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Lost in translation

REVIEW

THEATRE OPENING NIGHT

Toneelgroep Amsterdam/
NTGent

Playhouse, the Arts Centre,
until Saturday

Reviewer: Chris Boyd



UNLUCKILY for Ivo van Hove and his Dutch company Toneelgroep, this staging of John Cassavetes' 1977 film *Opening Night* comes hard on the heels of a similar (and better) adaptation of Pedro Almodovar's *All About My Mother*, which the MTC performed just a month or two back.

The Spanish film director borrowed a key plot element from the Cassavetes film: a

celebrated stage actress witnesses the death of an autograph hunter, and is haunted by the teen.

The thunder of van Hove's technological gimmickry has also been stolen by Rupert Goold and Ben Power, whose fishbowl version of *Six Characters In Search of an Author* came to Australia in January and that show didn't require the headspinning obstacle of subtitles.

None of this would matter, though, if *Opening Night* wasn't excruciatingly weary, stale and flat. The few exceptional performances (most notably Elsie de Brauw as the show's star Myrtle) are outnumbered and completely undermined by a general lassitude.

A fascinating idea, lost in translation.