The Accused

**Reviewed by:** Michael Jones-McCaw on Saturday 21 July 2012  
**Venue:** Pyramid Arts Centre, Warrington  
**Type of Production:** Play  
**Producer/Director:** Nick Cupit  
**Musical Director:**   
**Choreographer:**

Show Report

You can pretty much guarantee that Encore productions will always come up with something original when putting on a production. Jeffrey Archer’s, ‘The Accused’ was no exception having the whole play set in an actual courtroom. Even though a court case hadn’t been held in the room for over 20 years it was though an artistic eye and clear determination from the production team that this was made possible.   
An atmosphere was instantly created as soon as you walked into the building with barristers and solicitors walking through and whispers with witnesses – I immediately felt part of the production and strangely nervous, as we were told the audience would form the jury panel. Brilliant!  
We were formally introduced to the plot by the Jury Bailiff played by Michele Dean, who clearly explained what would be required from us and the story behind ‘The Accused’.   
Bryan Higgins and Ria Hall playing Anthony Kearsley for the Crown and Joanna Barrington for the Defence, were ideally cast and both gave outstanding performances. The pair set a standard that felt so natural and real, they kept the pace going throughout the production without a detraction or distraction and without a blunder, which for two roles so big is pretty impressive.

Patrick Sherman played by Roy Hayes –AKA The Accused, appeared as cool as a cucumber giving his account of events. He delivered a confident portrayal of the character.  
Kayleigh Bibby played Jennifer Mitchell – the Key Witness. Another wonderful performance which was believable both these characters left the audience trying to guess who was telling the truth and so accomplished the task in hand as actors.

Detective Inspector Payne played by Gemma Thorniley gave her account of events and appeared under real pressure when questioned by Barrington, it was like watching a TV drama on the edge of my seat. Other performances of note came from Tony Avery, Abbas Jabarooti and Christine Robins all showcasing great talent in their cameo roles and proving more twists and turns than a roller coaster.  
Another wonderful performance to add to the growing list of successes from Encore – congratulations.