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A bubbling caldron of mayhem in 'Macbett'

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Revising a play that is already revisionist is a tricky proposition. But director Neno Pervan boldly dickers with Eugene Ionesco's "Macbett" in Il Dolce Theater Company's gratifyingly revisionist staging at the Globe Playhouse in West Hollywood.

An absurdist take on Shakespeare's "Macbeth," Ionesco's lengthy 1972 play is remarkably faithful to the dramatic arc of its source material. So too is Pervan's drastically abbreviated version, taken from Charles Marowitz's translation and presented here by special permission of Ionesco's daughter.

Pervan's production is Cliffs Notes brief yet in keeping with Ionesco's absurdist spirit. What results is surprisingly perspicacious Shakespeare, albeit with a few soap-opera embellishments, most notably Ionesco's innovative subplot in which Duncan's disgruntled wife has a steamy affair with Macbett, urges him on to regicide and subsequently marries him.

A nimble cast, including Pervan himself, keeps the action clean and streamlined. Hilariously cowardly and self-serving, Pervan's Duncan is a preening dandy of suitably ridiculous ilk. As Macbett, glowering Zoran Radanovich hits the right emotional levels but needs to scale back his leaping, occasionally unmotivated aerobics. In the most full-fledged performance of the evening, Pamela Clay plays Lady Duncan/Lady Macbett as a saucy siren on the downhill slope to lunacy and despair.

Now for a quibble. For some odd reason, Pervan blocks numerous scenes on the stage floor, beneath the sightlines of a majority of the audience, which strains and cranes to see glimpses of the prostrate actors. Surely, a few suitably placed platforms could have raised this production, not to mention its performers, to new heights.

-- F. Kathleen Foley