

Complicated web of perfect chaos

PERFECT WEDDING. Directed by Alan Swerdlow, with Alan Committie, Robert Fridjhon, Jenny Stead, Jo Galloway, Lynita Crofford and Alex Halligey. At Theatre on the Bay until Saturday.
TERRI DUNBAR-CURRAN reviews.

BANGING doors, double entendres, outrageous misunderstandings and general mayhem – Robin Hawdon's *Perfect Wedding* has all the juicy ingredients of a classic farce. The hilarity begins seconds into the play and increases with the introduction of every new character.

Bill (Fridjhon) awakes on his wedding day to a scene of stag night carnage. The hotel room is littered with clothing, several pieces of dismantled mannequins, a butternut, and worst of all, a strange woman in bed beside him.

With the impending arrival of his bride and mere hours before the wedding, his main priority is to get rid of the girl and make sure the honeymoon suite is spotless.

Enter Tom (Committie), the best

man who prides himself on being "very very together". However, even Tom and his clipboard aren't going to be enough to cope with the unfolding chaos.

With a play like this the fun is in the twists, turns and misunderstandings, and to outline too much of the plot would be to spoil the enjoyment of watching it all play out on stage.

Suffice to say that when bride-to-be Rachel (Halligey) puts in an appearance, the race is on to get rid of the mystery girl, find a chamber maid and keep the bride's father under control. While Tom blusters around trying to keep it all together, he has the added stress of the arrival of his latest girlfriend.

All of the action takes place in the lounge and bedroom of a hotel suite. The cut-away adjoining wall and door allow the audience to watch the action in both rooms – it's a clever device and all the more effective because not once does any of the actors let on that there's not really a solid wall in their way. The four doors and one window are

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used to maximum effect as the countless near misses and hurried liaisons play out.

It's all in the timing, and while the one frantic chase scene could have been a little tighter, the six actors handled the overall pace of the show well.

Another theatrical quirk which makes plays like this so wonderful to watch is when the actors find the dialogue and situation just as hilarious as the audience.

Watching Committie and Fridjhon try desperately to keep it together under the smug gaze of Galloway's chamber maid Julie was delightfully amusing.

Hawdon's script is classic farce material with plenty of verbal

trickery, puns and witty one-liners. It also allows for a good physical comedy which sees Committie flinging himself about onstage.

He's brilliant at panicking and plays the neurotic "not so together anymore" Tom with dexterous energy. Fridjhon, too, excels at making palpable the frantic anxiety of a man about to be caught in a very bad situation.

Galloway is a scream as the chamber maid who knows far too much and is caught up in the pandemonium, and Halligey's bride becomes more and more dishevelled as her patience starts wearing around the edges and her perfect wedding seems to be slipping out of her control.

Stead plays a lively Judy frantically trying to fit into the complicated web of deceit and confusion. And Crofford takes an amusing turn as the bride's increasingly more sizzled mother Daphne.

Perfect Wedding is a fantastic comedic romp and definitely not to be missed.

● To book, call 021 438 3300