Kicking off its 2012 season with the Tennessee Williams’ classic *A Streetcar Named Desire*, the Liverpool Playhouse brilliantly re-create the hustle, bustle, whirl and wonder of New Orleans City. The street sounds and soul are brought to mesmerizing life in this historic and intimate Liverpool theatre by a superb Peter Coyte arrangement.

The stage (meticulously designed by Gideon Davey and Paul Keogan) is set in the cramped and claustrophobic two-roomed city apartment where the audience can feel the cloying heat with each mop of the brow and whirr of the overhead fan and feel the tension as it grows and ferments.

The bright city lights beam enticingly through the large window of the apartment that also serves as an entrance and exit for droppers-by, and which carries through it the evocative and endless street sounds from the immediate vicinity of this poor, culturally mixed neighbourhood - cats howling, bins crashing, jazz music playing, streetcars passing, and families making love and
war. It certainly made me feel part of and in the heart of a pulsating and vibrant city; just a pity that outside the doors of this theatre, Liverpool itself remains economically stagnant despite the hopeful gusto of the Liverpool One shopping precinct.

Written in 1947, and now regarded as a classic of the American stage, Streetcar was adapted for cinema and was a big hit at the movies partly due to the moody, macho and memorable portrayal of Stanley Kowalski by Marlon Brando dressed in little more than a muscle-stretched T-shirt throughout, and also because of the ethereal and anachronistic performance by Vivien Leigh as Blanche DuBois. Brilliant casting maybe, but the real talent of course lies in the wonderfully poetic, observant and elaborate vocabulary of the Williams script and his portrayal of the characters whose relationships are full of passion, intensity and sexual tensions, a characteristic of many of his works - which makes watching it an intense and absorbing experience, especially as this performance is over three hours long.

Any new production of this play is bound to be burdened by the ghosts of Brando and Leigh as they have come to be immortalised in these roles. I remember watching the film and loving the Marlon Brando character, despite the fact that he was a cruel and chauvinistic pig. Somehow because it was Brando, he managed to get away with being a right bastard because of his unique star quality, charming persona and his smooth and easy portrayal of such a cold and destructive character. I must say I found little to like in Sam Troughtons portrayal of Stanley, he really is a bastard is Sam. He doesn’t and couldn’t live up to Brando (his T-shirt just didn’t make the grade) but in all fairness, who could? Short on charisma as well as stature he gives an unflinchingly aggressive performance throughout and with each wag of his finger I felt truly threatened.
A Streetcar Named Desire at Liverpool Everyman Playhouse

She than likely run a mile from a Blanche into the arms of a professional therapist or a month in re-hab. The passionate performance of Amanda Drew as Blanche, is well supported by a small cast of local actors, and problem we have to manage.

log on and seek out “Mr or Ms Right” and search for and sift out the wheat from the chafe, along with an increasing number, be registered with an on-line dating agency in search of the countryside to avoid embarrassment, and before re-hab became so fashionable), to be put happiness and fulfilment. She may have cohabited, married and divorced thrice over without contrary.

most likely network-socially and connect with thousands, expressing her “likes” or otherwise. Or freedom in the kind of intimate relationships she has and how she conducts them. She would so complicated and pre-meditated, and when did it all become so anti-social?

Ironic as it may seem given that women now have more choices, equality and independence, a sparse but well thought out set and complimentary soundtrack. I was left with a different kind
couch of a therapist, labelled an addict and be dependent on a regular therapy session and Streetcar tendency to turn to professionals for help with “problems” she might also be a regular on the
risk and unpredictability of meeting someone in person. Instead of getting out there and having
an emotion to be experienced with abandonment into a risk we need to be wary of and a
compared to its modern day equivalent of a “Cab to a Counsellor”! Gimme Bonkers Blanche and
and a wider range of acceptable couplings, we seem to be less tolerant of any behaviour we
a real face-to-face encounter, jumping in feet first Blanche style, we have transformed love from

Although many things have changed for the better in the lives and choices of women and men,
this story poignancy.

I have I just been deluded by the memory of Brando in that T-shirt?

As well as a tale of clashing class and culture, it is a well-observed account of one woman’s “not the sort to go for jasmine perfume” – Blanche is a woman with a love of the poetic and a big
causing him to row with the pregnant Stella. Like a predator lying in wait, he preys on Blanche
makes constant digs, refers to him as a Polack (an ethnic slur which today might get her hauled
gold dresses”, costume jewellery and excessive drinking and sneers at her pretensions and air
of superiority.

Stella adores her husband and is aroused by his animal-like primal behaviour which she finds
finally has no strength left with which to wrestle.

unable to fend off her final descent into what appears to be madness, but what is really just the
treatable addiction. She wasn’t ill, Blanche was just a “slut”.

modern era be treated for addiction and advised to see a counsellor, therapist or invited to
homelands are illustrated - the urban sprawl of the city being rough and tough vs the green,
action was seen as un-womanly and unbecoming in a “lady” of her class, rather than as a
“SlutWalk” vs “foul play”.

Blanche’s pretensions swathed in illusion turn out to be a thin mask for alcoholism,
to others”. Blanche’s pretensions swathed in illusion turn out to be a thin mask for alcoholism,
Troughton’s angry portrayal couldn’t lay to rest the spirit of Brando. Amanda Drew was
(Sam Troughton), whose shirt was more often off than on to show him and his type in his raw
the face of an educated and autonomous woman. Blanche tells Stella that she is taking time off
originally come from what Blanche considers to be the more refined circumstances of a large
considers itself a cut above the rest of us, dressed in furs and pearls, and Stanley Kowalski
gentle and verdant countryside being somehow more virtuous - is a description many opponents

When Blanche arrives at the apartment of her put-upon sister Stella (played with meek and