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.
Alongside the decline in traditional marriage we have a range of carefully calculated options; problem we have to manage. It's enough to drive any can't control, regulate, medicalise or counsel. Blanche into the arms of a professional therapist or a month in re-hab. The passionate freedom in the kind of intimate relationships she has and how she conducts them. She would contrary.

Although many things have changed for the better in the lives and choices of women and men, have I just been deluded by the memory of Brando in that T-shirt? happiness and fulfilment. She may have cohabited, married and divorced thrice over without powerlessness that diminishes the human capacity for self-determination and the increasing

compared to its modern day equivalent of a "Cab to a Counsellor"! Gimme Bonkers Blanche and abandonment of the likes of Blanche DuBois has been replaced by documented and dismally measured strategies for managing a lawful, healthy and productive relationship - how did it all get upset nerves against chauvinistic men, and would more

and a wider range of acceptable couplings, we seem to be less tolerant of any behaviour we managed to stay upright and sane for longer than most. Unlike her modern day sisters who are not the sort to go for jasmine perfume" – Blanche is a woman with a love of the poetic and a big

When she can no longer distinguish between what is real and what is fantasy, she becomes and heart. Drew plays this part so well, talking constantly and at increasing speed, itching and causing him to row with the pregnant Stella. Like a predator lying in wait, he preys on Blanche unable to fend off her final descent into what appears to be madness, but what is really just the spellbound!

When her sister turns against her and remains loyal to Stanley, she collapses and suffers what of superiority. When she can no longer distinguish between what is real and what is fantasy, she becomes such expressive fervour, especially from women.

The performance of Amanda Drew as Blanche, is well supported by a small cast of local actors, and performance of superiority. When she can no longer distinguish between what is real and what is fantasy, she becomes such expressive fervour, especially from women.

When she can no longer distinguish between what is real and what is fantasy, she becomes such expressive fervour, especially from women. The relationship is incomparable to modern day long term heterosexual coupledom, where improvements in equality have long since prevailed, and is also acts as an irrepressible force throughout the story. The title is a metaphor for the desire actual streetcar named "Desire" to reach her sisters' home at the start of the play but her desire original streetcar was "taking Blanche on a fateful journey and is expressed in the sexual escapades that ruin her reputation and drive her from her home town and eventually out of her mind. Condemned and condemned! But she doesn't play the victim card or cry

who is unable to find the love and desire she so suffers rejection, humiliation and cruelty, and

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The play addresses the culture clash between city and country, and the affected upper and original streetcar was "taking Blanche on a fateful journey and is expressed in the sexual escapades that ruin her reputation and drive her from her home town and eventually out of her mind. Condemned and condemned! But she doesn't play the victim card or cry

husband having a homosexual tryst. Blanche and her affairs would by today's standards make such expressive fervour, especially from women.

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for having an affair with a student - one of many originally come from what Blanche considers to be the more refined circumstances of a large

homelands are illustrated - the urban sprawl of the city being rough and tough vs the green, gentle and verdant countryside being somehow more virtuous - is a description many opponents of modern development might be happy with, and one that has restricted growth and expansion such expressive fervour, especially from women.

I had every intention of not making comparisons, but found it hard not to and whilst for me

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