



[Brief Encounter](#) at The Lowry

By Emma Rice, adapted from the Noel Coward film

Reviewed by [John Waterhouse](#) February 2018

This is a show which can truly be described as a real treat encompassing catchy period music, amazing physical effects, stunning multi-media production and a strong cast. It also pays homage to both a classic British film and one of our most enduringly popular playwrights. Writer/Director **Emma Rice** has done a most excellent job in taking a classic film and moving it to a new era whilst never losing sight of the original.

This production of *Brief Encounter* presents a something problem to reviewers because there are several artistic effects which really deserve special mention but to do so would give spoilers to what are otherwise genuine surprises. It certainly has for me - the most powerful and creative images I have ever seen, with many clever and at times, jaw-dropping twists.

It is also hard to pin down in genre; it is certainly a musical and to some extent an actor/musician show but it is also a farce which somehow never ridicules the original subject matter and remains faithful to the period throughout. It is perhaps a nit pic that there are a few images of the Second World War whereas as *Brief Encounter* is set in 1939, the year the then Prime Minister promised 'Peace in our time' but the overall atmosphere is of two care free lovers, who certainly don't have an impending war on their minds.

Brief Encounter is not typical territory for Noel Coward. His best known plays, such as 'Hay Fever' or 'Present Laughter', tend to be about the idle rich obsessing about romance whilst leading frivolous lives. This story is very much about busy working people who use public transport to get around, and are already in committed relationships at a time when divorce was widely considered shameful.



Brief Encounter is on at The Lowry until Saturday 24th February.