

'One Elliot Park' by Lindsay Miller ☆☆☆

WHODUNNITS are all the rage at this year's Leith Festival; show me an intractable double-dip recession, and I'll show you audiences looking for the reassurance of a puzzle that has a solution.

The sense of familiarity doesn't last long, though, in this smart shoestring production by professional group Siege Perilous, designed to showcase a new play by young Edinburgh writer Lindsay Miller. Playing at the Malmaison until Tuesday, *One Elliot Park* is set – or so it seems – in a block of four flats inhabited by neighbours who don't get on well. Debs is a harassed housewife, always complaining; Douglas is a punctilious middle-aged man, devoted to his elderly parents; Mark is a twentysomething good-time boy who drinks too much.

And Chloe, in Flat No. 2 – well, she's a quiet girl who seems to have vanished, after a strange incident in which all three other residents came home to find the doors of their flats wide open. Over a fierce 70 minutes, Miller's intensely theatrical thriller-style script, full of tense monologues and seamless scene-changes, gradually rises to a fever-pitch of shrieking paranoia and competing voices, in which it begins to emerge that Chloe is perhaps the only resident of the house, and that the others are just three terrifying faces of her multiple personality disorder.

Miller's play is more disturbing than thrilling to watch, and often painfully accurate in reflecting the torment of extreme mental breakdown; as a writer she is interested in horror, without seeming completely clear about her purpose, in evoking such pain and fear. What's certain, though, is that this vivid and fast-moving play creates opportunities for some fine performances from its cast of five, led by Lily Carrie as Chloe; and Andy Corelli's production is full of style and pace, offering an intriguing prologue to a weekend night out, down at Leith Shore.

Joyce McMillan; "The Scotsman" 15th June 2012