

A change in direction

RALPH KOLTAI DESIGNS METROPOLIS
AND BEGINS A NEW CAREER

BY MICHAEL ROMAIN

Forty years and over 200 productions later, British designer Ralph Koltai has decided to redirect his career. "I've reached a point where I ask, 'What's next?'," commented Koltai when I spoke to him at his home in Kentish Town, somewhat chaotic as a consequence of his impending move to France. "I've designed for small theatres, big theatres, and explored all the possibilities — open stage, proscenium

arch, and studio spaces." So after a lifetime of honours, Koltai is trying his hand at directing. "It makes so much sense. You can't design effectively without understanding directing. Designing is a conceptual art — what works on stage, blocking, balance — it's all directing. I'm not the type of designer who can just put pencil on paper, create a design, then push it at the director and say, 'Now do something with it!' I understand what I've

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With over 200 productions to his credit, designer Ralph Koltai has decided to try his hand at directing. "I'm not the type of designer who can just put pencil on paper and create a design. I understand what I've designed and how it would work best on stage." His most recent design venture is the £2.5 million (US \$4.2 million) musical, *Metropolis* (1). "Most of my work is symbolic, using metaphors and modern art. *Metropolis* is much more accessible."

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Après la réalisation des décors pour plus de 200 spectacles, le décorateur Ralph Koltai veut se lancer comme metteur en scène au théâtre. "Je ne suis pas le type de décorateur qui peut simplement griffonner un dessin. Moi, je comprends ce que je crée et comment cela fonctionne de la meilleure façon sur scène". Son dernier décor, pour la pièce musicale Metropolis (1), a coûté 2.5 million de livres (US \$4.2 million). "La plupart de mon travail est symbolique, j'utilise des métaphores et des images de l'art moderne. Metropolis est beaucoup plus accessible".

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Nach über 200 Produktionen als Designer hat Ralph Koltai entschieden, sich als Regisseur zu versuchen. "Ich bin nicht der Designertyp, der mit einem Bleistift auf dem Papier ein Design entwirft. Ich verstehe, was ich entwerfe und wie es am besten auf der Bühnen wirkt." Kürzlich entwarf er das Design für das 2,5 Millionen englische Pfund (US \$4,2 Millionen) teure Musical *Metropolis* (1). "Fast alle meine Arbeiten sind symbolisch, unter Benutzung von Metaphern und moderner Kunst. *Metropolis* allerdings ist leichter zugänglich."



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