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**Schultz's production of *Burn This* "sizzles" in Michigan**

*Summary: Associate Professor of Theatre Arts Ray Schultz recently directed Lanford Wilson's <em>Burn This</em> at Performance Network Theatre in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The production, which runs through September 2, 2012, received very strong reviews from area critics.*

(August 31, 2012)-Associate Professor of Theatre Arts Ray Schultz recently directed Lanford Wilson's *Burn This* at Performance Network Theatre in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The production, which runs through September 2, 2012, received very strong reviews from area critics.

The Detroit Free Press writes that *Burn This* "sizzles," calling it "blistering" as well as, "tragic, funny and volatile, often at the same time." The New Monitor notes, "PNT's production is brisk, intriguing and entertaining." *Burn This* is, "an intriguing drama that features some of the best performances of the season," writes the Dexter Patch. The Examiner.com voices, "the entire Performance Network cast is fascinating it is thrilling to watch how they manage to provide each other essential balance to withstand the centrifugal force that threatens to spin them all out of control." Furthermore, Michigan's Rogue Critic recently nominated *Burn This* for three of the "Rogue's Gallery" awards: Best Rogue (for lead actor Darrell Glasgow), Best Lighting Design, and Best Fight or Movement Choreography.

Often compared by critics to Tennessee Williams, Lanford Wilson, who died last year at the age of 74, was a prolific playwright and winner of the Pulitzer Prize for *Talley's Folly* (1979). *Burn This* is an explosive play that is set in 1986 Manhattan and captures the recklessness of that decade. Pale, a coke-snorting Jersey restaurant manager, and Anna, an up and coming choreographer, meet when her roommate Robbie, Pale's brother, dies. As the passions ignite Pale's intense and troubled personality emerges. Menacing, profane, dangerous, and yet oddly sensitive, Pale is both terrifying and fascinating. When Anna retreats into her work, he pursues her relentlessly, setting off an inferno of rage and desire that threatens to consume them both.

While this is the first play of Wilson's in which Schultz has directed or acted, he is no stranger to Wilson's work. The play has always been one of his favorites and he was thrilled to finally get to work on a production of it with a talented company of actors and designers. "I saw the first Broadway preview of *Burn This* and its sense of grief and loss really affected me to the point I couldn't stop thinking about the play for weeks afterwards. It was an important play for me to see on so many personal levels, not least of which is that it helped me to make the decision to return to school to get my advanced degree and become a university professor."

Schultz has acted and directed extensively in Michigan. He has worked numerous times with Performance Network, which is one of Michigan's most highly regarded professional theatres, known for their commitment to producing plays that are considered experimental, high-profile and/or possessing literary merit. He was recently recognized with his fourth Wilde Award nomination for his work as director of the best drama nominee, *Next Fall*, which was performed at Performance Network in Ann Arbor in summer 2011. For more information regarding Schultz's nomination, [continue reading](#).

Schultz was assisted in his work on *Burn This* through generous funding from the University of Minnesota's Imagine Fund Awards and University of Minnesota, Morris's Faculty Research Enhancement Fund.

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