

A new artistic regime at Hampstead comes in with a consistent, original and perverse Hedda Gabler directed by John Dove. Almost everybody is so laid-back that it is hard to believe they would be galvanised into the retributive Greek time-scheme of Ibsen's play the moment the Dionysiac Lovborg (Dermot Crowley) hits town. Lindsay Duncan, in a clever and selfless performance, replaces the pounding tigress of tradition with an acidulous ice-kitten watching the action distastefully from the side. It is only at the very end, when the bleak misery of entrapment sweeps across the composure of her face like winter sleet, that we are allowed to see any anguish beneath Hedda's ingenuous detachment.

Ratcliffe on Hedda

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