



MARC AND BRIGITTE ENGUERANU

■ The floor of Bercut's set was tilted upwards with a 20° angle slope, while the ceiling was inclined another 25°. The walls were curved inward also, giving more of a feeling of confinement. The set looked like a library, decorated with painted and real books on walls, ceilings, and floors (above).

● *Le parterre du décor de Bercut était sur une pente à 20 degrés, alors que le plafond était incliné de 25 degrés dans l'autre sens. Les murs étaient bombés vers l'intérieur, donnant ainsi un plus grand effet de resserrement. Le décor ressemblait à une bibliothèque décorée avec de vrais et faux livres, peints sur les murs, plafonds et sols (ci-dessus).*

▼ Der Boden von Bercuts Bühnenbild war um 20 Grad aufwärts geneigt, währenddem auch die Decke sich um 25 Grad senkte. Die Wände waren nach innen gebeugt, was noch mehr ein Gefühl der Beengung erzeugte. Das Bühnenbild sah aus wie eine Bibliothek, mit echten und aufgemalten Büchern versehen auf Wänden, Decken und Böden (oben).

Nazi gas chambers wearing his prayer shawl." Mesguich, who is Jewish, wanted Titus to wear phylacteries, the strips of leather worn by religious Jewish men during their morning prayer, and asked Forbin to purchase them. "I went into a shop in the Jewish quarter and when I told the shopkeeper it was for a dramatic play, he refused to sell them to me," she recalls.

Titus' sons wear long, flowing robes and turbans reminiscent of the desert — another reference to biblical times. Other characters wear tattered clothes to show that they have "come a long way, from the past," according to Forbin.

Forbin's biggest challenge came in costuming Lavinia, Titus' youngest child who is raped and mutilated to punish her

father. (Her torturers are later killed and served up to their mother for supper.) Forbin chose dresses that accentuated Lavinia's youth and innocence. "Rape is all the more terrible and terrifying when it involves a child," Forbin says. She picked a long, blue dress in heavy cotton with a cinched waist and full skirt touching the floor. After the crime, Lavinia reappears in a white wedding-like dress in cotton satinette, the stumps of her amputated arms dangling from oversized shoulders and torso. Actress Catherine Rougelin's arms, hidden under the dress, were crossed against her body at the waist, while the stumps were sewn onto the dress's extra-wide upper sections.

Few costumes were made especially for *Titus*, and some actors wore their own

street clothes on stage. Even Lavinia's white dress was a hand-me-down from a 1988 production.

Hair and makeup by the German-born Kuno were particularly striking. Lavinia's hair after the rape — actually a wig — has been shorn, and there are long wisps hanging from her scalp. With visions of concentration camp survivors fresh in contemporary imaginations, the reference was unmistakable. And like many survivors who returned from the camps with death in their eyes, Lavinia's thick, bluish-white makeup and dark circles make her look more dead than alive. In all, a stunning rendition of Shakespeare's bloodiest tragedy — a triumph for three of France's most exciting young theatrical talents.