

*“And besides, the way I see it, I’m already in Urinetown. We all are. Even you.”*

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So... what is Urinetown? If you're asking yourself this, you're already starting to understand the show. *Urinetown* is a campy musical about oppression, revolution, and hope (not Hope, though it is also about her.) However, Urinetown (the place) is a big question mark that hangs over the heads of the show’s ensemble. The characters present several options for what they think Urinetown could be, or what they know it to be: “a tool,” “a lie,” or “a metaphysical place.” Early in the events of *Urinetown*, the cops make it clear that Urinetown (the place) doesn’t exist. Urinetown, in a literal sense, is the act of execution for their crimes.

Thus begins the dramatic irony of the show. You— yes, you— know the secret of Urinetown, and the fate that some of these characters will meet, and in knowing the truth, you’ve lost some of the tension and fear that you might’ve otherwise felt during the performance.

*Urinetown* (the musical) is a show that plays with the ideas of Bertolt Brecht, a German theatre practitioner who believed that theatre should not be a method of escapism, but a forum for political ideas. Brecht pioneered something called “Epic Theatre,” a form of theatre that rallies against what is traditionally expected of audience members: we cannot be complacent as we watch, instead we must think critically about the work itself. The hallmark of Epic Theater is what Brecht called “The Distancing Effect,” which does not allow the audience to suspend their disbelief or get lost in the work, instead keeping them constantly aware of the fact that they're watching a performance. In our production of *Urinetown*, look out for some of Brecht’s distancing methods: explanatory title cards, fourth wall breaks, mid-scene interruptions, and explicit, direct exposition. In order for you to fully experience *Urinetown*, you must acknowledge that it is not just a musical to entertain you, but a cautionary tale.

As such, we invite you to both *Urinetown* and Urinetown. Keep your head on a swivel, and enjoy the show.