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Electrifying

THEATRE

A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

Young Vic, SE1

★★★★★

HENRY HITCHINGS

IVO van Hove's account of this frequently revived Arthur Miller play is bruising and revelatory. It has a startling simplicity – a lean, muscular sense of forward movement and urgency.

On a naked thrust stage hemmed in by a perspex wall, the drama's raw magnificence speaks with an unusual directness. The design is by Jan Versweyveld, who creates a forceful, potent impression of the characters being trapped. There's nothing to distract us from Miller's tragic vision of the costs and unanswerable influence of desire, with Tom Gibbons's sound discreetly ominous throughout, hinting at everyone's immersion in the rituals of Catholicism.

Mark Strong plays Brooklyn longshoreman Eddie Carbone. He's absorbed in the life of his close-knit Italian-American community and consumed by an obsessive interest in his teenage niece Catherine (Phoebe Fox, brilliant as an ingénue who turns into a rebel). He and his wife Beatrice have raised Catherine. When she falls for Rodolpho, an illegal immigrant the Carbone family have taken in, Eddie is ravaged by jealousy.

Strong brings a remarkable mix of weight and poise to Eddie. The lawyer Alfieri, who serves as the chorus, describes Eddie's eyes as being like tunnels and Strong evokes the crazed single-mindedness of a man locked inside a fatally flawed system of beliefs. We're horrified by the absurdity of his suspicions – and by his inability to understand what's

happening to him. Eddie insists that Rodolpho's motives for courting Catherine are bogus. Rodolpho likes to cook and sing and help out with dress-making, so in Eddie's view he must be gay and his interest in marrying Catherine can stem from nothing except an ambition to become an American citizen.

Luke Norris's Rodolpho is bright

take on a classic



TRISTRAM KENTON

and effusive, at his best in the highly charged scene where he and Catherine are alone together for the first time. Nicola Walker is superb as Beatrice, whose devotion is tested as Eddie's destructive neediness mutates into violence. The final outpouring of passion is conveyed by van Hove in an astonishingly bold way (which it would be wrong to

disclose) and reinforces the play's links with Greek tragedy.

This is the first time that van Hove has worked with British actors, and the Young Vic's artistic director David Lan has achieved a real coup in bringing the Belgian here to stage this magnificent, electrifying production.

■ Until June 7 (020 7922 2922, [youngvic.org](https://www.youngvic.org))

Magnificent:
from left, Phoebe Fox, Mark Strong and Nicola Walker