

# Citadel questions crime, passion

## Equus

Directed by James MacDonald  
Starring Tom Wood  
23 September to 15 October  
Citadel Theatre

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Arts & Entertainment Writer

Is it right to extinguish someone's passion? Is it important to have faith in a god? These are some of the questions that audiences attending *Equus*, the Citadel Theatre's opening play of the season, will be thinking about, according to the play's director and the Citadel Theatre's new Associate Artistic Director, James MacDonald.

Written by Peter Shaffer and starring Tom Wood, *Equus* is a modern classic based on a crime that took place in England. *Equus* tells the story of a stable boy who blinds six horses and gets sent to a psychiatric hospital for treatment. The psychiatrist, played by Wood, discovers why the boy (Anthony Johnston) committed that crime.

"He learns what was behind it," MacDonald says. "In doing that, he discovers all about the boy's family and social background and what the boy did to lead him to that, and also in the process, the psychiatrist discovers something about himself.

"Passion is one of the big themes in the play," MacDonald continues. "It has to do with how we see passion in our society and how, as people approach middle age, they tend to lose their passions and don't really know



why or what to do about it. It's a great play in that way because it really has broad appeal. It has a very angry young man, and also a man in middle age that is undergoing a lot of crises that will be very familiar to pretty much anyone who sees it."

MacDonald feels that he, too, had more passion when he was younger, and so the play asks him, personally, whether it's a good or a bad thing to lose this sometimes unstable emotional grounding as one gets older.

In relating the crime in *Equus* with the recent shootings in Montréal, MacDonald thinks that there are generally two public reactions to such crimes: some people believe that people who commit horrific offences should be shot, while others believe they need help.

"Like all plays, it's a play that means different things to different people, and it hits different people in different ways," MacDonald says. "I think a lot of people who have children will

see it in terms of how they deal with them."

MacDonald also mentions that *Equus* possesses a fair amount of religious meaning, especially for people who are deeply pious or have chosen to leave faith behind. He points out that the play doesn't necessarily answer the questions that it raises, but rather gets people thinking about the nature of religion itself.

Additionally, MacDonald states that the playwright's intent is to create a feeling of being in a medical operating room, sitting and watching an operation, or observing the dissection of the boy's mind. The mood will be like that of a Greek tragedy, and audience members will surely feel that they're part of the action.

"This theatrical and dramatic play presents a unique experience in the way it's staged and designed, and audience members will be surprised from the moment they first enter," MacDonald says.

# Flyboys pretty fly for the WWI sky

## Flyboys

Directed by Tony Bill  
Starring James Franco, Jean Reno,  
Martin Hendersen and Jennifer  
Decker  
Empire Theatres

PATRICK ROSS  
Arts & Entertainment Staff

Attention World War II enthusiasts: your favourite piece of film fodder may be about to be bumped from centre stage—or at least forced to share it.

Believe it or not, it's been quite a while since a big-budget film has been released about the First World War. While the more glamorous WWII is spawning an endless parade of major Hollywood films, *Flyboys* has succeeded in bringing WWI back onto the cinematic radar.

The film is held together by a tremendously gifted cast. James Franco plays Blaine Rawlings, an embittered young rancher who flees financial and legal troubles in the United States to join the *Lafayette Escadrille* squadron, a group that volunteers to fight on behalf of the French in meat-grinding, maelstrom-engulfed Europe. James is joined by Eddie Beagle (David Ellison), William Jensen (Philip Winchester), Briggs

Lowry (Tyler Labine) and Eugene Skinner (Abdul Salis), who're all about to fight under the leadership of Reed Cassidy (Martin Hendersen) and Captain Thenault (the ever-masterful Jean Reno). Add Jennifer Decker as Lucienne, Franco's French love interest, and one has the ingredients for a fantastic piece of filmmaking.

**Flyboys may be one of the few examples of a film where the staggering technical achievements serve to enhance an already impressive accomplishment.**

*Flyboys* hinges on what's actually a fairly standard war film plot: young man arrives in war zone filled with idealism and exuberance. He trains for combat, meets an intriguing local woman and woos her while carrying out his duties as an intrepid, budding hero. Then, the hero tastes real combat, becomes disillusioned, finds a villain (in this case the nefarious German ace

known as the Black Falcon) and spends the rest of the film working towards the fateful final confrontation.

However, the film manages to diverge from this common plot line by exploiting the moral ambivalence inherent in WWI. Instead of having an overwhelming feeling to battle against, Franco et al must find their own meaning in the war. In doing so, they learn how to suffer defeats that often feel like victory, and win victories that often taste like defeat.

*Flyboys* is a film that certainly never could have happened without modern CGI (computer generated imaging) technology. With it, director Tony Bill takes the audience into the cockpit of a WWI-era biplane like never before. The aerial combat scenes are both dizzying and exhilarating, intense and terrifying. *Flyboys* may be one of the few examples of a film where the staggering technical achievements serve to enhance an already impressive accomplishment.

The fact that *Flyboys* is a true story doesn't take away from its emotional and intellectual impact: the film balances perfectly *Pearl Harbor*-style melodramatics with *All Quiet on the Western Front*-style historical accuracy, yielding a believable but entertaining war-time drama.



Lucius Malfoy might be a cheeky old bastard, but he definitely has some sexy hair going on. His locks are just so shiny.

See, if you volunteered for *Gateway A&E* (meetings are Thursdays at 5pm in Room 3-04, SUB), you could discuss the secret to his silky strands with him, because, you know, he's probably connected to one of us via the dark mark. Really, though; one in four U of A students is actually a follower of the Dark Lord.

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## monday



## tuesday



## wednesday



## thursday



## friday



THE GATEWAY