

Theatre review: The Marriage of Figaro, Lyceum Theatre

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It's not often that you see a play's leading man break into opera arias to cover scene changes. But that's just what Mark Prendergast gets up to in Glasgow-based playwright DC Jackson's sly updating of Beaumarchais's 18th-century romp – yes, the play that Mozart set to music in his opera of the same name. (Hence Prendergast's singing – and very creditable performances he gives too.)

It's just one example of the telling attention to detail in Lyceum artistic director Mark Thomson's fast-moving production (the ever-confused security guards are another – don't take your eyes off them.) Thomson brings a manic energy to match Jackson's bawdy reimagining of the tale in the world of contemporary banking. Figaro and his bride-to-be Suzanne run a dodgy financial company that's about to merge with Scotland's biggest financial firm, headed by the unhappily married Chief (a leering Stuart Bowman) and Chair (the imposing Briony McRoberts), on the same day as their own wedding.

Add to that a sex-mad Ukrainian office boy, an accountant in a penguin suit, and lashings of Jackie Collins's Glass Ceiling perfume, and you've got a thrillingly preposterous production that wrings every last drop of mischief out of its high farce.

Prendergast's Figaro is a likeable rogue, a still point in Jackson's frantically turning world, and Nicola Ray as Suzanne is all too willing to sacrifice her integrity for the sake of

monetary success. But the stand-out performances are from Molly Innes as a slathering, deranged Margery, convinced that an earlier tryst with Figaro will ensure her fortune, and Jamie Quinn's wide-eyed, cross-dressing office boy Pavlo. Alex Lowde's inventive and effective set slowly retreats to reveal the depths of the Lyceum's cavernous stage.

At times Thomson's relentless pace meant that lines were lost, or covered up by audience laughter (of which there was lots). And there's a feeling that Jackson is poking rather gentle fun at his corporate victims, even though by the end we're all too aware of their ultimate bankruptcy. But this is a fine, powerful production that makes its audience laugh and think in equal measure.

[The Marriage of Figaro](#) continues at Edinburgh Lyceum Theatre until 14 April 2012.