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Dynamite debut

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By Jon Kaplan

Tiny Dynamite is an explosively good show. Strong performances, direction and design contribute to **Theatre Smash's** outstanding debut production.

Abi Morgan's script follows two childhood friends – the subdued Lucien (**Steven McCarthy**) and the edgy Anthony (**Dylan Trowbridge**) – who spend their summers together, the better-off Lucien giving drifter Anthony a base for a few weeks. But this summer they meet Madeleine (**Perrie Olthuis**), a woman who reminds them of a haunting figure from their past.

Director **Ashlie Corcoran's** finely nuanced production delves deep into this trio. The troubled men have difficulty communicating and connecting despite their history; Madeleine is the catalyst who provides the possibility of resolving buried traumas.

Filmic in its frequent scene changes, the script occasionally meanders and sometimes takes a while to make a point, but the cumulative effect is striking as Morgan teases the audience with, among other ambiguities, who's interested in whom and why.

And you won't get a better cast. McCarthy is the cerebral, organized Lucien, who plays parent and sometimes condescends to Trowbridge's alternately innocent and dangerous Anthony. Once struck by lightning, Anthony now attracts bees and lightning bugs and believes in the irrational, miraculous aspect of life.

Olthuis has the most difficult role as the open-hearted Madeleine, drawn to both men but realizing that being with them makes her both happy and lonely.

You never doubt the sexual tension in her relationship with the men, a tension that hums like the sizzling power lines that are part of the set.

Speaking of the set, the designers make an important contribution, too. **Robin Fisher's** shifting wooden platforms hint at various locales, **Michael Walton's** suggestive, sometimes eerie lighting allows the piece's magic realism to seem everyday, and **Michael Laird's** electrically charged sound design and **Mike Ross's** music conjure up a world of mysteries.

The result is dramatic fireworks.

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