

18 December 2006

By: Alexandra Dogaru, Editor, Gaming Reviews (PC)



[Sam & Max: Situation Comedy](#)

Jolly Good Show! Jolly Good!

Episode 2 is on the loose. After the enchanting first episode, Culture Shock, of the re-launched series of Sam and Max comes another Steve Purcell comics inspired game. The story goes on as the craziest two detectives on the lot continue their investigations of fighting crime. Well, little funny crimes, of course. Let me say for the ones that missed out on the review on the first episode that Steve as well as other employees of Telltale Games was also involved with the creation of some famous adventure games such as Grim Fandango and the Monkey Island series. Although it is not imperative that you play the first episode to understand the story or even solve the problems in the second episode, I would highly recommend you to do so as each of them introduces new depths in getting to know the side characters such as the crazy inventor Bosco, the mysterious mob looking like mouse Jimmy and the ever career changing Sybil. But for now, enjoy a short overview of the latest episode, Sam & Max: Situation Comedy. **Story** While still recovering from their long period of adornment, as they keep themselves busy with the daily funny games, the phone rings once more disrupting their playing. "Sweet mother of double jeopardy backstroking in butterscotch!" (to quote Sam). They have a new case to solve. And now it's their chance to meet even more celebrities (modern ones even, not just former stars) as they go to the local TV station - WARP. The famous talk show host Myra Stump (their very own Oprah Winfrey) has gone berserk hence she's holding the audience along with almost the entire station crew hostage. There are certain complications which led to the above mentioned phone call. First of all, the show is live so no acts of brutality are allowed (no, no shooting on the set). Secondly it's been a whole three and a half days show already so people were getting tired while the host continues her everlasting show asking for their complete attention. Finally, there is one more huge inconvenience - not just anybody can go to the Myra Show. You need to be a genuine celebrity to get in. These being said, it's only obvious there was only one solution to the problem - professional help from a team that had previous encounters with just as complicated cases. There was just one acceptable way to do this it was the time for desperate measures - the subtleness, the know-how, the golden trained eye of the greatest local detectives. This was the time to call in Sam and Max. **Concept** Once more the point and click system works perfectly. Just make sure you detect all the things that might be useful and with a little imagination use them to solve all the funny little puzzles that you come across. Again Sam is at your service, researching whatever you feel like and practically cracking the case for you. Of course the rabbit thing called Max is of immense help. He provides some useful clues as well as entertains you all through the episode. The DeSoto Chrysler is a star character once more as the freelance police will venture on another car chase down the main road. And speaking of familiar characters - they are all here too accompanying the new faces in the detectives' line of work. Even the choosy Soda Poppers. A TV show producer along with two talented actors and a modern day magician will help out the heroes to get to the settings of Myra's most fabled show. And well, Myra is a very special character that can talk about herself and her ideas even more than Max (and he can be pretty persistent). While their host goes on with her "Blah-blah-blah" and "Yak-yak-yak" the furry detectives will have to come up with a plan to save everybody again. Do you know what to do to get yourself on a TV show? Here's your chance to learn. **Gameplay** TV producers don't seem to be up to date with the freelance police adventures so the two furry detectives have to prove once more (and on tape) that they are celebrity material. Hence they'll sing, act and even start a celebrity scandal, all to save the sleepy hostages in the TV show. The interesting part is that a story of the whole

first series catches shape and the two detectives (along with you of course) get the feeling there is something more (much more) to these short, apparently unconnected cases. The 2 to 3 hours spent to solve the big mystery will prove to be really an amazingly relaxing session of laughter. The puzzles have logical solutions (and the side characters give plenty of hints) providing a fluid gameplay interrupted only by your very own amusement. Just like in the previous episode, the fun is guaranteed. The continuity of the big story is also assured by the use of the million dollars Bosco Tech devise that shoots crying bullets (small balls to be exact, but that's just a detail). Further inside information about the neighborhood and (especially) about the neighbors can be gain in the episode at hand. The three little Soda Poppers are once more under the bright lights on the sets of a TV station and they'll keep in mind all the previous knocking over the head needed to get them out of the state of hypnosis. **Video**The setting for this episode is pretty much the same as for Culture Shock. Well, except for the TV station that includes five stages and is the spot where the major part of the action takes place. The comic like look is still the secret ingredient of the game at hand. Cartoonish characters and settings make the delight of adventure fans everywhere, awesomely wrapping the whole concept of the game. I really enjoyed the scenes our heroes acted in and of course the TV show like effect used to give the feeling of a camera shooting. There are also the scenes of singing, but well, you'll still need to discover a bunch of stuff for yourself. **Sound**Composer Jared Emerson-Johnson and his team at Bay Area Sound did a wonderful job once more. The sound of the game is awesome. The same amazing voice acting for the already familiar characters as well as appropriate voices for the new faces all sums up to offer the player a great experience. Jazz inspired background music will keep up the pace with your new adventures all the way. **Multiplayer**No, not yet. **Conclusion**I love these guys. They're funny, always up to a mischief and always helpful. While Max, the bunny is packed up with hilarious (sometimes sarcastic) remarks and a generally exceptional impression about himself (you can hear all about it on Myra's show), Sam is more like the protective older brother totally overwhelmed with joy of having a blasting time with his little buddy. Now, I have to say the rather short experience the game offers bruises to the overall thrill of cracking another Sam & Max case. But the fun I had in the few hours of play definitely surpasses all that. The main story in this series is just unfolding, so I'm bound to be on the lookout for the next episode (announced for the beginning of February 2007 to be released worldwide).