



Setting the stage

BY ADAM PIRANI

With an international reputation that stems from the still-running 1986 London production of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* and the show's subsequent Broadway transfer, where he picked up two Tony nominations, one each for his set and costume designs, Bob Crowley has been working steadily ever since. He most recently designed *Hedda Gabler* at the National Theatre of Great Britain in January 1989 and *The Plantagenets* in October 1988 for the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon. *The Plantagenets* will reopen at the Barbican Theatre in April 89, launching the RSC's 1989 London season. Also, in April of 89, *Ghetto*, a new play by Joshua Sobell receiving its British premiere, will become Crowley's second show of 89 at the National Theatre, and his *Macbeth* will transfer from the RSC at Stratford-upon-Avon to London. He also designed the London premiere of Arthur Miller's *Two-Way Mirror* in August 88 at the Young Vic Theatre.

Born in southern Ireland, Crowley was an art instructor and then a scene painter before becoming a stage designer. Now 35, he is an associate artist of the RSC, for whom he has designed more than 20 plays. He has worked at the Manchester Royal Exchange and Bristol Old Vic, and has designed operas for the Royal Opera, the English National Opera and Kent Opera.

Talking to Crowley, it's clear that when he designs, there are no systems or rules. The idea that recurs when discussing his most recent works, *The Plantagenets* and *Hedda Gabler*, is that of creating a mood.

The Plantagenets—an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Henry VI Parts I, II and III* and *Richard III* into a trilogy—is reminiscent of a technique the RSC did in the early 60s with *The War of the Roses*. The three plays of *The Plantagenets* are entitled *Henry VI, The Rise*

DESIGNER BOB CROWLEY CREATES HEDDA GABLER
AND THE PLANTAGENETS