



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

State Theatre Company of South Australia

Dunstan Playhouse

Until 3 August 2019

Review by Jamie Wright

Brooklyn, New York. Eddie Carbone, a hardworking longshoreman of Sicilian descent lives with his wife Beatrice and her niece Catherine, who they've raised since infancy. Things aren't quite right, though; Eddie is more unsettled than seems reasonable by the fact that Catherine is growing up – and his reaction has affected his relationship with Beatrice as well. Then, after the arrival of Beatrice's cousins Marco and Rodolpho, who've entered the country illegally – Marco to make money for his wife and family back in impoverished Sicily; Rodolpho because he wants to stay and become an American – things get even more complicated.

Director Kate Champion has done a remarkable job of bringing this play to life, illustrated by the depth of characterisation and the treatment of Miller's exquisite dialogue. Her background in choreography is evident through numerous scenes where the cast move around each other like caged animals, and there's one mesmerising section with no dialogue at all, just an intricate sequence of movements. The tension is electric throughout, but the humorous aspects – there are many lighter moments, particularly in the first act – are handled just as well. There's the interesting choice to have some of the actors, on occasion, watch Eddie in scenes they aren't in, adding to his perception of being judged for his actions.

Mark Saturno is superb as the complex, conflicted Eddie – delivery, facial expressions and body language are all on show in this dynamic performance. As Beatrice, Elena Carapetis channels frustration, confusion and dwindling affection to powerful effect. Maiah Stewardson conveys Catherine's transformation from overly affectionate, childlike teenager to independent adult with a wonderful physicality. Dale March and Antoine Jelk are similarly great as the quiet, intense Marco and the charismatic, flamboyant Rodolpho. Good performances from Bill Allert as narrator/lawyer Alfieri, Brett Archer as Mike/First Officer and Chris Asimos as Louis/Second Officer round out the excellent cast.

All the action takes place on a stunning Victoria Lamb set, lit by Chris Petridis; rather than a furnished apartment there are a cluster of box frames used as walls and furniture, adorned with ropes used in the opening scene to reference Eddie's work on the docks, and the riverfront theme continues downstage with dock-like pilings. The shipping container-like blocks take up most of the space on stage, leaving a small space where the actors are constantly in close proximity. Sound, by Jason Sweeney, is subtle but helps drive the tension up when required.

It's a superb piece of theatre on all levels, and shows that, more than sixty years after it premiered, Arthur Miller's "A View from the Bridge" has ideas and themes that still resonate today, particularly in Australia where the ongoing treatment of immigrants (despite being a nation built by such people – hypocrisy is definitely a target here) remains a contentious topic; toxic masculinity is also still an issue, as is homophobia and an aversion to the differing values of younger generations. That such social commentary is so skilfully woven through such an engaging, compelling story makes for powerful theatre, particularly when it's handled as well as this production is.