

British Theatre Guide

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Bottleneck

Luke Barnes

Pleasance Courtyard

1–26 August 2012



The first half of *Bottleneck* shows James Cooney's Greg at his worst. The 14-year-old Liverpudlian is struggling after his mother walked out on the family.

He spends his time causing trouble in what appears to be a brief period before jail, or a young persons' version, claims the troublemaker.

Despite the efforts of Cooney and director Steven Atkinson, it is difficult to empathise with someone who has so little regard for his fellow man.

The only inconsistency lies in a friendship with gay Tommy, a friend who one might have expected such an alpha junior male to shun and pick on.

The association seems even stranger when one understands that Greg has red blood in his veins, which in his language means that he supports Liverpool FC with a fervour that he will not commit to anything else, while Tommy is a hated blue.

Despite this difference, Tommy procures a ticket for a Liverpool match as a present for Greg's birthday and they set off for an appointment with destiny at Hillsborough.

For those with long memories, alarm bells will begin to ring and *Bottleneck* changes from juvenile humour to something far deeper, requiring and receiving a significant change from Cooney, a star in the making.

Reviewer: [Philip Fisher](#)