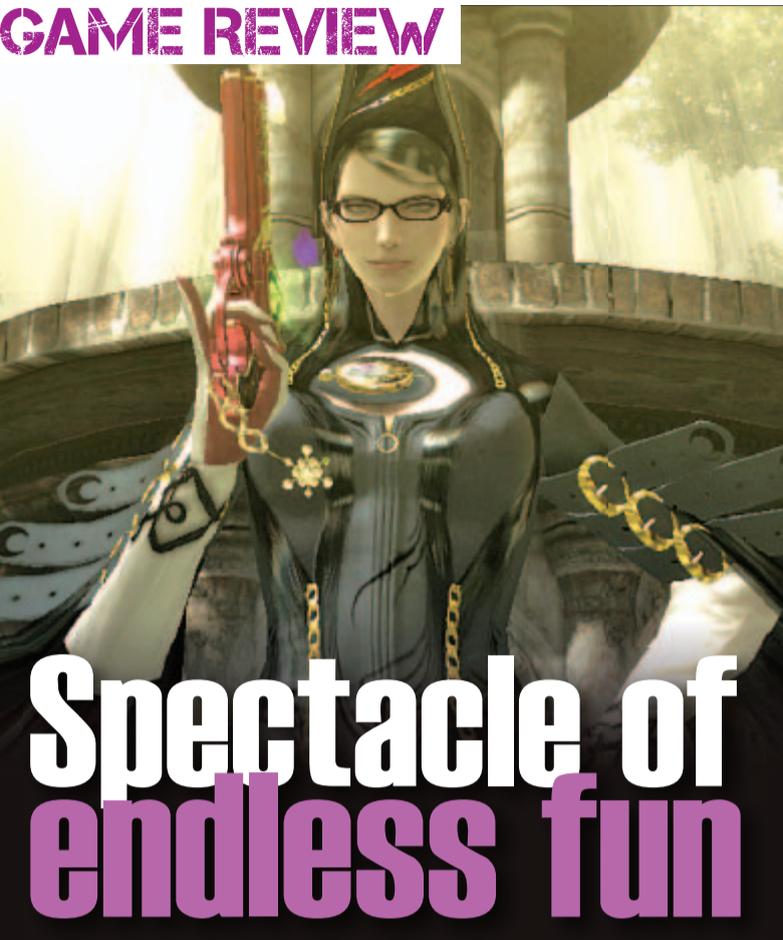


TIME IN

Had enough time out on the town? Check out these home entertainment options from games and CDs to gadgets, books and DVDs.

GAME REVIEW



Spectacle of endless fun

Bayonetta

PS3 / Xbox 360

The titular witch of *Bayonetta* has it all: Confidence, looks, smokin' wardrobe, killer heels (literally) and a job she thoroughly enjoys; killing angels for their halos (it also keeps her out of hell). But when a mysterious voice tells Bayonetta to seek something called the Eyes of the World, her quest stirs up fragments of her missing memory, lost since she woke 20 years ago from a slumber of centuries...

Bayonetta is a beat-em-up adventure game; the player's objective is to win brawls quickly with minimal injury. Attacking is mostly governed by two buttons, so mastering *Bayonetta's* martial techniques means timing the pause between presses. Landing hits fills a magic meter, allowing Bayonetta to unleash "tortureattacks," conjuring iron maidens and guillotines to finish her enemies. Successfully risking a last-moment dodge sends Bayonetta into Witch Time, slowing her opponents so she can unleash more complex techniques.

I'm not fond of many beat-em-ups' complex "multiple button and stick

CD REVIEW

For The Birds

The Mess Hall

★★★★☆

(IVY LEAGUE)

BY ROB MELLETT

JED Kurzel (vocals/guitar) and Cec Condon (drums/vocals) have been playing their brand of dirgy rock for nine years. *For the Birds* is their third LP. Expect lots of schlocky blues-style songs along the lines of Beck, Tom Waits and The Cramps. Repeated listens throw up gems like the moody psychedelia of *New Ornithology*, spiked with dreamy guitar hooks and stabs of piano. Also, check out the blues swagger of *The Switch*. Originality may be in short supply here, but, ultimately, *For The Birds* flies high.



BOOK REVIEW

Changing My Mind

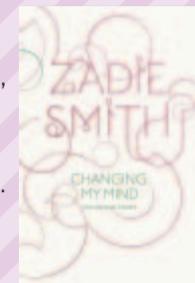
Zadie Smith

★★★★☆

RRP \$45 (HAMISH HAMILTON)

BY ROB MELLETT

SPLIT into five sections – Reading, Being, Seeing, Feeling and Remembering, *Changing My Mind* finds Zadie Smith casting an acute eye over material both personal and cultural. This engaging collection of essays reveals Smith as a passionate and precise essayist, equally at home in the world of great books and bad movies, family and philosophy, British comedians and Italian divas. *Changing My Mind* is journalism at its most expansive, intelligent and funny.



waggle" chains, so *Bayonetta's* two-button moves are refreshingly easy to learn. The game goes out of its way to help; a technique manual is available at nearly any time and the level (and post-death) loading screen doubles as a practice area.

Bayonetta boasts great graphics. On my Xbox 360 the lovingly-rendered city of Vigrid and its ancient surrounds are warm and bright and the angels, from hovering winged heads through angel cars to gigantic serpents, are gloriously weird. Throughout the frantic fights the game maintains a gorgeously smooth frame rate.

Speaking of pretty: With her ludicrous proportions, tight-fitting black costume which disappears when she uses her powers and sassy attitude (especially when taunting enemies), Bayonetta isn't politically correct. However, she's always capable and confident, the other characters in the game treat her as a fellow bad-ass and those

who seek her want her power or to see her brought to justice, not her body. Plus, Bayonetta joins Anastacia in championing pretty women who wear glasses.

One can't ignore *Bayonetta's* context. Its first set piece fight is on the face of a ruined clocktower as it tumbles down a massive cliff face, and things only get more eye-poppingly spectacular, often to a bouncy Japanese pop soundtrack. Such over-the-top adventures beg for an over-the-top leading lady.

Bayonetta has some problems. The screen tears noticeably when things get busy. The fight soundtrack consists mostly of two J-pop tunes which grate quickly. Finally, I've read that the Playstation 3 version has graphics and loading trouble.

Overall, though, *Bayonetta's* sheer spectacle far outweighs its flaws. Skillfully combining wow-factor and honest challenge, *Bayonetta* is fun for fun's sake. **TO**

– ROB FARQUHAR



1 DRESS
30 DAYS
30 WAYS



Can she do it? Find out all in this month's Cairns Eye magazine. Inside The Cairns Post Wednesday January 27.

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