

Review: Blood Brothers at The Lowry

Willy Russell's seminal Liverpool-based play is back in Greater Manchester



Blood Brothers at The Lowry theatre (Image: Publicity Picture)

back into Salford again this week at The Lowry's Lyric Theatre, and the 1983 musical is showing no signs of age.

Willy Russell's seminal Liverpool-set work tells a classic 'prince and pauper' tale of twins who, separated at birth, grow up on the opposite sides of the tracks, only to meet again with fateful consequences.

With over 10,000 West End performances under its belt and successful runs across the world – including New York's Broadway – it's fair to say Blood Brothers is a hit.

This production, still under the stewardship of long-time director and producer Bill Kenwright as well as Bob Tomson, delivers the same enthralling show that has been captivating audiences for over 36 years.

While previous productions have featured famous faces such as the Spice Girls' Mel C, this production has a less starry cast, but is no worse off for it.



Blood Brothers at The Lowry theatre (Image: Publicity Picture)

Linzi Hatley is a stand out as Mrs Johnston, bringing the Lyric Theatre to a standstill with an emotional rendition of the show's powerful closing number Tell Me It's Not True. The emotional heart of the show, we laugh and cry with Hatley's Mrs Johnston every step of the way as struggles her way through life.

Playing the eponymous Blood Brothers, Alexander Patmore (Mickey) and Joel Benedict (Eddie) showcase great chemistry and energy - particularly in the early years of their characters' arcs. While they were more effective in the comedic scenes than the dramatic ones, the performers still expertly build up the tragic juxtaposition of the two brothers' lives.



(Image: Publicity Picture)

Also, Robbie Scotcher as Narrator brings a foreboding presence to proceedings, haunting the stage ominously as constant reminder of our characters' doomed fate.

From the supporting cast, Danielle Corlass deserves the most plaudits for a touching performance of the bittersweet Linda, while Paula Tappenden impresses with her desperate portrayal of Mrs Lyons.

Blood Brothers tackles issues of class in a blackly comic and blunt manner – somehow finding levity in scenes of overbearing melancholy - that still resonates three decades later. The story of two parallel lives - one of privilege, the other poverty - is not particularly unique. But what sets this version apart from all the others is not just the catchy score, but also its human characters, realistic setting and distinctly northern charm.

The Manchester leg of Blood Brothers' 2019 spring tour continues at the The Lowry's Lyric Theatre until April 13.