

A VIEW FROM
THE BRIDGE
1990

TEDDINGTON THEATRE CLUB

In stark cut-away

PACKED to overflowing on Sunday evening, the Hampton Court Theatre car park gave early indication that Eric Yardley is on to an audience winner with this week's production of *A View from the Bridge*.

It almost seems cheeky for him to stage this modern tragedy so soon after the definitive National Theatre production.

But a strong TTC cast emerges with credit from the comparison, helped by Gordon Edwards' towering set - a mirror image of the Cottesloe arrangement, with the Carbone's crowded apartment and the lawyer's office, in stark cut-away, on either side of a Brooklyn back street; a golden Manhattan skyline

glimpsed between fire escapes.

When Miller first brought the play to London in 1956, additional domestic scenes helped round out the tragic figure of Eddie Carbone. This has been taken a stage further with Alan Knight's massive Eddie and Kate Garman's intense wife Beatrice sharing a close and believable home life, although at some cost in lessening the sense of Eddie's isolation and animal danger.

Alone among the cast Rick de Kerckhove as Marco suggests real muscular power and the physical exhaustion of a day spent unloading ships. But it seems needlessly heroic to demonstrate his lifting strength with an unusually heavy dining chair - I hope he lasts out the week.

The greatest gain in this non-professional staging is the chance to cast 16 year-old Catherine and her Italian cousin Rodolpho with actors of just the right age. The gain

is immeasurable, and I urge all TTC members to hurry to Hampton Court to see two young actors of great promise in these roles: Caroline Doole, slight and driven by impulse, flying from a close encounter with uncle Eddie into the attractive arms of golden-haired Matt Hilliard - latter-day star crossed young lovers.

The play began as a one-act verse drama with the lawyer Alfieri as the chorus figure from classic Greek drama, but Miller (whose 75th birthday is celebrated with this production) later came to see Alfieri's contribution as superfluous embroidery.

It is thus to the considerable credit of Peter Slater that he occupies this marginal role with such weight and compassion that it takes on a separate life of its own - making one wish he contributed to the central drama instead of moralising on what we see with our own eyes.

John Thaxter