


BEHIND THE SCENES

Costumes are key in bringing characters in a play to life. The heart of the costume designer's job is to express visually the physical, psychological, and emotional status of the characters. "Clothing is communication," costume designer Jonna Hayden told the *Eugene Weekly*. "There's nothing onstage on any actor that's not a choice. It should always explain who the actor is and enhance the story." Costume designers, along with set designers, play central roles in providing the visual cues that help the characters tell the story.

Costume design takes in the elements of color, shape, and texture. Although a costume has a main color, how that color is highlighted or contrasted with other colors draws interest and helps create the character. A costume with contrasting colors, such as blue and gold, will create more of a stir, or tension, than a costume with similar colors such as dark blue and purple. A costume designer determines shape based on who the character is and how the character acts. If the character makes many small, timid, quiet movements, the designer may opt for a figure-hugging type garment that moves only when the character



Costumes should reflect the personality of the character and be historically accurate.

moves. On the other hand, if a character makes exaggerated or sweeping movements, the designer may want to create a costume that flows—a fluttery skirt or baggy pants, for example. The costume designer also uses texture to create interest. Fabric texture affects how light hits the fabric and reflects off of it. If the costume designer wants to spotlight a feature of the costume, he or she will use a shiny or high-contrast texture. If the costume designer wants some part of the costume to stay in the background, he or she would use a flat texture such as canvas or wool. Many designers use contrasting textures because even without color, textures can achieve a great effect, such as a gray wool coat with a shiny gray satin lapel. Although the coat and lapel are the same color, the sheen of the satin stands out against the wool and sends a subtle message to the audience that the wearer is likely wealthy or stylish.

Costume designer Joe Zingo said in the *Eugene Weekly* story, “Costuming is a set of skills, design is a set of skills, knowing color, fabric, and texture is a set of skills. You have to know what a fabric will do, under stress, movement, when it’s dyed or distressed. You have to know whether it will suggest wealth or poverty.”

On the Job

Most costume designers are self-employed. When the opportunity to design costumes for a play comes their way, they assess the scope of the project and decide how to assemble a team, whether from their own staff or by hiring others, in order to be most efficient. Different productions have different needs

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and budgets. No matter if the staff is a staff of one or is a large and specialized staff, costume designers are responsible for more than artistry. They must have good communication skills and maintain an even temper while working with a variety of personalities. Besides designing and constructing costumes, costume designers must be able to manage budgets, contracts, deadlines, and the entire costume crew.

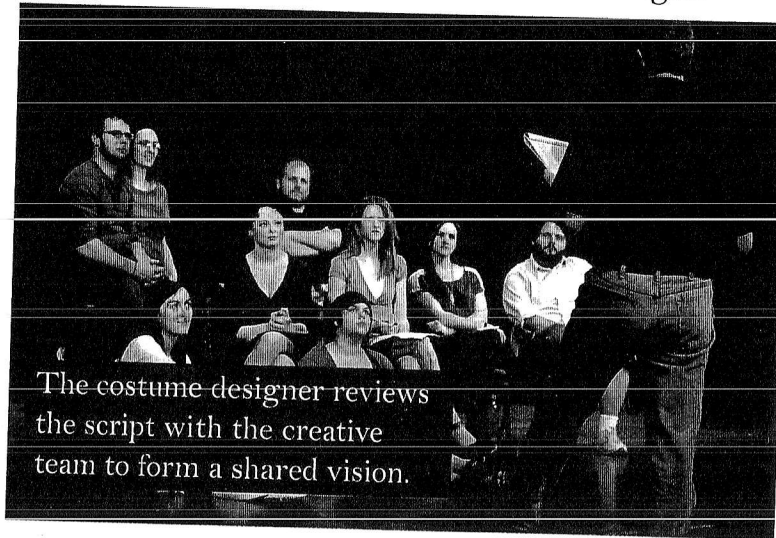
Costumes include anything that the performers wear and, on occasion, touch, including clothing, jewelry, footwear, hats, accessories, and sometimes certain props, makeup, hairstyling, and wigs. The responsibilities of the costume and wardrobe staff can be divided into preproduction, production, and postproduction phases. Preproduction includes designing, purchasing, and constructing costumes. The production phase includes last minute preparations, final rehearsals, wardrobe organization and repair, and sometimes makeup and hairstyling. Postproduction is basically “closing up shop,” and it includes how the costumes will be handled after the show’s run has ended.

The Script

The first step for a costume designer in preproduction is a meeting with the director and other members of the creative team, usually the set designer and the lighting and sound directors. The director presents the script and relates his or her ideas and feelings about the play. Each member of the creative team makes note of when, where, and how his or her expertise and contributions will be needed. The

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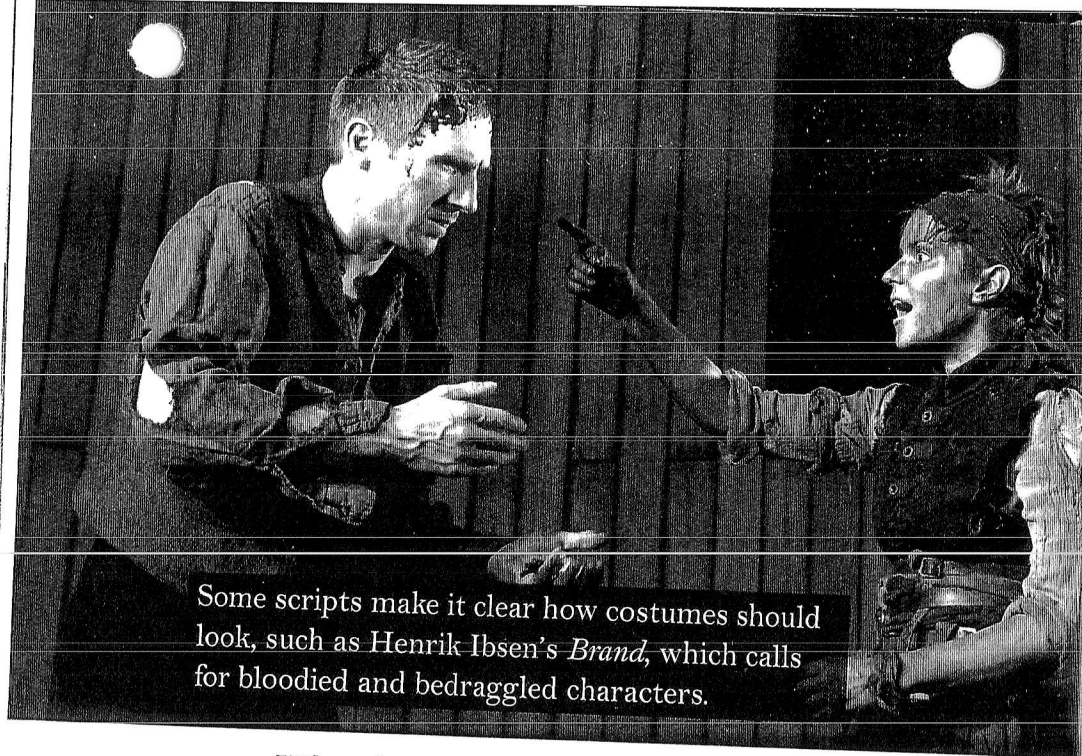
director and the creative team meet several times to discuss the script and their individual interpretations. Eventually, a “shared vision” is formed and the creative team begins working on their individual designs.



Asking the Right Questions

After reading the script, costume designers reread it several times while asking themselves dozens of questions. In order to understand the play, its theme, tone, and characters, they will want to know:

- What is the plot?
- How many acts and scenes?
- What are some of the themes in the play? (e.g., danger, pride, friendship)
- What is the style of the play? (e.g., realism, romanticism, fantasy)



Some scripts make it clear how costumes should look, such as Henrik Ibsen's *Brand*, which calls for bloodied and bedraggled characters.

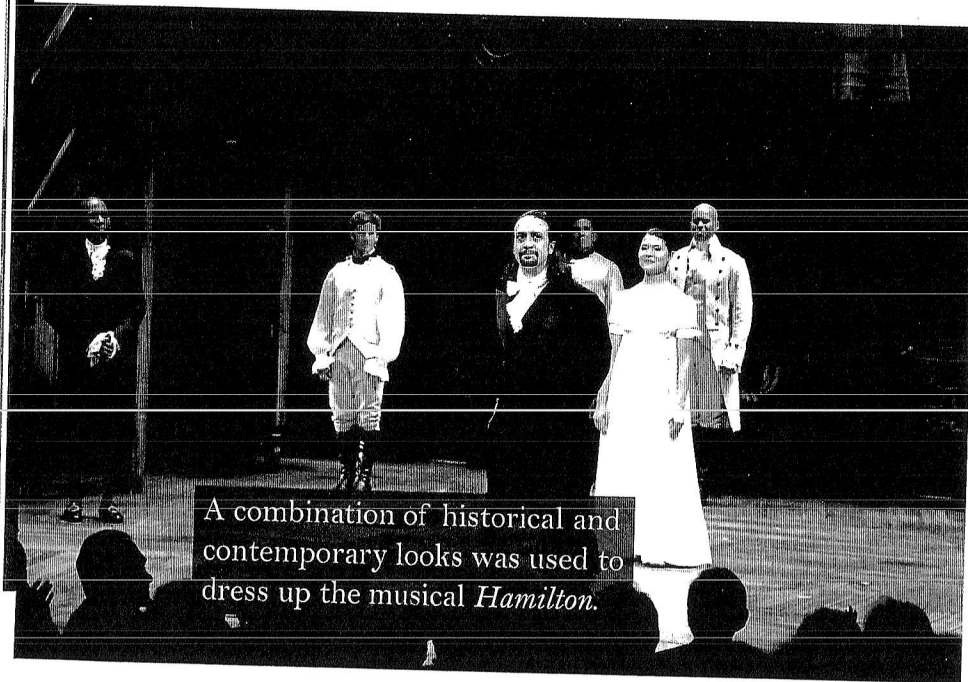
- What does the physical action of the play call for? (e.g., playing chess, being in a rock band)
- Are there any references to clothing in the text? (e.g., *Girl with a Pearl Earring*)
- Are there any textual references that mention a character is dressed certain way? (e.g., covered in blood)
- What kind of body does the character have?
- How does he/she walk? Sit? Gesture? Stand?

Time and Place

Generally, the first element a costume designer considers is the time period. The play may be contemporary, meaning it is taking place in the present, or it may take place in a period which is

referred to as modern, meaning within the last few decades. For both of those instances, a costume designer can often save money and time by buying ready-made garments. To some extent, especially in smaller productions, the minor and walk-on characters can even wear their own clothes or borrow clothes from other people. Ready-made clothing can be bought in clothing stores for many of the characters in contemporary plays. Plays taking place in modern times require more sleuthing. Modern-dress period and "retro" clothing, such as bold stripes from the 1970s or suits with big shoulder pads from the 1980s, are more likely found in second-hand or thrift stores. Costume designers browse old magazines such as 1960s issues of *Vogue* or J.C. Penney catalogs for inspiration. Store-bought costumes are often altered, not only to provide more interest on stage but to make the costume fit the actor properly. In small productions, the costume designer and/or the assistant will do the shopping, altering, and constructing. In large productions, there may be assistants and designated shoppers, but most costume designers really prefer to shop themselves. Given the ability to purchase rather than make costumes, the costume designer will need more shoppers and fewer patternmakers and stitchers.

If the period is historical, costume designers summon up their cultural knowledge to gain awareness of the period. They research family structure, marriage customs, types of government, politics, and economics, as well as what forms of art, music, and literature were popular. Plays can also blend historic and contemporary time periods.



A combination of historical and contemporary looks was used to dress up the musical *Hamilton*.

Sometimes directors choose to tell a contemporary story with characters from the past, or vice versa. Sometimes the director chooses to set the play in a different place or time from the original script. This can be challenging for costume designers as they are often asked for designs that reflect both time periods. For example, a costume designer charged with creating costumes for a historic play in a contemporary setting may dress characters in contemporary clothing but add accessories or alter garments to reflect the past, such as a dress with a long row of tiny buttons, or one with an empire waistline and a hemline shorter in front than back (to suggest a gown with a train), or a man's shirt with loose or slightly blousy sleeves. In the Broadway musical *Hamilton*, the costume designer, Paul Tazewell, mixed eighteenth-century American

history with contemporary looks. In some scenes, the male actors wear military clothing—breeches, vests, and boots, but without the traditional adornments of military medals and big brass buttons and chains. But to add a contemporary motif, Tazewell left the actors' heads without historic adornment—no wigs or hats. Rather, the actors wear their own looks—a bun; a ski cap; long, wavy hair.

Taking In the Character

After initially studying the setting, plot, and other elements of the script, the costume designer zeroes in on the characters. Designer Walter Peterson gives this advice: "You have to know how the actor and the director see the character before you can dress them. Once you have an idea of who you're dressing, then you can begin to develop a look that can portray that character." Style and color give information about the character—personality, status, background, mood, and more. The questions designers ask will guide them toward appropriate and character-revealing costumes. Designers should always want to know, what is the character's:

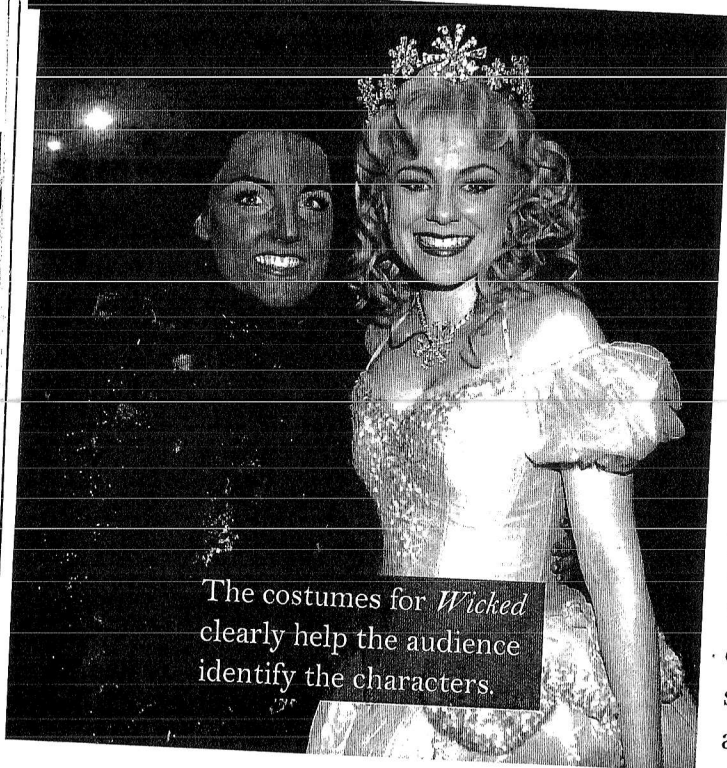
- Age?
- Social status?
- Financial situation?
- Occupation?
- Education?

- Nationality?
- Present home?
- Relationship status?
- Attitude toward others?
- Moral code?
- Personality type?
- Health?
- Mental state?

Designer Judith Bowden explains, "I take my cues from the characters and their surroundings as written

in the play, as well as from the stylistic choices of the production. In the same way that an actor builds upon the framework of traits and actions of his or her character in the story, I read what the character does and says for clues about what

The costumes for *Wicked* clearly help the audience identify the characters.



they might wear. I also need to think about how best to reflect a character's evolution through the development of the story."

Costumes add to the impact of the play in many ways. Walter Peterson explains, "Your work is the first thing the audience sees so you have to be able to tell them who that character is." Costumes give the audience information about the characters before they even speak a line. For example, consider what the costumes are revealing when the curtain opens on two sisters—one is dressed in bright red with a flouncy skirt, and the other sister is dressed in a formal business suit. Costumes reinforce the mood, style, and tone of the production. The amount of detail or style or color in a costume helps distinguish between major and minor characters. Costumes can change the look of the actor to express a character growing older or having a change of heart.

Getting the Go Ahead

After researching time and place, and taking in as much as they can about the plot, action, and characters, costume designers (as well as set designers) turn in their proposals. In the case of a costume designer, the proposals take the form of tear sheets, look books, renderings, and mood boards. Many costume designers today still prefer to do their sketches by hand, although more and more use computer technology to at least partially assist in their presentations. Once the director approves the costume designer's preliminary ideas and drawings, the costume designer can complete the final designs. These final designs are presented in full color,

showing the style, textures, accessories, and details of each costume. Costume designers also supply fabric swatches; color choices; trim details, such as buttons or lace; and accessories, such as hats, jewelry, wigs, and shoes. Before the final presentation is brought to the director, the costume designer estimates cost.

Costume Plot

An important responsibility of the costume designer is creating a **costume plot**, which is a list outlining which characters appear in which scene and what they are wearing. By tracking the needs of every character, the costume plot helps the wardrobe staff arrange the costumes backstage in correct order. It also helps reveal any problems with the costumes, such as having to do a quick costume change out of, or into, a complicated costume. The costume plot accounts for every costume and every accessory in the performance and whether it was **built**, borrowed, rented, purchased, or personally owned by the actor. Other notes include actors' measurements, ideas for costumes or accessories, laundering instructions, and assignments for staff and volunteers. Many also find it helpful to include cost. The costume plot is an extremely useful tool that not only keeps track of costume changes for actors and managers but also helps keep track of the budget.

Costumes Come to Life

Costume designer Judith Bowden says, "The main job of costume design in a production is to provide

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physical and emotional support to every actor through the clothing he or she will wear to enhance characterization. The costume must work onstage. This means it must provide comfort, flexibility, and durability. At the same time the design must provide strong visual support of the story, concept, and context of the play as a whole. It is my role to ensure that the costumes reflect the visual style of the production and help actors portray their characters on their journey through the play's action."

Turning a two-dimensional costume design into a living and breathing costume is a challenging, exciting, and sometimes costly task. For historical productions, costume designers recreate the past with detail. For fantasy and other surreal genres, costume designers use their ingenuity to create imaginary costumes. For modern and contemporary productions, many costumes can be bought ready-made. Here are some terms used to describe the different ways of acquiring costumes:

Build: Costumes that are made from scratch are "built," not "sewn." Creating a costume includes so many more procedures than just sewing. Building a costume is the most expensive option.

Rent: Costumes that were once built for other productions are often sold to costume rental businesses and then rented to other theater companies. Renting is less expensive than building, especially for detailed period costumes or uniforms. The downside of renting is that the costume may not be exactly right and that

when the production is over, the costume must be returned. Additionally, renters are liable for any damage done to the costume.

Buy: Costumes for contemporary and some modern plays can be store bought. For the most part, a shopper has the ability to choose color and style. Unlike renting, a store-bought costume can be altered and modified to suit the design and the actor's physique, and at the end of the production, the costume can be kept for future use.

Pull: A pulled costume is one that is taken from the theater company's stored wardrobe. The advantages are that there is no additional cost to using the costume and, for the most part, the costume can be modified. Unfortunately, smaller theater companies or high schools do not have much in the way of a stored wardrobe to pull from.

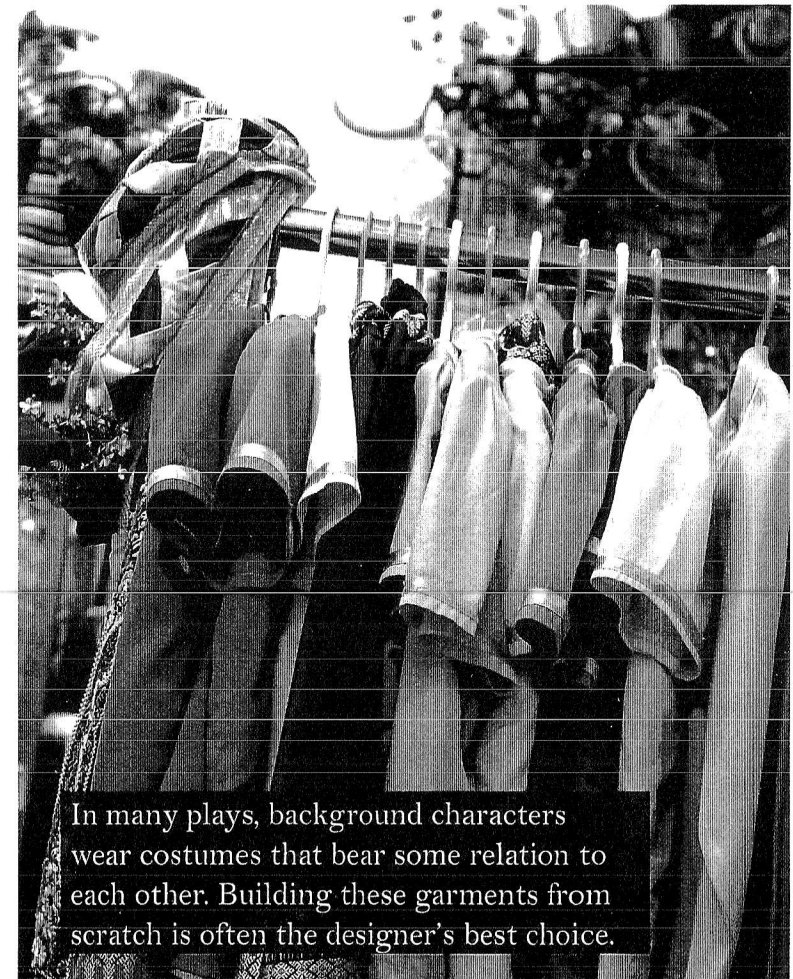
Borrow: Professional theater companies tend to avoid borrowing costumes, but for many smaller companies, it is commonplace. The advantage, of course, is that there is no cost to borrowing, but any damaged items could be expensive to replace.

Building Costumes

Building a costume takes many skilled people, or in the case of a small production with little staff, it takes a few people who have many talents.

Designing

It all starts with the costume designer, who, besides creating the look and style of each costume, also needs to choose colors, trim, fabric, and fabric treatment (such as dyeing). The people performing the tasks rely on one another. For instance, the designer and patternmaker design the pattern pieces. However, in order to gauge how each pattern piece will fit together, the designer must have already chosen the fabric because the weight



In many plays, background characters wear costumes that bear some relation to each other. Building these garments from scratch is often the designer's best choice.

and texture of the fabric will influence how the pattern is made. Meanwhile, the person who is in charge of finding and purchasing the fabric may not find the right fabric, or enough fabric, or may discover it is too costly. Under such circumstances, the designer and the patternmaker must literally go back to the drawing board.

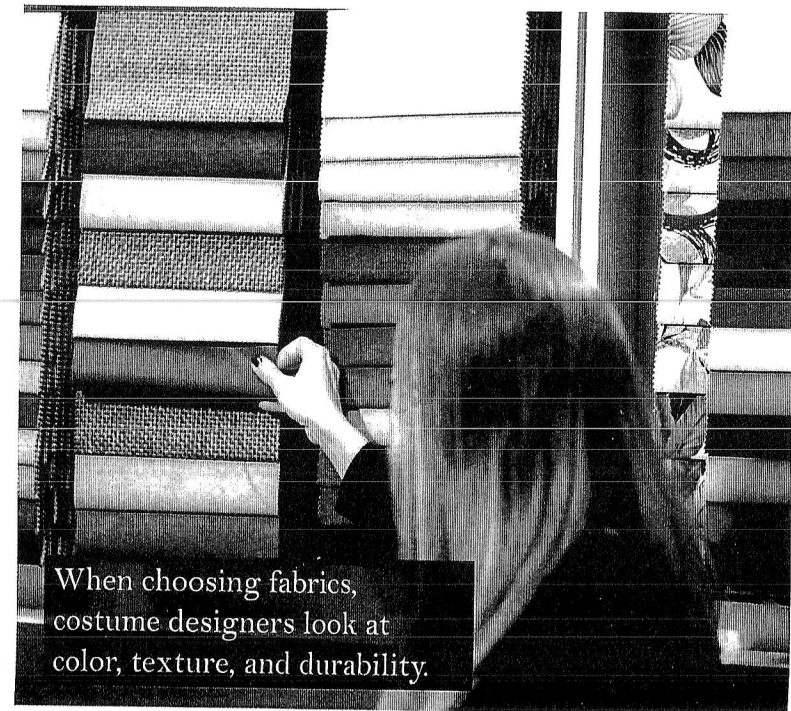
Measuring

In order to be precise and consistent with measurements, the same person should measure each actor. The best way to measure for a costume is to tie a ribbon around the person's waist and measure up, down, and outward from there. It is important to measure correctly as any alterations that have to be done later because of an incorrect measurement waste time and money. In the largest theater companies, more than fifty measurements are taken for each actor.

Fabrics

Costume designers and people who make fabric selections have to be very resourceful. Theater costume designers and crews rarely buy from general purpose retail fabric stores. Usually, conventional dressmaking fabrics are not bold enough to be used onstage. Colors and textures need to stand out onstage. Large cities, such as Los Angeles and New York, have garment districts where all manner of fabrics can be found. It is not uncommon for costume designers who do not live in a large city and have a fair-sized budget to go on a buying trip to their favorite garment district. High schools rarely have such large budgets, so the ingenuity

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of a good costume designer can create expensive-looking costumes without expensive fabrics. However, costumes should not be made out of cheap, flimsy materials, as they must withstand the rigors of movement on stage, cleaning, and handling, as well as survive to be reused. Upholstery fabrics, which are durable and often available in strong patterns, are popular. When the costume designer chooses the fabrics and the colors, and the costumes are completed, they may appear to be crude or too flashy when observed up close. Yet that shows the ability of a good costume designer to know how to make a costume bold enough to have an impact on people sitting in the back of the theater. In the same vein, a good costume designer will choose colors that seem garish in normal light but appear natural under stage lights.

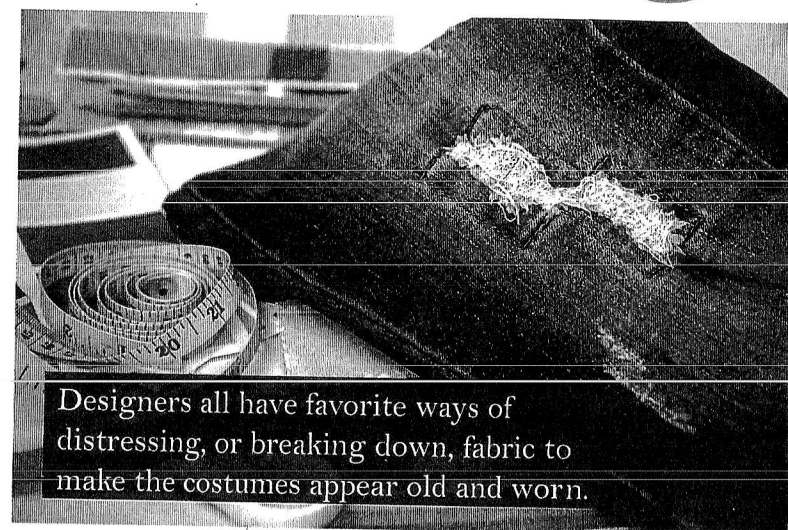


When choosing fabrics, costume designers look at color, texture, and durability.

Fabric Specialists

Many wonderful costumes have been created out of basic fabrics and materials. Fabric dyers, painters, and costume craft artisans are inventive, highly valued members of the costume crew. If the costume designer requires a certain pattern or color, fabric dyers and painters can reproduce it. Computer technology in the form of digital fabric printers has given costume designers exciting new options for fabric designs and selection. Although they are expensive to purchase and need careful upkeep, fabric printers can print elaborate and complicated designs on all types of fabric with ease. Costume designers can also send their original pattern designs to fabric-printing companies. A plus in this process is that many characters, especially background characters, can be linked by wearing the same print but in different garment and fabric types—for example, a pattern of swirls and dots can be printed onto wool socks, silk bowties, cotton shirts, and such. Manufacturing technology can produce fabrics that are embroidered, layered, or fused (such as sequins or metallic fibers fused to fabric). These fabrics were once costly and very labor intensive to create.

Painters and dyers treat fabrics to make the costumes look realistic and not unnaturally new. The process is called either distressing or **breaking down**. There are distressing/break-down kits for fabrics available, but many costume designers have their own favorite methods, including rubbing the fabric on cheese graters, belt sanders, nail files, concrete sidewalks, and applying spray paint. There are



Designers all have favorite ways of distressing, or breaking down, fabric to make the costumes appear old and worn.

numerous other techniques to break down fabric, such as smearing the fabric with shoe polish or soaking the fabric in tea or coffee to give it an old, yellowed look. One designer commented that his two favorite methods are burying the fabric in the dirt or running it over with a car. These are costuming tricks that will easily fit into a high school budget.

Finished costumes are also broken down. Shirt sleeves are soaked in water and then tied up with string overnight to create natural looking wrinkles. Pockets are filled with rocks to make them sag. In a production of the play *Annie*, the costume designer described her technique for costuming the orphan girls: "Every single piece of clothing was built, over-dyed, manipulated, torn, then re-sewn, patched, and embroidered to have the look of hand-me-downs."

Costume Craft Artisans

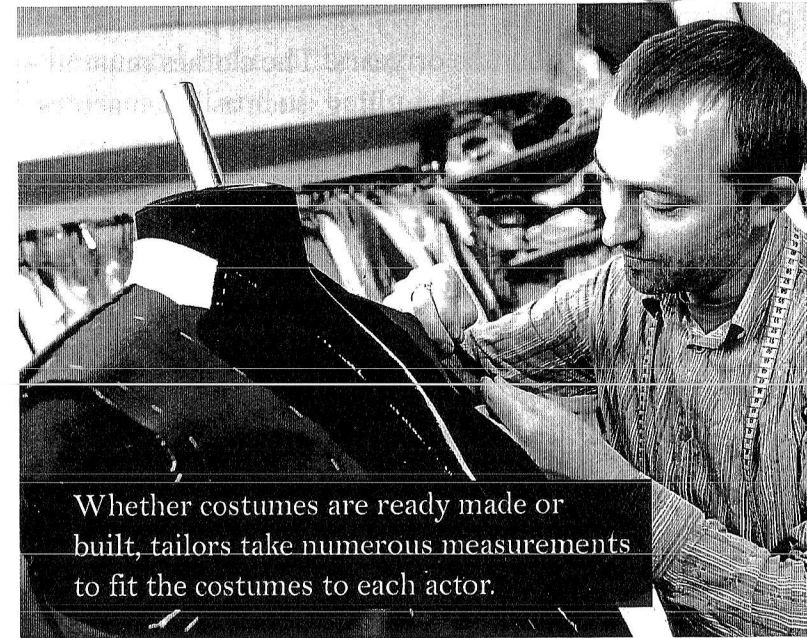
Many wonderful costumes and accessories have been created out of simple and unusual materials.

All variety of unexpected materials have been used to great success. Styrofoam is chief among them, as well as coffee filters, twist ties, netting, drinking straws, plastic bags, wood, papier-mâché, sponges, liquid latex, bric-a-brac, steel, and more. As it is, there is a growing movement to encourage theater costume designers and makers to use recycled materials whenever they can. Costume craft artisans, which also include milliners (hatmakers) and cobblers (shoemakers), make headpieces, handbags, hats, helmets, armor, jewelry, crowns, canes, parasols, fans, lace, swords, shoes, boots, and fantastical appendages such as masks, wings, horns, flippers, fins, and tails.

Draping, Patternmaking, and Stitching

"Draping is the most important part of costume design," believes costume designer Rose Mackey. Draping is a process of draping and pinning fabric onto a dressmaker's dummy padded to the contours of the actor who will wear the costume. The draping process begins by making all sections of the garment (e.g., front of skirt, sleeve, collar, etc.) out of inexpensive material—usually cotton muslin. Muslin comes in a variety of weights, and it is important to choose one that is similar to the costume's fabric. This allows the costume designer to see how the garment falls. Then the sections are draped, positioned, and pinned together. The costume designer will often change the structure of the costume numerous times during draping. After draping, the fabric is removed and used to create the final pattern.

Patterns have traditionally been made by hand, but



Whether costumes are ready made or built, tailors take numerous measurements to fit the costumes to each actor.

many people now use CAD (computer-aided design) software to design patterns. Patternmakers take careful notes, whether the patterns are made by hand or on a computer, so that they can easily redesign or remake the patterns. Some smaller theater groups base their patterns on store-bought paper patterns. Pattern cutters follow the pattern but make large seam allowances so that changes can be made easily when the garment is fit to the actor. The pattern then is **basted** and again fit to the actor (large theater companies have specialized fitters and tailors). Once the costume designer is satisfied, the costume is sewn by stitchers. Often the wide seam allowances are left in the costumes so that the costumes can be fitted to other actors later on.

Stitchers follow the exacting requirements of the patterns and are responsible for seeing to it that the garments are durable. School and community theater

plays have short runs, but very successful professional plays can run for months or years. The clothes must also stand up to frequent handling, such as when actors nearly rip off their costumes during costume changes. Costumes are subjected to washing or dry cleaning frequently; in some productions it is done every day. Most elaborately built and rented costumes are not easily or inexpensively cleaned, so many costume designers line expensive costumes with inner shields that can be removed and washed (actors do a lot of sweating under those bright lights). The inner shield adds to the costume's durability. Rarely will a costume designer call for a garment to fasten with zippers or buttons as it is too easy for an actor to fumble with them during a costume change. Some costume designers choose snaps or Velcro, although Velcro is rough and can damage the fabric. Many costume designers opt for magnets to hold the costumes together. After stitchers have finished the construction, the costume is passed along to the costume crafters to provide embellishments.

Shopping for Ready-Made Costumes

Shopping is not all fun and games; it can be very exhausting as well as challenging. Large companies have shoppers or costume design assistants who spend an enormous amount of time in department stores, boutiques, thrift stores, costume shops, craft stores, and even private garage sales. These can be great places for high school designers to come up with inexpensive garments. The challenge is finding

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clothes that both coordinate with the costume design scheme and come in the right size. Most ready-made costumes will end up being embellished, accessorized, and altered to suit the costume design. Shoppers need to be good record keepers of their activities—they record receipts and price estimates, carry along fabric swatches, costume plots, mood boards, sketches, actors' measurements, and photographs or drawings of set designs. They take copious notes as well as photographs. Shoppers and costume designers look for more than garments: they look for thread, trim, and notions (such as Velcro or snaps), as well as shoes, hats, belts, cufflinks, jewelry, and more. Many costume designers will spot and purchase an intriguing garment or collection of garments or accessories that may be useful in a future production. "A costume designer is a bit of a hoarder," says Sandy Bonds, professor of costume design at the University of Oregon, "an organized hoarder."

Actors Have Their Say

For many reasons, there must be cooperation between actors, costume designers, and the costume crew.

Although the costume designer determines the look and style of the costume, the actor must feel comfortable wearing it. Some costume designers say that when they have actors first try on a costume, many of the actors will not look at themselves in the mirror but rather walk, sit, dance, and bend without looking, just to feel if the costume fits right. In productions with many actors and many costume changes, costume designers have their hands full

trying to be sure garments fit well while satisfying the design scheme.

Costume designers involve the actors with as much decision-making as possible and should ask in advance if actors have any allergies to specific fabrics or materials, such as latex or lamb's wool. On occasion, actors may disagree with the costume's design, and compromises have to be reached. Sometimes actors dislike their costumes and feel that they do not represent the character they are trying to develop. This can be a tricky situation and difficult to handle. For example, an actor may say that his or her character would not wear a garment that is cut as short as the design calls for, or the actor might feel personally uncomfortable with the length. Costume designers would appreciate that kind of feedback as they have a responsibility to the production to enhance the character and support the actor. When an actor tries on a costume for the first time, costume designer Kerry Hulson says, "It's the first time we see the shape in three dimensions and on the actual bodies—the bodies determine a lot about how the clothes are cut in the end. It's not just about period accuracy, it's much more about how it looks on the actor ... We also have a lot of discussions with the actors during fittings. They have a real sense of how they wear the clothes and the costumes really impact their performances, how they stand, how they move, etc."

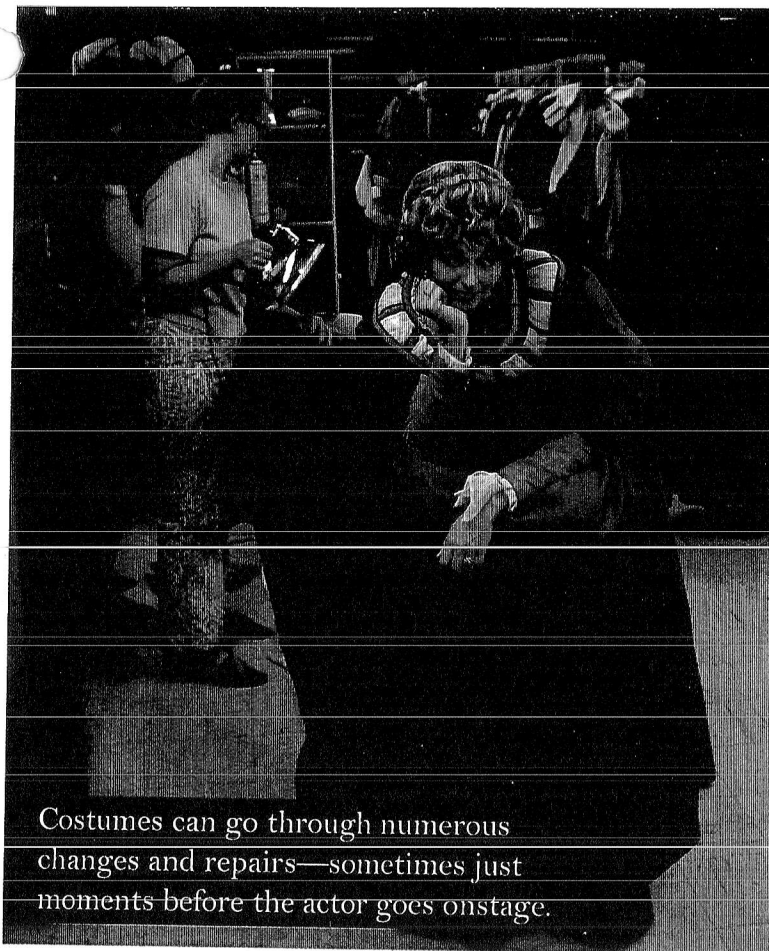
Costume designers stay in contact with the actors from the very beginning to try to avoid any snafus later in the costuming process. They attend rehearsals to see how the actors move about the stage. Clothing affected people's posture during the period in which

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it was worn; designers need to see if costumes force actors to move or sit in a way that is not authentic. They take note of which scenes the actor is called upon to perform physical actions such as kicking, jumping, pushing, dragging, or sword fighting. They also pay attention during costume changes. If there are rapid costume changes, the costume designer needs to be sure the costumes are easy to get in and out of. Sometimes the solution is to layer the costumes, so the next costume is worn underneath the first costume. Another method for a quick change is to design the costume so the actor can walk into it arms first and be fastened in the back, by a wardrobe assistant or another cast member, rather than having the actor put the costume on over his or her head. Costume designers do not produce their final costumes until the costumes fit the actor's physique and the actor feels comfortable.

The Fit

All costumes, whether store bought or built, are fit on the actor, at least two or three times. During fittings, the costume designer, fitter, or tailor will take several measurements and photographs. Costume designers, tailors, fitters, and stitchers must expect to be flexible in making changes and alterations. As the production moves forward, both director and costume designer will make adjustments to the costumes' design and style. Changes can be made because of a last-minute design change, a change in the script, or to refit the actor. Sometimes the actor will have gained or lost weight, or found through performing in rehearsals



Costumes can go through numerous changes and repairs—sometimes just moments before the actor goes onstage.

that the costume does not fit right. In any of these cases, the fitter or tailor will measure, take in or let out seams, shorten, lengthen, cut, stitch, glue, or patch. The person doing the fitting should never be without a kit carrying as many tools and supplies as might be needed, including:

- Needles (different sizes)
- Thread (including embroidery thread)
- Safety pins
- Fabric glue

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- A sharpie, tailor's chalk, or dressmaker's pencil
 - Measuring tapes
 - Variety of scissors
 - Toupee tape (used to glue on hairpieces and mustaches)
 - Camera

Rehearsal Reports

After rehearsals, the director may provide each department with a daily rehearsal report. The report details any changes made in the script that affect the department. The costume designer may get a report requesting additional costumes, accessories, or modifications. A rehearsal report could include such items as:

- Script change in movement (e.g., a character in a hoop skirt will now fall to the floor)
- New costume (e.g., replace winter hat with ear muffs)
- Accommodate items that are handled and stored (e.g., a cook uses a wooden spoon, so the cook's apron needs a large front pocket)
- Cuts or additions of accessories or props
- Requests to further distress a garment (e.g., a character gets bloodied)

Hair and Makeup

In many productions, the costume designer oversees makeup and hair. Makeup and hair designers collaborate with the costume designer to be consistent with the look and feel of the rest of the production. Designers review how each character's personality or age changes over the course of the play. The right hair and makeup also sends out visual cues to the audience about changes in the characters' circumstances, such as success, failure, wealth, poverty, happiness, or loss. Hair and makeup create the characters' attributes—beautiful or ugly, lively or dull, earnest or deceitful, healthy or sick, realistic or otherworldly.

The costume designer conceives the makeup design. Traditionally, professional stage actors take responsibility for their own makeup unless they have a character with a complicated makeup design, such as a werewolf. Nonprofessional actors, such as those in high school, may need more help. In theater, makeup has three purposes: to highlight the actor's features and expressions; to help the actor create a character; and for corrective purposes. Under the glare of lights, the actors' faces become washed out. In order to be visible to a large audience in a big theater, actors will apply their makeup heavily. In smaller venues, the actors' makeup will be more natural in appearance. All stage actors wear at least some makeup, generally a base color, powder, eyeliner, lipstick, and rouge. Makeup is also used to create a character. It can be used to portray age or disposition, such as funny, mean spirited, or larger than life. In creating characters

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from historical periods or from different countries, the costume designer looks at how different people regarded beauty. For example, a beautiful person in a different time or place could be one to have thin eyebrows, heavily made-up eyes, a heart-shaped mouth, or high cheekbones. Creating a character is not just about beauty; many characters require special effects to achieve their look, such as making a pointed chin out of plastic putty for the Wicked Witch of the West in *The Wizard of Oz* or creating disfigurements such as bruises, scars, or warts. Corrective makeup is makeup applied to make an actor look his or her very best. Corrective makeup uses special makeup formulas to achieve distinctive shadowing and highlighting of the actor's face. The costume designer, or sometimes the makeup designer under the direction of the costume designer, will draft a makeup plot. The makeup plot is a guide for each actor on how to apply his or her makeup and what it should look like. The makeup plot also juxtaposes each actor to one another to see how they relate. A minor character should not wear makeup that upstages a major character.

The costume designer also creates the hair designs. Most theater companies will employ a hair stylist whom the costume director will oversee. The costume director designs or requests beards, moustaches, wigs, and hairpieces, as well as deciding how natural hair will be worn. The designer chooses the color and the arrangement of the hair and decides when and if a hairstyle should be changed during the course of the play to reflect a change in the character.

The Production Phase

Budgets and the size of the productions vary, so the responsibilities of the costume designer during the production phase of a play also vary. In some instances, the costume designer is very hands-on during the production; other times, the work is delegated to others. Regardless of whether the costume designer is backstage helping the cast apply makeup or is standing in the wings taking notes, the costume designer is ultimately responsible for last minute costume preparations, costume handling, wardrobe organization, and arranging for someone to assist actors and oversee hair and makeup.

The phrase "**load-in**" is used to describe the day that all sets, lighting, sound equipment, costumes, and props are brought into the theater. It usually takes place within a week of opening night. All cast and staff are required for load-in. Each department has a scheduled time to arrive, and even with a schedule, it is an exceedingly hectic day. The costume department's load-in includes all costumes, garment racks, changing booths, props, and hair and makeup supplies. The costume designer discusses with the wardrobe staff how each costume should be handled and where each item should be stored. The wardrobe staff is instructed on how to put the garments on, as well as how to clean and launder them. The costume designer's costume plot is used as a check-in for inventory.

The week leading up to the opening performance is very fast paced, and a successful theater troupe handles the frenzied atmosphere with good organization. During the production "build/rehearsal" period, the

costume designer has many obligations. The costume designer attends all the production meetings held by the director and the rest of the company. There are many rehearsals scheduled prior to the opening, and although the costume designer does not need to attend all, he or she must attend all **dress rehearsals** (that is, when the cast rehearses in costume, hair, and makeup) and should attend as many tech rehearsals as possible. For the costume designer, the tech rehearsals' focus is how lighting affects the costumes. Before the first dress rehearsal begins, most costume designers hold a **dress parade**, where, without the distraction of rehearsals, the actors parade on stage wearing their costumes. This allows the director, and the costume and wardrobe staff to get the full effect of the costumes, how they relate to the play, and how the group of actors will look together.

Postproduction

Strike is the last night of the performance, when the entire cast and crew tear down the set, pack the wardrobe, and clean up backstage. The costume designer's responsibility is to prepare the wardrobe for cleaning and storage and to separate out and pack rented costumes in their original bags for return as soon as possible. Props, makeup, and hair accessories should be sorted and packed up, and the clothing racks, dressing booths, and makeup and hairstyling tables and mirrors are packed and put on the theater's loading dock or area. It is a very hectic time, and safety is often an issue. But once the task is completed, everyone can head for the cast party.