

about what we should do."

The show is already being

idea because of its own financial difficulties.

# Miller's bridge too far

## A View from the Bridge: People's Theatre, Heaton

ARTHUR Miller's drama of passion and jealousy in the shadow of the Brooklyn Bridge might have been a good play if it weren't for the author's pretensions to elevate it into something that it isn't.

Originally written in blank verse, it was seen by Miller as the modern equivalent of a Greek tragedy, when the material lends itself better to heated melodrama.

It's in this latter vein that the piece can still be enjoyed, provided one is prepared to put up with such self-conscious devices as the use of a narrating Chorus, in the form of the lawyer Alfieri (Ron Cherry), who mediates for us the squalid conflicts of the working class milieu.

Miller's anti-hero is Eddie Carbone, a longshoreman of Italian descent, who allows his home to be used by two illegal immigrants recently arrived from Sicily.

The love has long since drained from Eddie's own marriage to Bea (Clare Peel), but when his live-in niece Catherine (Moira Tarkenter) falls for the blonde Rudolpho (Paul Carding), Eddie begins to experience powerful emotions which can't simply be put down to paternal protectiveness.

The protagonist, whatever his complex motivations, is clearly a monster, however pathetic. But Miller would have us believe he is figure of great tragic stature, brought low by mortal weakness.

## THE CRITICS



**Worldy: Niamh Cusack and Reece Dinsdale in Playboy of the Western World.**

His failure to impose this view does not in the least detract from the magnificent performance in the role of Christopher Goulding, the theatre's Press officer, whose manner and bearing are thoroughly convincing and help immeasurably in sustaining an authentic New York atmosphere.

He is well supported by the other leads (several of the minor parts are less successfully filled), and Eric Peel's direction brings out the raw power at the heart of this flawed American 'classic'.

The run ends Saturday.

Sheldon Hall

**The Playboy of the Western World: West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds**

WHEN J M Synge's comedy was premiered in 1907 it provoked

some of the most violent outbursts in Dublin's theatre history.

"A vile and inhuman story told in the foulest language," cried Irish nationalist leader Arthur Griffith.

There were no such outbursts at the opening night of Jude Kelly's revival, merely applause for a vigorously entertaining production.

The predominantly Irish cast left me wondering if sub-titles were needed at first until I 'tuned in' to the accents.

Even Yorkshire-born Reece Dinsdale - back at the Playhouse following his success in last year's opening show Wild Oats - sounds like the real thing.

He's Christy Mahon, a bedraggled young man who stumbles into a country pub on the Irish coast and finds himself proclaimed a local hero after admitting to killing his father.

The men admire his courage, the girls swoon over him - and only the back-from-the-dead appearance of his Da upsets this cosy set-up.

Dinsdale gives Christy the right amount of dash and swagger with Sorchia Cusack scoring as the Widow Quin who takes a more than friendly interest in his well-being and Niamh Cusack as Pegeen Mike, the girl who decides to marry him.

The production continues until March 2.

Steve Pratt

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## A pleasant return

### A View from the Bridge — People's Theatre until Saturday.

HAVING not visited the theatre for some time, I had forgotten the special atmosphere that a really good production can create.

Arthur Miller's play combines all the elements of love, anger, humour and ultimate tragedy, which keep the audience spellbound as long as they are put into the right hands as they are here.

Eddie Carbone is a New York long shoreman who lives near the Brooklyn Bridge with his wife Beatrice and niece Catherine.

It is the early 1950s and hundreds of immigrants are illegally flowing into the area from poverty-stricken Sicily, with Eddie doing his bit for the old country by taking in Beatrice's cousins Marco and Rudolpho.

Trouble brews when Rudolpho falls for Catherine, and Eddie's emotions rapidly swing from annoyance through jealousy to despair as he sees the little

### Last night's review

girl who was never his disappearing from his clutches.

The performances by the People's Theatre Arts Group are uplifting with Christopher Goulding, (the image of Danny DeVito), in the part of Eddie particularly convincing.

They even manage to master a very passable New York twang with a couple of notable exceptions at the end which were quite acceptable for an supremely polished first night performance.

The play itself is a masterpiece of language and ranks with "Death of a Salesman" as one of Miller's best works and an accurate reflection of the mood of its time.

ANDREW SMITH

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missioners would disinvest if Sunday trading was legalised.

business under the Government's enterprise allowance scheme.

## Classic, and a triumph

ARTHUR Miller defined theatre in the Greek manner in the preface to his first US edition of *A View From The Bridge* as a dramatic consideration of the way we ought to live.

He then went on to give us a play which shows us, as its main theme, the baser side of human nature. It seethes with repressed sexual passion and it has a

*A View From The Bridge, People's Theatre, Newcastle*

strong subliminal indication of incest and homosexuality — not to mention the poverty.

I'm afraid the sets for the play resemble the back parlour of a 1950s terraced home in Oldham rather more than it does post-war Brooklyn but that's where my dissatisfaction with the production ends — this is a finely tuned and highly emotional playing of a modern classic which does great credit to The People's.

First and foremost, the evening belongs to Christopher Goulding, who gives us a smouldering portrait of a man who slowly submerges in a frothing sea of frustrations and jealousies.

His Eddie Carbone begins as an honest man

with a dry sense of humour and a feel for deep-rooted honour. A cancer of self-doubt gradually takes him over and his betrayal is as much destructive of himself as his imagined adversaries: Goulding's performance is assured, chilling, and almost painful to watch.

Ron Cherry plays an articulate man who tries to share his experiences with his fellows, joining the action at points and narrating the remainder. This makes us feel both involved and welcome. It's not an easy part, and Mr Cherry keeps the pitch perfect.

But then this is exceptional stuff, proving that revenge is not sweet but extremely bitter. It is directed with finite attention by Eric Peel — and it deserves the widest audience.

Evening  
ronicle