

# Theatre & Dance

Edited by Andrzej Lukowski  
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TIME OUT MEETS

## Ivo van Hove

The hottest theatre director in the world right now, Bowie collaborator Ivo van Hove gives us an exclusive heads-up on 'The Damned', coming to London next year

**IVO VAN HOVE** is the most in-demand theatre director on the planet, something you can tell just by looking at his schedule. Next year he'll be directing Gillian Anderson and Lily James in 'All About Eve' in the West End, helming a massive Broadway revival of 'West Side Story' and – as we can exclusively announce today – his wildly acclaimed stage version of Luchino Visconti's harrowing film 'The Damned' will be a cornerstone of the Barbican's 2019 season. Working with the legendary French company Comédie-Française, it's another towering achievement from the man the late David Bowie hand-picked to direct his final work, the 2015 musical 'Lazarus'.

### Why did you decide to adapt 'The Damned'?

'I like stories about families, and it's about a big industrial family who hate Hitler, hate that ideology, but make an alliance with the Nazi state because it's in their financial interests. So that's something that rings a bell these days – maybe a few bells.'

'The blockbusters spoiled everything'

### It's very, very dark. Why make something that's so bleak?

'Why every year do thousands and thousands of people go to Madrid to see "Guernica" by Picasso? Why are they so attracted to this painting where there isn't one sparkle of light or hope? I think art can be the anti-venom that makes us think: No, Jesus, not again. You know I'm kind of an optimist, believe it or not.'

### 'Network', 'All About Eve', 'The Damned'... why adapt so many films?

'Sometimes there is a misunderstanding that I am making an adaptation of a movie. I've seen the Visconti movie, when I was young, but I didn't

adapt the movie, I adapted the script, because it's a good script. The movies I do really are from a time before the blockbusters. The blockbusters spoiled everything. I love that time of the '50s, '60s, '70s, when movies were still driven by characters, not only story and action. It's Steven Spielberg's fault. Although I think "Jaws" is wonderful.'

### Does the same go for 'All About Eve'?

'Adapting it is an old dream of mine. I met [West End super-producer] Sonia Friedman and in her office there was a huge picture of "All About Eve". I said: "This is such a great script." And she said: "I know." And then we had a project. It talks about the theatre world and about getting older when

ANNA HUIX/CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES; SKETCHING, SIMON ARNARD

being an actor is more important [to you] than your real life. It's not a political drama, it's really about life.'

### Some people have suggested you're an odd choice to direct 'West Side Story', that your work is too European avant-garde...

'Well, it was my choice! Expect us to make a version that's twenty-first-century, not looking back to the end of the '50s. Every scene is about a social theme. Of course there is great dancing, of course there is great singing, but it's all an instrument to catch your attention.'

### Did working with David Bowie change your relationship with his music?

'It became stronger, and I knew his music by heart already. I had this one meeting with him, I said: We have to talk about your music and what your songs mean. Sometimes he'd say: "Ivo, it was fucking 50 years [ago], I don't remember." But then he'd try. He really was a great collaborator. He always listened, he always said "yes, try it", he was always open to what we were putting on the table. It was a huge lesson in life – never become blasé, never think you know everything. He was a great human being and a great artist.'

→ 'The Damned' is at the Barbican. Jun 19-25 2019.

'All About Eve' is at the Noël Coward Theatre. Feb 2-May 11 2019.



By Andrzej Lukowski  
Who is never going to get any closer to meeting David Bowie (sadface).