



**VENUS IN FUR**  
BY **DAVID IVES**



DRAMATISTS  
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INC.

VENUS IN FUR  
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Originally produced by Classic Stage Company,  
(Brian Kulick, Artistic Director; Jessica R. Jenen, Executive Director).

Originally produced on Broadway by the Manhattan Theatre Club  
(Lynne Meadow, Artistic Director; Barry Grove, Executive Producer)  
by special arrangement with Jon B. Platt, Scott Landis and Classic Stage Company,  
at the Samuel J. Friedman Theatre on October 13, 2011.

In addition, a bio for the Broadway producers of VENUS IN FUR is required in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play. The bio will be provided to licensees by Dramatists Play Service.

*This play is for Walter Bobbie*

VENUS IN FUR has its world premiere at Classic Stage Company (Brian Kulick, Artistic Director; Jessica R. Jenen, Executive Director) in New York City on January 26, 2010. It was directed by Walter Bobbie; the set design was by John Lee Beatty; the costume design was by Anita Yavich; the lighting design was by Peter Kaczorowski; the sound design was by Acme Sound Partners; the production manager was La Vie Productions; and the production stage manager was Christina Lowe. The cast was as follows:

THOMAS ..... Wes Bentley  
VANDA ..... Nina Arianda

VENUS IN FUR was subsequently produced on Broadway by the Manhattan Theatre Club (Lynne Meadow, Artistic Director; Barry Grove, Executive Director; Florie Seery, General Manager) by special arrangement with Jon B. Platt, Scott Landis and Classic Stage Company, premiering at the Samuel J. Friedman Theatre on October 13, 2011. It was directed by Walter Bobbie; the set design was by John Lee Beatty; the costume design was by Anita Yavich; the lighting design was by Peter Kaczorowski; the sound design was by Acme Sound Partners; the production manager was Joshua Helman; and the production stage manager was Winnie Lok. The cast was as follows:

THOMAS ..... Hugh Dancy  
VANDA ..... Nina Arianda

The same production moved to the Lyceum Theatre in New York City, opening on February 7, 2012.

## **CHARACTERS**

THOMAS

VANDA

# VENUS IN FUR

*A clash of thunder and a burst of lightning reveal Thomas in a bare, rented studio. End of an afternoon. A few old metal chairs. A table with a clip-on lamp and a stack of headshots. A ratty prop divan. A metal stand with a coffeemaker and some paper cups. In the middle of the room, an iron pipe disappears into the ceiling. A fuse box hangs on a wall.*

THOMAS. (*Pacing, into his cellphone.*)

No. No. Nothing. Nobody. It's maddening, it's a plot. There *are* no women like this. No young women, or young-*ish* women. No beautiful-slash-sexy women. No sexy-slash-articulate young women with some classical training and a particle of brain in their skulls. Is that so much to ask? An actress who can actually pronounce the word "degradation" without a tutor?

(*A roll of thunder.*)

Honey — Honey, in the book Vanda is twenty-four, for God's sake. Back in those days a woman of twenty-four would've been married. She'd have five kids and tuberculosis. She'd be a *woman*. Most women who are twenty-four these days sound like six-year-olds on helium. "*And I was all like whatever and he was all like, y'know, and I go like whatever and he's like all, y'know?*" No, I don't *know*, I don't know anything except that I saw thirty-five incompetent actresses today, and even the ones pushing retirement didn't have the stuff. Anybody who does is either shooting a series or she isn't gonna do this for a nickel a week. And the *stupidity*. They bring along props, whole sacks full of costumes. And whatever happened to femininity? Bring along some of *that*, please. Young women can't even play feminine these days. Half are dressed like hookers, half like dykes. *I'd* be a better Vanda than most of these girls, all I'd have to do is put on a dress and a pair of nylons. Well, our Vanda's got to be out there somewhere. But at this point ...

*(Thunder and lightning. The lights in the room flicker.)*

Hello? Hello? Honey? Honey, are you there?

VANDA. *(Offstage.)*

Knock knock knock!

*(Vanda enters, in steep high heels, wearing a soaked coat. She carries an enormous bag, a purse, and a battered black umbrella.)*

Am I too late? I'm too late, right? Fuck. *Fuck!*

THOMAS. If you're here for *Venus in Fur*, everybody went home half an hour ago.

VANDA. God, I'm sorry, I'm so, so sorry, I got caught like way uptown and my cell went out. Then my fucking heel gets stuck in one of those sewer-cover-thing-whatevers. Then there's this guy on the train, I don't even want to tell you about him, rubbing up against my ass the whole trip. Then it starts to pour. I get soaked through to the fucking skin. Fuck! Fuck!

*(She throws herself into a chair.)*

God. Just my luck. Fuck ... *FUCK!*

THOMAS. Can I run out and refill any prescriptions for you?

VANDA. I'm okay. Just my usual luck is all. Thank you, God, once again! Hi. I'm sorry. Vanda Jordan.

THOMAS. Vanda...?

VANDA. See what I mean? I've even got her name! How many girls in this town are named *Vanda*? Actually I'm Wanda but my parents called me *Vanda*. Anyway, I'm like perfect for the part and the fucking train gets stuck in a tunnel while this guy's trying to penetrate me. Talk about fate. And you are?

THOMAS. Thomas Novachek.

VANDA. Hi. Hey, wait a minute. Thomas Novachek? You wrote this!

THOMAS. Yes, I did. Well, I adapted it.

VANDA. And you're directing it, too, right?

THOMAS. Within an inch of its life.

VANDA. God, I love your plays! I mean, the ones I know. *Anatomy of Shadows*? Like, *wow*. *Anatomy of Shadows* was *amazing!* I saw it twice!

THOMAS. I didn't write *Anatomy of Shadows*.

VANDA. Right, right. I mean, you know, the other one. God, this is embarrassing. Anyway, *this* play is sure amazing. I mean, the parts of it I read. Pretty wild stuff.

*(She takes off the coat, revealing a studded patent-leather top, a short black leather skirt, and a silver-studded dog collar.)*

# VENUS IN FUR

by David Ives

1M, 1W

Thomas, a beleaguered playwright/director, is desperate to find an actress to play Vanda, the female lead in his adaptation of the classic sadomasochistic tale *Venus in Fur*. Into his empty audition room walks a vulgar and equally desperate actress — oddly enough, named Vanda. Though utterly wrong for the sophisticated part, Vanda exhibits a strange command of the material, piquing Thomas's interest with her seductive talents and secretive manner. As the two work through the script, they blur the line between play and reality, entering into an increasingly serious game of submission and domination that only one of them can win. A mysterious, funny, erotic drama that represents yet another departure for the multifaceted David Ives.

*"The teeter-tottering test of wills that takes place in VENUS IN FUR makes even the most fraught encounter between a domineering director and a sensitive performer seem like a play date in the sandbox ... ninety minutes of good, kinky fun."*  
—The New York Times

*"VENUS IN FUR invites both carnal and cerebral excitement."*  
—The Village Voice

*"Wildly intelligent and sometimes frightening."*  
—The New Yorker

*"David Ives's rehearsal-room look at the erotics of control is sexy, zany and full of surprises."*  
—Time Out New York

*"You want funny? You want sexy? Then you'll want to see VENUS IN FUR."*  
—The New Jersey Newsroom

## Also by David Ives

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