Blood Brothers

**Reviewed by:** Michael Jones-McCaw on Friday 27 January 2012  
**Venue:** Brindlley Theatre Runcorn  
**Type of Production:** Play  
**Producer/Director:** Kit Philips  
**Musical Director:**   
**Choreographer:**

Show Report

Being a play I am more than familiar with, I was so looking forward to Encores production of Blood Brothers. Playing to a full house and on a huge open stage, I was worried that the cast might be feeling nervously exposed and vulnerable - I was nervous for them.

Talented Kit Philips not only took the reins in directing the production but he also played Eddie. Directing and performing in the same production is hard and extremely demanding - you worry about whether things are coming across in the right way i.e. the audience’s perception, also sight lines, cues, technical issues, props. Well, everything was absolutely perfect with not a glitch in sight. Your choice of music especially impressed me. On top of all this ... Kit gave a sterling performance. Your relationship with Mickey was bang on - the pair of you. Endearing, heart-warming and sincere. Tony was the best Mickey I've seen - with facial expressions any performer would die for, from the minute he appeared, the audience loved him.

I can't think of a word worthy to describe Julies Parry’s Performance as Mrs Johnston - stunning? I could see and feel her anguish. Gemma Thorniley as Mrs Lyons - so beautifully underplayed and very natural. Both of these characters are hugely demanding and need to be played so carefully in order to get the right amount of intricacy from each mother. I can honestly say I have never seen them played so brilliantly. Kayleigh Bibby as Linda was lovely - she was down to earth and honest and Bryan Higgins provided fine narration with such ease. A perfect cast - everyone was consistent and therefore the relationships between each character made the story so believable and very real. I felt so involved right the way through.

It's not often that I'm so moved after watching a show (especially one that I know so well and I've been involved in) but your production really did move me, not only because the story was told so well by a hugely talented cast, but because as your NODA rep, I was very very proud of what you and Encore have achieved. Congratulations.