stay for seven years before emigrating once more to the USA where they had relatives. Richard would later call the *kindertransport* a "great example of caring for human dignity, for racial tolerance and for compassion". It taught him a lesson about injustice, which inspired him to make films such as *Gandhi* and *Cry Freedom*.

Most of the children would never see their parents again. Postcards from home would talk cryptically of having to "go on a journey" and then communication would stop altogether. Consequently, the majority would become permanent British citizens. Many had also been split up from their siblings; it was rare for more than two children from one family to be allowed to escape. The final *kindertransport* was on 1 September 1939, bringing in the last of nearly 10,000 children. They would be the lucky ones. Of the Jewish children left behind, it is estimated that 1.5 million were killed.

Background

Diane Samuels talks about *Kindertransport*

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 so fully 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 almost all passed on, on seeing the play, used to ask me, 'How can you possibly understand my experience so deeply?' I would 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.



Frank Meisler's bronze memorial sculpture of the "Children of the Kindertransport" outside Liverpool Street Station in London. Commissioned in 2006, it is surrounded by 16 milestones, each bearing the name of a city from which the trains departed.

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 hoy 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 re-running 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 I've 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 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 Samuels

From an interview given in 2008.

kinder-transport

The Cast

Lil	Alex Saint
Faith	Megan Dutton
Evelyn	Sarat Broughton
Helga	Lindsey Barker
The Ratcatcher	Robert Crumpton
Eva	Sarah Morgan

The Production Team

Director	Celia Bonner
ASM / Production Assistant	Siobhán Linnett
Lighting & Sound Design	Geoff Scullard
Lighting & Sound Operation	Jo Myers
Props	Claire Eddlestone-Rose
Assisted by	Alan Jones
Costumes	Mike Shaw & Team
Set Coordination	Paul Simpson & Team
Workshop	Steve Cox & Team

Information believed to be correct at time of going to press...

Without our incredibly dedicated, enthusiastic team of **Volunteers and Staff**, whose sheer hard work often goes unnoticed, Altrincham Garrick Playhouse would simply be unable to continue providing such a range of top-quality productions for everyone enjoy.

Thank You!

With their continuous commitment to excellence, we owe them all a huge debt of gratitude. Thank You!

The Playwright

Born in Liverpool in 1960 and educated in the city's Jewish schools, **Diane Samuels** found herself an outsider for the first time when she was at Cambridge University. Here she confronted 'an English context' that made her 'feel like a foreigner because the vocabulary of (her) world and culture (were) very different to the English one'. 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 including **The True Life Of Mata Hari**, **Frankie's Monster**, **The Bone Keeper** and **Kinder-transport**, which won the 1993 Meyer Whitworth award and played on the West End and Broadway.



Her study of history shaped her playwriting career – a calling that has always examined social and historical issues. Diane claims the writing process still fascinates her and she holds Creative Writing Workshops for all ages, experience ranges and ability levels.



For the past few years and ongoing, music has played a greater and greater role. Writing juicy, substantial roles for women of all ages to speak and sing. Asking universal questions through deeply personal stories – epic-intimate drama that is multi-dimensional

Diane worked with composer Gwyneth Herbert on **The Rhythm Method**, a musical love story with contraception, in 2018, before adding the finishing touches to

Waltz With Me, a new play with music inspired by the remarkable marriage, life and work of Mother Cornelia Connelly, and with Maurice Chernick created **Song Of Dina**, a semi-opera giving voice to Dina, silenced sister of Joseph of Technicolour Dreamcoat fame, in spring 2019.

The Company



Sarat Broughton – Evelyn

Sarat has been a member of The Garrick for almost thirty years and has featured in numerous productions of all genres at the theatre, including comedies, plays and period dramas. Her most recent appearance was as *Winsome Webster* in *Bombshells* in the Studio in 2023. She has also been a member of the Casting Committee and assisted with Front of House duties in the past.

Sarat has taught Drama and LAMDA for many years and is an Examiner for LAMDA in the UK and overseas.



Alex Saint – Lil

Alex came back to theatre after a 35 year break, debuting here in the Garrick Studio in *Unravelling the Ribbon* in the 2024 women's season. After studying drama in Bristol in the 1980s, where she was constantly involved in productions, she made her career in arts management but is now thoroughly enjoying being active in local theatre again.

Alex trains with northern writing legend Jim Cartwright and with theatre director Nick Bagnall, where she is learning loads. Last spring she played *Oberon* at Shakespeare North Playhouse in an outdoor production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* produced by Jim and directed by Nick, which was an amazing experience. She recently performed a monologue in a Cartwright showcase at the Royal Exchange Studio and also for Act Your Age North, which connects local writers and actors on the Manchester fringe.

She has loved working on *Kindertransport* with this fabulous company, and is looking forward to getting more active in the Garrick in the future.



Sarah Morgan – Eva

Sarah is delighted to be returning to the Altrincham Garrick, having previously performed in *Calendar Girls the Musical* in 2022 and *Peter Pan* in 2021. She's no stranger to theatre though as Sarah has been performing since she was 9 and can often be seen on various stage around South Manchester. Some of her credits include:

Mole in *The Wind in the Willows* (Stockport Garrick), *Shelby* in *Steel Magnolias* (Players Theatre), *Dot* in *Homefront Wedding* (Woodford Players), *Margaret Dashwood/Lucy Steele* in *Sense and Sensibility* (CHADs Theatre), *Bobbie* in *The Railway Children* (Stockport Garrick) and *Catherine* in *A View from the Bridge* (Players Theatre). Sarah also studied Musical Theatre at Pendleton School of Theatre from 2020-2022.

The rehearsal process for this play has been truly memorable. From researching the *Kindertransport* and people's attitudes at the time, to reading the stories of the children, it has all been so eye-opening for Sarah. These stories have been combined together to form Eva's moving story and Sarah has found it interesting taking these experiences to help build these layers up to bring Eva to life and do these children justice.

Sarah would also like to thank everyone for being so welcoming and for allowing her to be a part of this powerful play.



Lindsey Barker – Helga

About twelve years ago Lindsey played the roles of *Carrie Kipling* in *My Boy Jack* and *Patricia Green* in *Breaking the Code*, covering both World Wars, and she's delighted to be back in the same territory in what will be her 70th production in stage. Lindsey is thrilled to be playing the role of *Helga* in *Kindertransport* – a challenge she has relished – in such a meaningful and deeply moving play, which has simultaneously re-ignited her long-time interest in military history.

Previous acting credits at Altrincham Garrick Playhouse: *Go Back For Murder*, *Jerusalem*, *Playhouse Creatures* (Studio), *People*, *Business Affairs*, *Towards Zero*, *When We Are Married*, *The Lady in the Van*, *Present Laughter*, *Calendar Girls the Musical*, *The Sound of Music*, *Witness for the Prosecution*, *Bombshells* (Studio), *The Father*, *The Audience*, *The History Boys* and *The Worst Witch*. Away from the Garrick, Lindsey is a Supporting Artist for television and is represented by Nemesis Talent.



Robert Crumpton – The Ratcatcher, Nazi Officer, Organiser, Postman, Station Guard

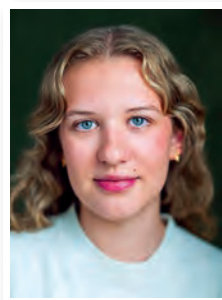
Robert is delighted to be returning to perform at the Garrick again, and to be part of such a moving and important play. In 2025, Robert played *Pozzo* in *Waiting for Godot* in the Garrick Studio in January, several roles in *Vardy v Rooney: The Wagatha Christie Trial* in May, and *Sir Philip Bin* in *Bleak Expectations* in October. Robert trained as an actor at Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art in London.

Robert's theatre credits include: *Henry V* (Oxford Playhouse), *Mr Kolpert* (Greenwich Playhouse), *Romeo and Juliet* (Nottingham Playhouse), *The Emperor Jones* (The Gate, Notting Hill); five national/international summer tours with the open-air British Shakespeare Company; leads in *Rope* and *Everyman* (The Madrid Players); *Betrayal*, *Crave*, *Miss Julie*, Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Present Laughter*, and the title roles in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* (English Theatre Madrid).

Television: *El Ministerio del Tiempo* (HBO/La 1), *In From the Cold* (Netflix), and the Spanish soap opera *Servir y Proteger* (La 1). Film: *The Vault*, *Cracking the Shakespeare Code*.

As a director, Robert's credits include: Racine's *Phèdre* (Old Fire Station Theatre, Oxford); *An Inspector Calls* (The Madrid Players); *Romeo and Juliet*, Jim Cartwright's *Two*, and an adaptation of Carol Ann Duffy's *The World's Wife* (English Theatre Madrid).

Robert would like to dedicate his performance to the memory of his grandmother, Miriam Kershner, whose parents fled anti-Jewish pogroms in the Russian Empire before the First World War; they then started a new life in Manchester.



Megan Dutton – Faith

Megan made her Garrick debut last season as *Mildred Hubble* in *The Worst Witch*, and also featured in the company in our unforgettable staging of *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* last June. Megan studied at Portsmouth University where she graduated with a BA in Musical Theatre. She then went on to train in Musical Theatre Performance at Associated Studios London from where she graduated in 2023.

Outside of the Garrick Megan has played *Jack* in *Into The Woods* (Playground Theatre), *Eurydice* in *Orpheus in The Underworld* (New Theatre Royal) and *Angie* in *Top Girls* (Bush Theatre).

Other credits include: *Jan* in *Grease*, *Patrice* in *13: The Musical*, Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella*, and *Beauty and The Beast*.

The Director



Celia Bonner

Before Celia moved to Manchester from her native London she was told by a colleague that she should join the Altrincham Garrick, so she did. She has been connected with the theatre ever since, though for years her work in broadcasting prevented her from much involvement.

Celia has acted and directed both on the main stage and in the Studio. Favourite acting roles include *Mrs Danvers* in *Rebecca*, *Miss Shepherd* in *The Lady in The Van* and *Jessie* in *Calendar Girls The Musical*, as well as *Esther Price* in *The Price* in the studio. Among favourite plays she has directed for the Garrick are *The Madness of George III* and *My Boy Jack*.

Celia has also been hugely in demand from other local theatre companies, particularly Wilmslow Green Room Theatre, where she has just directed a very successful production of *Dick Barton and the Curse of the Pharaoh's Tomb*.

Last season Celia returned to the Garrick to direct an unforgettable, sold-out production of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting For Godot*, and she is delighted to be back in the Garrick Studio again directing this compelling play and working with such a talented, dedicated company.



Tuesday 24 – Sunday 29 March

pomona

by Alastair McDowall

Directed by Mark Goggins

Step into the haunting depths of Manchester's underbelly, where evil lurks and danger is around every corner. Welcome to Pomona – a place where dreams are overshadowed by darkness.

Join Ollie on her desperate quest to find her sister, who has mysteriously vanished. As she navigates this treacherous world, she encounters a cast of unforgettable characters, each hiding secrets that twist reality in unexpected ways. In Pomona, nothing is as it seems.

Here at the centre of everything, journeys end and nightmares are born.



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WARNING: This production contains strong and offensive language, and contains scenes that some audience members may find disturbing including violence, blood, kidnapping, death, forced pregnancy, human trafficking, and references to pornographic content, sexism, sexual assault, suicide, and abuse.

Tuesday 28 April – Sunday 3 May

hobson's choice

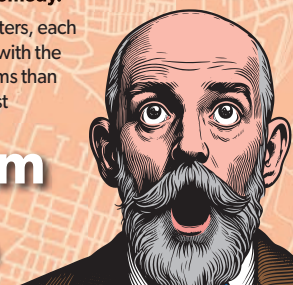
by Harold Brighouse Directed by Ros Greenwood

Salford. 1880. A father and daughter go head to head in this classic comedy.

Widower Henry Hobson is struggling to handle his three grown-up daughters, each seeking a husband and an escape from the family boot-makers' shop. But with the domineering Hobson spending more time boozing in the Moonraker's Arms than on the business, the future of the firm and the family is in the hands of eldest daughter, the no-nonsense Maggie.

When she sets her sights on the talented boot-maker Willie Mossop, it's the start of an unlikely partnership that threatens to ruin Hobson's trade. Reluctantly, he's forced to make a choice...

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PG

Tuesday 9 – Sunday 14 June

punk rock

"I hate normal people. Normal people should be eviscerated."

Tucked away in a library in a Stockport grammar school, half-a-dozen sixth formers on the cusp of adulthood, are whiling away the hours...

A clatter of teenage thoughts tumble out between the friends. Dreams of Oxbridge, contempt for the locals and of course: sex, sex, sex. But as exams approach and pressures rise, real brutality emerges from behind their playful barbs. And soon there is nothing left but violence.

From Manchester power-house playwright, Simon Stephens, *Punk Rock* is a brutal and urgent examination of contemporary adolescence. *Intelligent. Articulate. F***ed.*

by Simon Stephens
Directed by Meg Brassington

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WARNING: This production contains strong and offensive language, and discussions of self-harm, sexual abuse, racism, homophobia, ableism, body shaming, gun violence, murder, and mental health issues.



"A thrilling blend of entertainment, politics and justice today"

The Sunday Times

QUIZ

A: COUGH

B: HACK

C: BARK

D: RASP

GARRICK
ensemble

Directed by
Joseph Meighan

by James Graham

Based on the book by Bob Woffinden and James Plaskett

"Bad Show: The Quiz, the Cough, the Millionaire Major"

September 2001: the nation is gripped by a scandal that remains, to this day, a mystery. In an outrageously audacious heist, Charles Ingram, a.k.a. the Coughing Major, and his accomplices duped the world's most popular TV quiz show, Who Wants to Be a Millionaire, out of £1,000,000.

Or did they? And if they did cheat, how did they really do it?

James Graham's thrilling, entertaining and provocative comedy drama asks you, the audience, to put fingers on keypads and answer the ultimate 50/50:

Guilty or Not Guilty?

12A



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