

Year 9 'Blood Brothers' by Willy Russell

Features of form

1. A didactic play	A drama which intends to teach, especially with regard to morals.
2. Tragedy	An event causing great suffering, destruction and distress.
3. Parallels and contrasts	Parallels – similarities. Contrasts – differences.
4. Narrator	A person who gives the spoken account of something. Omniscient to remind the audience about the ending of the play.
5. Stage directions	An instruction in the text of the play indicating the movement, the position or tone of an actor, or the sound effects and lighting.
6. Song	A single work of music that is typically intended to be sung by the human voice. It is through the songs that the characters reveal their true thoughts and feelings.
7. Dialogue	A conversation between two or more people.
8. Montage	A series of short sequences are edited into a sequence to condense space.
9. Foreshadowing	A warning or indication of a future event.
10. Symbols and motifs	A thing that represents or stands for something else. A motif is a dominant or recurring image of idea.
11. Accent and dialect versus Standard English	Standard English is any form of the English Language that is accepted as a national norm. Accent is a distinctive way of pronouncing a language. Dialect is a particular form of language which is peculiar to a specific range or social group.

Set from 1960 – 1980
In Liverpool, England



Key Themes

Childhood Adolescence
Superstition
Violence
Nature Vs Nurture
Social Class

Context

Willy Russell	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Born into a working class family. He grew up near Liverpool. Father had various jobs including mining and factory work. Annoyed at treatment of intelligent working class and associated stereotypes. Left school at 15 with just one O'level: a D in English Language. Went to evening classes and university to become a teacher.
Liverpool	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A major port and the centre for trade providing lots of jobs at the docks. During the Industrial decline, Liverpool became very vulnerable as the docks were shut and unemployment rates soared. Some men turned to crime and gangs in order to support themselves and their families. There were also riots in 1980s.
Margaret Thatcher	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Prime Minister in 1979. Reduced the power of the trade unions and closed down many factories etc leading to widespread unemployment.
Skelmersdale	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> In the 1960s the government began building New Towns. These were small, existing towns which were extended and redeveloped to provide more housing for nearby cities. Working class families were rehoused here in the 1960s.
Class	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Working class vs Middle class divide More opportunities for middle classes reflected in education, job prospects and wealth.
Education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Education Act of 1944 led to 'secondary modern schools' and 'grammar schools.' Top 20% went to a grammar school with an academic curriculum. Secondary modern taught more practical subjects. 7% of students were educated in private, fee-paying schools. The average boarding school fees in the 1960s would have been approximately 25%.



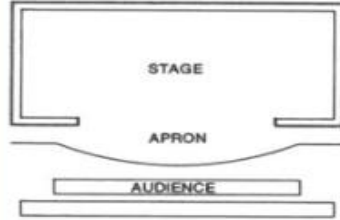
Characters

1. Mrs Johnstone	Naïve, loving and maternal, caring, rash, strong, generous, good, selfless, uneducated, superstitious, lively, zesty, trapped, victim, helplessness,
2. Mrs Lyons	Lonely, cold, wealthy, dependent, inconsiderate, pampered, self-centred, manipulative, over-protective, anxious, unreasonable, mad
3. Mickey	Friendly, excitable, adventurous, sneaky, cast-off, wants to impress, shy, determined, bright, witty, hard-working, ambitious, trapped, victim
4. Edward	Friendly, generous, naïve, restricted, impulsive, lacks compassion, condescending, sneaky
5. Sammy	Aggressive, threatening, sarcastic, anti-social, criminal, hostile
6. Linda	Kind, compassionate, feisty, humorous, strong-willed, supportive, protective, poor, untrustworthy, desperate

Proscenium Arch: Common in large theatres and opera houses. The proscenium refers to the frame around the stage; the area in front of the arch is called the apron. The audience faces one side of the stage directly and may sit at a lower height or on tiered seating.

Advantages:

- Stage pictures are easy to create, as the audience look roughly at the same angle.
- Backdrops and large scenery can be used without blocking sightlines.
- There is usually fly space and wings for storing scenery.
- The frame around the stage adds to the effect of a fourth wall; creating a self-contained world.



Disadvantages:

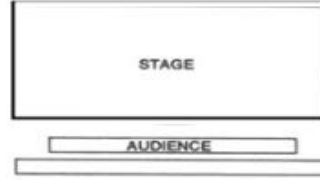
- Some audience members may feel distant from the stage.
- The auditorium could feel formal and rigid.
- Audience interaction may be more difficult.



End On: This is similar to proscenium arch, as the audience faces one side of the stage directly and may sit at a lower height or on tiered seating. However, it doesn't have the large proscenium or apron. Our studio is set up as end on.

Advantages:

- The audience all have a similar view.
- Stage pictures are easy to create.
- Large backdrops or projections may be used.



Disadvantages:

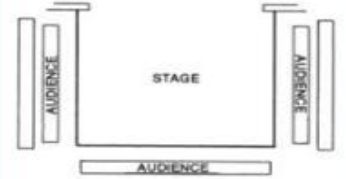
- Audience members in the back rows may feel distant from the stage.
- It doesn't have the proscenium frame, which can enhance some types of staging.
- It may not have wings or a fly area.



Thrust: When the stage in front of the proscenium protrudes into the auditorium, so that the audience are sitting on three sides. This is one of the oldest types of staging; Greek amphitheatres and Elizabethan theatres like Shakespeare's Globe are both types of thrust stages

Advantages:

- As there is no audience on one side of the stage, backdrops, flats and large scenery can be used.
- The audience might feel closer to the stage – there are 3 front rows.
- Fourth wall can be achieved while having the audience close to the action.



Disadvantages:

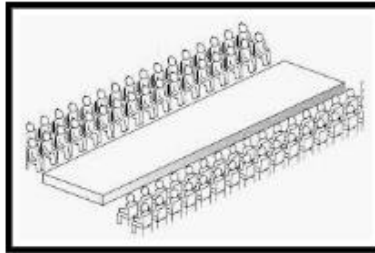
- Audience members in the back rows may feel distant from the stage.
- It doesn't have the proscenium frame, which can enhance some types of staging.
- It may not have wings or a fly area.



Traverse: The acting area is a long central space and the audience sits on two sides facing each other. This type of staging can feel like a catwalk show.

Advantages:

- The audience feel very close to the stage as there are two long front rows.
- Audience members can see the reactions of the other side of the audience.
- The extreme ends of the stage can be used to create extra acting areas.



Disadvantages:

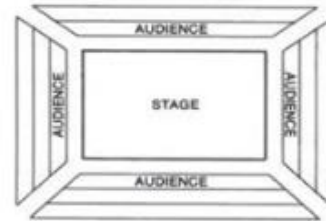
- Big pieces of scenery, backdrops or set can block sightlines
- The acting area is long and thin, which can make some blocking challenging.
- Actors must be aware of making themselves visible to both sides of the audience



In the Round: The stage is positioned in the centre of the audience and the audience are seated around all areas of the stage. The stage/audience can either be curved (creating a circle), or more like a square or rectangle. There are usually several 'tunnel-like' entrances, these are called vomitories.

Advantages:

- The audience is close to the stage as there is an extended first row.
- The actors enter and exit through the audience which can make them feel more engaged.
- There is no easily achieved fourth wall separating the audience from the actors – it is easy to interact with them.



Disadvantages:

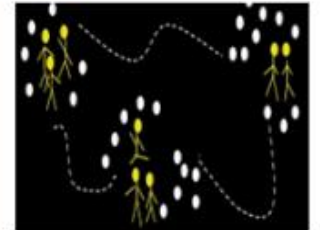
- Designers cannot use backdrops or flats as they would obscure the view of the audience.
- Stage furniture has to be chosen carefully so that audience sightlines aren't blocked.
- Actors must continually move around so that the audience can



Promenade: The performance areas are set in various locations in a venue. Promenade means 'to walk' and the audience follows the action on foot, moving from one performance area to another. Promenade staging is often used in site specific performances (a performance in a location that is not a conventional theatre, e.g. a street, a warehouse)

Advantages:

- Interactive style of theatre where the audience feels involved.
- No set changes or need for movement of big bulky items.
- Enables audience to be more engaged as they move from one piece of action to the next.



Disadvantages:

- The audience may find moving around the space difficult or might get tired.
- Actors and or crew need to be skilled at moving the audience around and controlling their focus.
- There can be health and safety risks

