Ivo van Hove’s critically acclaimed epic Roman Tragedies makes US premiere at BAM

Audience can witness the unfolding drama while mingling with the actors on stage

BAM’s 150th anniversary celebration continues through Dec 2012

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Roman Tragedies
By William Shakespeare
Toneelgroep Amsterdam
Directed by Ivo van Hove

Translation by Tom Kleijn
Set and lighting design by Jan Versweyveld
Video design by Tal Yarden
Music composed by Eric Sleichim
Costume design by Lies van Assche

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House (30 Lafayette Ave)
Nov 16 at 6pm; Nov 17 & 18 at 3pm
Tickets: $70 (general admission)

In Dutch with English titles

Next Wave Talk: On Shakespeare’s Rome with James Shapiro
A lecture by Columbia Professor and author James Shapiro
Nov 17 at 1pm / 1 hr, BAM Hillman Attic Studio
BAM Hillman Attic Studio
Tickets: $15 ($7.50 for Friends of BAM)

“An exhilarating pleasure…unmissable.” —The Guardian

“Astonishing and brilliantly staged.”—The Independent

Brooklyn, NY/October 16, 2012—Visionary director Ivo van Hove returns to BAM, transforming the BAM Howard Gilman Opera House into a modern-day Roman amphitheater for a groundbreaking production that condenses Shakespeare’s three Roman tragedies—Coriolanus, Julius Caesar, and
Anthony and Cleopatra—into a single production. Staged as one continuous performance, each tragedy reveals and focuses on a different facet of political strategy:

Coriolanus takes place during the rise of the Roman Republic. Here, the eponymous hero refuses to accept the changed political constellation. He defies the masses and their new representatives and is banished. In a final and desperate action, he takes up arms against Rome, his own beloved city.

In contrast, Julius Caesar acquires power because he is a master in manipulating the masses. But when a number of politicians realize that the republic is in danger of becoming a dictatorship, they remove him in order to save the democracy—though unfortunately not in time to reverse the changed political climate.

Finally, Antony & Cleopatra brings global politics to light through the lens of the passionate love of the Roman Antony and the Egyptian Cleopatra. As Antony struggles between civic responsibility and his heart's desire, a chain of dark events ensue, culminating in an unforgettable bloodbath, which, according to The Guardian "is about as good as theatre gets; combining astonishingly inventive stagecraft with glorious acting, raw as an open wound, totally invested and decidedly unpretty."

In Roman Tragedies, the audience is situated in the middle of the political arena. Spectators can move freely between the “hall”, the “circle,” and the “stage,” following characters as the action unfolds. The set includes a news ticker, which summarizes events that have been cut for the adaptation (mostly battle scenes). Audience members are encouraged to submit their responses to the play online during the performance; these responses are played on the ticker during set changes. There is no fixed intermission but there are a number of shorter breaks and refreshments are available on the stage throughout the performance. Contrary to traditional theater etiquette, members of the audience have permission to use multimedia resources to chronicle what they see in real-time.

Roman Tragedies premiered in June 2007 at the Holland Festival and has since appeared in London, Montreal, and Quebec.

About the artists

Ivo van Hove began his career as a stage director in 1981, doing plays he had also written, including Ziektekiemen and Geruchten. He was the artistic manager at AKT, Akt-Vertical, and De Tijd, successively. Between 1990 and 2000 he was the director of Het Zuidelijk Toneel. Since 2001 van Hove has been general director of Toneelgroep Amsterdam (the Amsterdam Theatre Group). He has coordinated productions at the Edinburgh International Festival, the Venice Biennale, the Holland Festival, Theater der Welt in Germany, and the Wiener Festwochen in Vienna. He has also worked in London, Canada, Lisbon, Paris, Verona, Hannover, Porto, Cairo, Poland, and New York. He has directed at the Deutsches Schauspielhaus in Hamburg, the Staatstheater in Stuttgart, and the New York Theatre Workshop.

At Toneelgroep Amsterdam, van Hove has directed Angels in America by Tony Kushner, Cries and Whispers by Ingmar Bergman (2011 Next Wave), Opening Night by John Cassavetes (2008 BAM Next Wave), Rocco and his Brothers by Luchino Visconti, Teorema, based on the work of Pier Paolo Pasolini (in partnership with the Ruhtriennale), Antonioni Project by Michelangelo Antonioni, La voix humaine (The Human Voice) by Jean Cocteau, Zomertrilogie (Summer Trilogy) by Carlo Goldoni, Kinderen van zon (Children of the Sun) by Gorky for Toneelgroep Amsterdam and NTGent, Nooit van elkaar (And we'll Never be Parted) by Jon Fosse, de Russen! (The Russians! Platonov meets Ivanov) by Tom Lanoye and Husbands by John Cassavetes.

Van Hove produced Thuisfront for Dutch television and his first film, Amsterdam, in 2009. He directed the musical Rent for Joop van den Ende. At the Vlaamse Opera he staged a production of Lulu (Alban Berg) and the complete Ring cycle by Wagner (2006–2008). He also mounted productions of
Janáček’s *De Zaak Makropoulos*, Tchaikovsky’s *Iolanta* and Der Schatzgräber by Franz Schreker for the De Nederlandse Opera in Amsterdam. From 1998 to 2004, Van Hove was the festival manager of the Holland Festival, where he presented an annual selection of international theater, music, opera, and dance. Since 1984, van Hove has been part of the artistic management of the department of dramatic art at Hogeschool Antwerpen.

He is currently working on stagings of *Na de repetitie / Persona (After the rehearsal/Persona)* by Ingmar Bergman.

Van Hove has earned numerous honors, including two OBIE Awards for the best production of an off-Broadway production in New York—for *More Stately Mansions* and *Hedda Gabler*—as well as the East Flanders Oeuvre Prize (1995), the Theatre Festival Prize (1996), and the Archangel Award at the Edinburgh Festival (1999). He was made a Chevalier of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in France in 2004. In 2007 he received the Prijs van de Kritiek in the Netherlands, a prize awarded by theater critics. In 2008, he and Jan Versweyveld received the Prosceniumprijs, a Dutch theater prize.

**Toneelgroep Amsterdam** presents internationally acclaimed contemporary theater from its home base, the Amsterdam Stadsschouwburg. As the Netherlands’ largest repertory company it holds a prominent place in the Dutch capital’s international cultural scene. With an annual average of 20 plays and more than 350 performances, the company entertains audiences of 100,000 each year.

The company’s unique approach to a wide range of projects has made a tremendous impact on theaters and artists around the world. Toneelgroep Amsterdam has collaborated with such artists as Krzysztof Warlikowski, Christoph Marthaler, Wim Vandekeybus, Johan Simons, Thomas Ostermeier and Grzegorz Jarzyna and works internationally with organizations such as Holland Festival, NTGent, the Belgian arts centers in Antwerp and Ghent, Wiener Festwochen, RuhrTriennale, Festival d’Avignon, BAM, Lincoln Center Festival, Festival Transamerique Montreal, Barbican London, Schaubühne Berlin, and the Münchner Kammerspiele.

For press information contact Sarah Garvey, 718.636.4129x7 or sgarvey@BAM.org.

**Credits**

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General Information
BAM Howard Gilman Opera House, BAM Rose Cinemas, and BAMcafé are located in the Peter Jay Sharp building at 30 Lafayette Avenue (between St Felix Street and Ashland Place) in the Fort Greene neighborhood of Brooklyn. BAM Harvey Theater is located two blocks from the main building at 651 Fulton Street (between Ashland and Rockwell Places). Both locations house Greenlight Bookstore at BAM kiosks. BAM Fisher, located at 321 Ashland Place, is the newest addition to the BAM campus and houses the Judith and Alan Fishman Space and Rita K. Hillman Studio. BAM Rose Cinemas is Brooklyn’s only movie house dedicated to first-run independent and foreign film and repertory programming. BAMcafé, operated by Great Performances, is open for dining prior to BAM Howard Gilman Opera House evening performances. BAMcafé also features an eclectic mix of spoken word and live music for BAMcafé Live on Friday and Saturday nights with a special BAMcafé Live menu available starting at 6pm.

Subway: 2, 3, 4, 5, Q, B to Atlantic Avenue – Barclays Center (2, 3, 4, 5 to Nevins St for Harvey Theater)  
D, N, R to Pacific Street; G to Fulton Street; C to Lafayette Avenue

Train: Long Island Railroad to Atlantic Terminal – Barclays Center

Bus: B25, B26, B41, B45, B52, B63, B67 all stop within three blocks of BAM

Car: Commercial parking lots are located adjacent to BAM

For ticket and BAMbus information, call BAM Ticket Services at 718.636.4100, or visit BAM.org.

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