

Langhoff states that the set is not a passive restatement of the text. As he says, "I don't like to recount what is in the play with the decor."

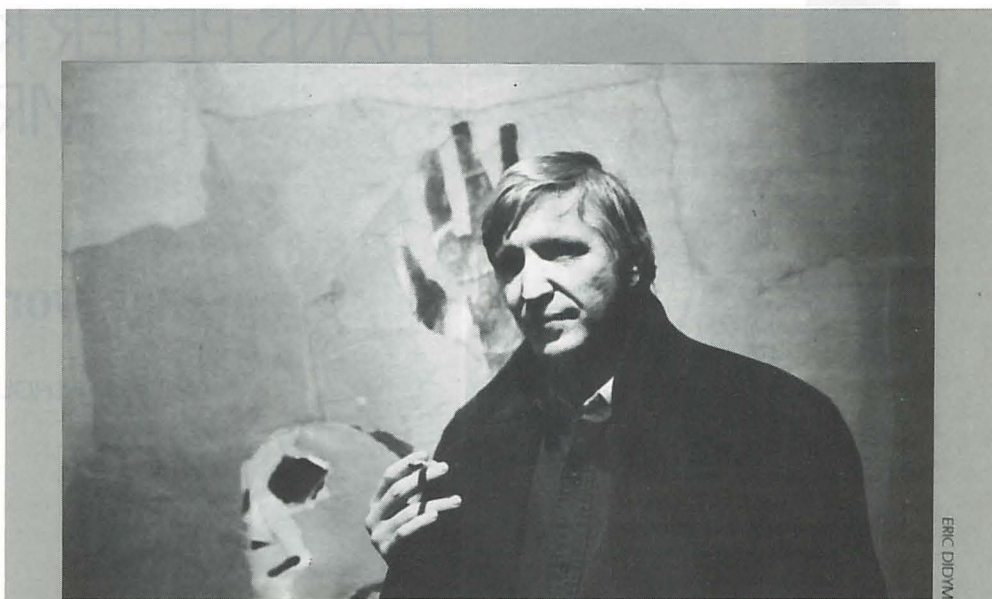
When attacking a project, rather than beginning with his goals as a director, Langhoff first perceives a new production exclusively as a design problem. Detailing the scratch-to-stage process, he says, "I start at my home in my workroom. I define the idea alone. I don't like to speak too much with others before." In this beginning stage, Langhoff does many sketches, jots notations, clips photos, and puts it all on his workroom walls. "My walls become a fantasy space with different visual material on different eras, spaces. They're not serious—it's just things that grab me."

After his fantasy stage of textiles and sketches has been tempered with such realities as budget and stage dimensions, Langhoff builds scale models, using as close to the exact materials to be used. Of the budget, Langhoff says with a laugh, "It's known in the beginning, then forgotten, although of course, it stays in the head somewhere." The plan, dimensions of the scene and technical possibilities become his primary concerns in constructing the model. "I use the same materials—wood, fabrics—for the model as for the real decor. If the idea is there but the costs are too great, I try to keep the idea but meet the budget."

It is only after a model has been realized that Langhoff is ready to switch figurative caps and as director, analyze the text and set for staging possibilities. He treats the two jobs as rigidly separate aspects of his project's development. Although, as Langhoff explains, that does not mean it can't also be fun. "When it's just me I play a game with myself because it's hard to be both decorator and director at once. I do the decor first, then work out the direction. That's my game; I must work with the decor that this designer, who is no longer here, has given me."

Langhoff enjoys working with other decorators when he is just directing. "I like that," he says in a voice loud with the vehemence of his reaction. "In my work as a director it's a big pleasure to have a fantasy with something a little foreign to me, as when the decor is done by another."

There are two set designers with whom Langhoff works regularly when not undertaking the task himself, both past assistants of his. Langhoff believes in the tradition of apprenticeship. He explains that he usually has one assistant helping him, a young decorator starting out. "The idea is to teach him, then later, he does the decor," relates Langhoff. "What I look for is talent, not efficiency. They show their work even if it hasn't been realized, just for the ideas."



2

■ For Matthias Langhoff (2) being director and designer of a project presents an interesting challenge. "I do the decor first, then work out the direction. That's my game, I must work with the decor that the designer, who is no longer there, has given me." Langhoff will demonstrate his talents beginning June 89 as the new director of the Dramatic Center of Lausanne, Switzerland.

● *Pour Matthias Langhoff (2), le fait d'être directeur et décorateur d'un spectacle, représente un challenge stimulant. "Je fais d'abord le décor, puis j'orchestre la mise en scène. C'est mon jeu, je suis obligé de travailler avec le décor que le dessinateur parti, m'a laissé." Langhoff démontrera ses talents à partir de juin 89 comme étant le nouveau directeur du Centre Dramatique de Lausanne, en Suisse.*

▼ Für Matthias Langhoff (2) ist es eine interessante Herausforderung, Regisseur und Bühnenbildner eines Projektes zu sein. "Zuerst entwerfe ich die Dekoration und anschließend widme ich mich der Regie. So packe ich es an. Ich muß mit der Dekoration arbeiten, die mir der Bühnenbildner, der hier entfällt, vorgegeben hat." Ab Juni 1989 kann Matthias Langhoff seine Talente als neuer Intendant des Centre Dramatique in Lausanne, Schweiz, unter Beweis stellen.

Of special effects, Langhoff says that he does not use them much although they interest him. "They must really have a special effect—they must find a new solution." As for lighting, Langhoff explains his simple minimalist's approach. "I start by looking at the set with a single candle, then see how I can use light to a minimum with best results."

For travelling productions, Langhoff explains that the problems raised are different in each case. The time for dealing with such problems is before the sets are made, to avoid costly and sometimes economically prohibitive changes that the various venues might require. "Sometimes when traveling one must choose different theatres rather than different decors. It would be too expensive to do otherwise." But it's not just decor that dictates a

traveling venue—Langhoff also believes it's the text. "Miss Julie needs a small scene to work. This precludes a large room, for the intimacy of the production would be lost."

In June 1989, Langhoff will add another dimension to his work in the theatre. He has been appointed the new director of the Dramatic Center of Lausanne, Switzerland, where he will continue his work as a designer and director.

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