MONTREAL - Save yourself a trip to Broadway.

Just in case you were planning a pilgrimage to New York to see the much-hyped revival of Arthur Miller's A View From the Bridge - starring Scarlett Johansson and Liev Schreiber - slated to open this weekend at the Cort Theatre: Pause. Reflect. And consider car-pooling it to Ste. Anne de Bellevue instead.

Montreal Theatre Ensemble is presenting a polished, professional production of the Miller classic at the Casgrain Theatre of John Abbott College, starring local actor Adam LeBlanc as the tormented Italian longshoreman at the centre of the play.

I repeat, this is a professional production, not a student one, although almost all of the actors are graduates of the John Abbot drama program, and director Terry Donald has taught at the college for many years. Furthermore, the Casgrain Theatre is one of the best-designed, best-equipped theatres on the island of Montreal.

This is the second time Donald has directed an excellent A View From the Bridge. The first was the inaugural production of the company presented at Centaur Theatre in 1991, starring the late Edouard Saad as Carbone.
Saad's father George Saad (Host of From Egypt to Montreal on CJNT-TV) serves as president of the company his son co-founded. In the program he thanks Montreal Theatre Ensemble for this commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the death of his son.

When I reviewed the 1991 production, I noted that it was a reminder of what we lacked in English Theatre in Montreal: professionally competent productions of the classics. We've come a long way since then. The Segal Centre for Performing Arts now specializes in modern classics. And the Montreal Theatre Ensemble, which impressed with its Of Mice and Men, by John Steinbeck, in 2008, has returned with this captivating A View From the Bridge.

First produced as a verse drama in 1955, then adapted by Miller into prose, this tale of an Italian immigrant family is a slow-cooker. The set-up is detailed, domestic, almost soap operatic. The second act explodes with pent-up emotions.

A young woman, Catherine (Christie Hebert), raised by her childless Aunt Beatrice (Rebecca Croll) and Uncle Eddie Carbone (LeBlanc), falls in love with Rodolfo (Matthew Raudsepp), one of two illegal immigrants given refuge by the Carbones because of family ties to Beatrice.

Eddie fiercely opposes the match. After consulting the philosophical lawyer Alfieri (Bill Fletcher), who serves as the narrator of the piece, he concludes that saving his niece is worth breaking the sacred code of protecting illegals. But the price of snitching is the loss of his good name in the community. When Marco (Peter Vrana), one of the betrayed immigrants, confronts Eddie, violence ensues.

Croll's solid, sensible Beatrice contrasts nicely with LeBlanc's volatile Eddie. Raudsepp and Hebert are engaging as the star-crossed lovers. Vrana has the wounded-bull presence the role of Marco demands.

In fact, all 22 performers acquit themselves admirably in this fine example of West Island masterpiece theatre.

Note: There's ample free parking on campus. And the #211 bus, from Lionel Groulx métro station, stops close by.

A View from the Bridge, by Arthur Miller, continues until Jan. 30 at Casgrain Theatre of John Abbott College in Ste. Anne de Bellevue. Tuesday to Saturday, 8 p.m., Sundays, 2 p.m. Tickets: $20; $18 students/seniors. Call 514-515-9140.