

K.I. from "Crime"

Adapted from Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* by Danil Gink. Dir. Kama Ginkas. With Oksana Mysina. Freight Entrance Theatre (see Off Broadway).

Vladimir Nabokov once complained that in Dostoyevsky's novels, characters would launch into dense, multipage monologues, during which the reader never knew what other characters were doing. Were they nodding off? Ducking out for tea? Now, thanks to Lithuanian-born director Kama Ginkas's bold and harrowing *K.I. from "Crime,"* we know. In this impressive coup of environmental staging, audience members *are* the other characters. And we're utterly transfixed by Oksana Mysina's tragic spectacle of mourning and rage.

Mysina brilliantly embodies a minor figure from *Crime and Punishment*: Katerina Ivanovna, the bitter, consumptive wife of an alcoholic petty bureaucrat. In the course of 90 minutes, "K.I."—who's on the verge of madness and death—clownishly entertains the audience in one room, then ushers them into another (stark white and lit by fluorescents) to join

in a grotesque funerary banquet for her recently deceased husband.

There are some things you should know about this remarkable production by the Foundry Theatre and Chashama, which cleanses the palate of empty theatricality and mediocre English: It is mostly performed in Russian, with helpful (and comic) translations for clarity; the audi-



SING FOR YOUR SUPPER Katerina Ivanovna panhandles for her poor kids.

ence is roped into the action, gently and tastefully; and it unfolds in real, excruciating time. It is also one of those examples of raw, masterly stagecraft (somewhat like 2000's *The Designated Mourner*) that leaves you aghast, with a renewed sense of theater as art. If that means anything to you, it would be a crime to miss this show. —David Cote