



## They built this *City* on honest acting

Compelling acting and a moving script propel *Shining City* to greatness

### theatre review

#### Shining City

Runs until 24 February  
Written by Conor McPherson  
Directed by James MacDonald  
Starring Tom Wood, Caroline Cave,  
Jason Carnew, and Shaun Smyth  
Citadel Theatre

BRYAN SAUNDERS  
Arts & Entertainment Staff

In his Tony-Award-nominated and critically acclaimed play *Shining City*, playwright Conor McPherson questions if things are ever as good, or if people are ever as truthful, as they first appear to be.

Of course, this in turn forces one to question whether or not McPherson's writing is truly as remarkable as critics in New York, London, and elsewhere claim it is.

Simply put, the answer is yes. Not only does the Canadian premiere of *Shining City* haunt you with its honest, true-to-life dialogue, but it also makes incredibly poignant observations about humanity in the process.

Within the confines of the play itself, parallels can be drawn between one person and another. The main characters of Ian (Shaun Smyth) and John (Tom Wood), for example, are both dealing with feelings of

isolation, facing a crisis of faith, and desperately seeking meaning in their life.

Wood delivers an absolutely moving performance with his portrayal of John, a recent widower who believes he's seeing the ghost of his dead wife. While it takes several minutes before the character of John actually starts growing on you, once Wood invades your psyche with his acting, he never quite lets go.

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Likewise, Smyth in the role of Ian is remarkable. He's expertly plays an ex-priest-turned-therapist who's giving John some psychological help and has ghosts of his own that he needs to deal with. Smyth's character also takes some time to grow on you, but perhaps this is because both Wood and Smyth aren't trying to force the audience to accept

the reality of their roles, instead allowing them to gradually discover these characters as being real.

Both actors seem to deeply understand how important it is that they portray their characters with absolute honesty and realism, since McPherson's play doesn't lend itself to the overdramatic interpretations that, say, an Oscar Wilde farce might.

Production designer Narda McCarroll also appreciates the importance of realism in *Shining City* and crafts her world accordingly. The lights, set, and sound all add to the sense of truth essential to this play, while being very careful not to distract from the very powerful acting. And while there are some truly heart-wrenching moments that will touch anyone with a human bone in their body, there's still an abundance of laughter to be had.

Like the real world and the real people that it's intended to reflect, this play is full of ups and downs, with audiences crying one second and falling out of their seat with laughter the next. This is especially evident during the play's powerful, human climax.

All of the elements of a good play truly do come together in the Citadel's production of *Shining City*: believable script, expert acting, and an amazing world of set, lights and sound. Theatre critics from all over the world are absolutely right when they say that this is one play that shines.

## Burnout Paradise steers into destructive fun

### gamereview

#### Burnout Paradise

Available Now on Xbox 360 and PS3  
Developed by Criterion Games

KYLE YASINSKI  
Arts & Entertainment Writer

Get off the roads: Criterion Games' latest installment to their award-winning *Burnout* series has just made it out onto the roadways, bringing chaos, carnage, and overall mayhem and destruction to the city streets. Welcome to *Paradise*, bitches.

For those of you who've never played a *Burnout* game before, the acclaimed series isn't like your average racer. If you're looking for a game where you can finely tune your vehicle then simply run it in closed conditions, this is the wrong game for you; the real focus of *Burnout* is vehicular chaos. The Showtime destruction mode turns your car into a flying metal tool of mayhem, and the other race events not only involve getting to the finish line, but taking out your opponents or

surviving longer than them.

In this latest iteration in the series, gone are the bland menu screens of old, where you picked and chose your events from a list. Now, the menu is an enormous open world where you can crash into and destroy almost anything. Want to start an event? Just pull the gas, and the break at any intersection. Want to start an enormous crash, causing millions of dollars in damage? Pull the two bumpers and enter Showtime mode, where you can kill everything in sight by simply crushing them with your incredibly punishing vehicle.

All of this is great, but the place where the game really shines is during online play. The connection is seamless, making it easy to pull up your friends list and invite up to seven other players whom you can race with, crash into, hunt down, or be hunted by. All of this also occurs with extremely minimal load time, with the entire game being ready in a matter of seconds, and absolutely no other wait periods aside from connecting to the Internet, which itself only takes a moment.

Visually, the game is beautiful. *Paradise City* is as gorgeous as it is enormous. The

city is also extremely detailed and varied, so you're not going to get lost on a mess of similarly built roads. However, the visuals reach new heights during a crash. There's nothing better than the pure joy of watching your shiny new car crumple and smash into an undriveable heap or seeing it do mid-air somersaults until it crashes into a bus.

The audio supplements the game very well. As your car is slowly destroyed, you can hear the smashing of the glass and the crunching of the metal or the explosions as you hit other vehicles at insane speeds. The soundtrack—featuring a large variety of licensed tracks, from the fitting "Paradise City" by Guns and Roses to "Fake it" by Seether and Twisted Sister's "I Wanna Rock"—mostly works well to set the tone for the game; there are a few odd choices, such as Avril Lavigne's "Girlfriend," but overall the soundtrack works out very well.

If you're looking for a game composed almost entirely of carnage and destruction, then *Burnout Paradise* is the perfect game for you. There's no better outlet to vent your vehicular frustrations.

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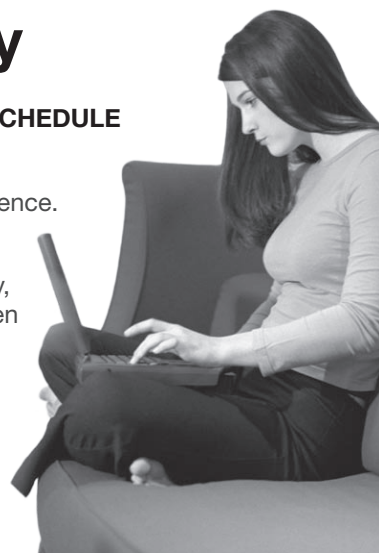
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