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The Royal Family costume design

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THE ROYAL FAMILY COSTUME DESIGN

A Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts

in

The Department of Theatre

by
Katherine Johnson
B.S., University of Louisiana at Lafayette, 2007
May 2010

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis project to my family, and friends—in particular to my Mom and Dad, who have always supported me with unwavering belief in the quest to reach my goals.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all of those who worked so hard to make *The Royal Family* a great success. The show would not have been the same if it were not for the dedication and talent of everyone involved.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to all of my professors for believing in me and pushing me to reach my goals.

All of the photographs shown within this document are the work of either the author or Eddy Perez.

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Abstract

It is my intention through this thesis to demonstrate the journey taken for the costume design process of *The Royal Family* written by George S. Kauffman, A Swine Palace Production, presented in celebration of the reopening of the Claude L. Shaver Theatre located in the Music and Dramatic Arts building on the campus of Louisiana State University. In turn, establishing that the abundance of practical experience as well as the technical and design courses undergone throughout my graduate career here at Louisiana State University, have supplied me with the knowledge and skills required in the professional field of Costume Design.

Introduction

It is my intention through this thesis to demonstrate the journey taken for the costume design process of *The Royal Family* written by George S. Kauffman.

To be a costume designer in a theatrical production such as *The Royal Family* is to work collaboratively with the director and the rest of the design team to effectively tell the story. Throughout my graduate career at Louisiana State University, I have taken courses that have shown me how to make discoveries, share and meld ideas with the design team, and portray those ideas in the physical form of costuming. In turn, I was given this design opportunity to display what I have learned. This thesis will seek to show how I approached the project, what was successful, what I would do differently and, what I learned.

Beginning with a step-by-step explanation of the over all process, I will explore what is known as the pre-production stage revealing all of what transpired leading up to the production while offering observations of the learning occurred. I will then discuss the design process for each character relative to the overall process, as well as challenges faced through the production phase. A critical analysis on the success of the design will be offered in conclusion.

Chapter 1: Development and the Design Process

Upon receiving the design assignment of *The Royal Family* I began by doing general research. Without having a copy the script yet, and anxious to get started, I looked into the background of the play. I rather quickly discovered that the play came out in the 1920's and was a loosely based parody of the first famous stage family, the Barrymores.

Initial Design Meeting

Also eager to get started was the director, John Dennis. Soon after the design team was established, and before anyone had a script, the director called our first design meeting. He spoke back and forth between both artistic and technical aspects of the show. He confirmed the setting to be in the Fall of 1927 in New York City. He explained the play to be about a family of actors, describing the characters as being artists, therefore instinctually having a high reaction to everyday situations. He also spoke to the design team about keeping it very real, despite the heightened sense of emotion coming from the characters. He painted a lively picture of how he envisioned our production of *The Royal Family*. The director explained that although the play takes place in an apartment, giving a peek at the offstage life of these actors, he felt as if these characters turn any place into a theatre. It is their nature to always be performing. He spoke about how this show was going to be very active in that there would be lots of physicality. At the mention of a tap number at the end of the show, the team giggled, thinking that he could not be serious—he was. The director, emphasizing his concept, ended with expressing the desire to have live animals—hoping for a monkey and a real baby—on stage for the final scene.

In an interview the director stated, “It’s called *The Royal Family* because the play is about the Barrymore family—it deals with a family at the heart of the theatre. One of the things that made me excited about *The Royal Family* is that it’s a perfect play for the new Shaver theatre,” (Dennis). This show was chosen by the administration and the director for the re-opening of the Shaver theatre in the Music and Dramatic Arts (M&DA) building on the LSU campus. The building had been closed to academia for four and a half years in order for the expansion and restoration of the building’s original art deco form to be completed. Not personally having ties to the M&DA building before the renovations, I could not fully grasp the significance of the reopening of the building that was felt by many in the college and the community of patrons. I could however, sense the anticipation, and I had been given the opportunity to be a part of it. Knowing that the renovations of the Shaver in its Art Deco style held such meaning to the show we wanted to create, the first thing I did was go into the space at first chance to take pictures. I took photographs of everything from the elaborately painted proscenium to the carpet that ran down the isles. I also photographed the architectural restorations throughout the inside and outside of the building; it was after all the reopening of the building, not just the Shaver Theatre. Some of the photos can be seen in figures 1-4 proved to be great inspiration throughout the design process.



Figure 1 Renovated Shaver Theatre

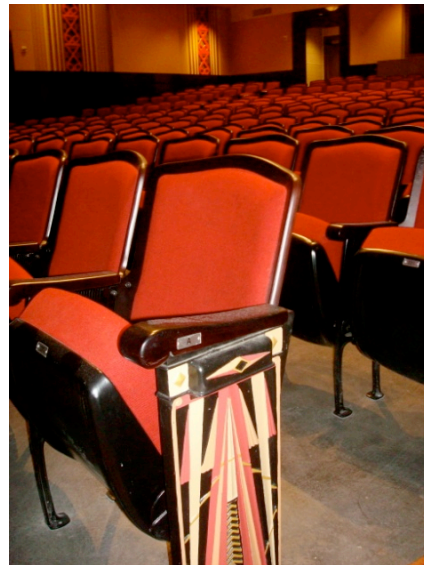


Figure 2 Seating Bank of the Shaver Theatre

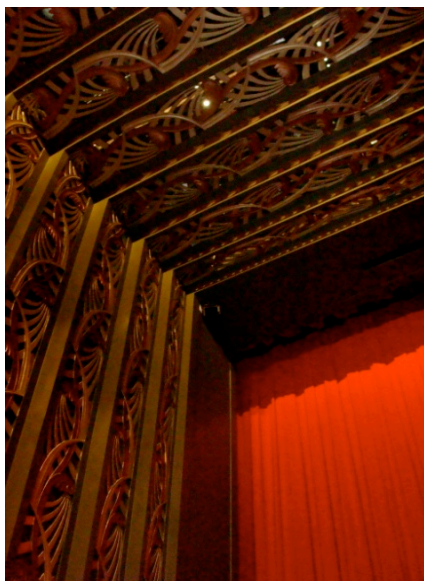


Figure 3 Art Deco Plasterwork of the Proscenium



Figure 4 Detail of Hand-Painted Plasterwork

Read the Script

After the initial design meeting and some preliminary research, I had a fairly solid feel for the kind of show we were looking to create. It was time I turned to the script to discover the story. As stated in *The Costume Designer's Handbook*, "It is useful to consider designing for the theatre as an accumulation of discoveries which begins when the designer reads the play..." (Ingham, Covey 32). Through my studies, I have learned that the initial read through of a script should be done simply for pleasure. I jotted down general thoughts during this read through, but saved specific note taking and intense thought about particular costume pieces for later in the process. According to Anderson's *Costume Design*, this is a time for the designer to "discover the aesthetic needs and overall mood, which may bring to mind colors, textures, fabrics, silhouette, and detail treatment," (44.)

After reading *The Royal Family* for the first time, my impression was that this play was about a family of actors who never go offstage. Each of the characters has a story to tell. As they go about telling their stories in dramatic fashion—the only way they know how—they often become the only ones who can hear themselves speak. One of the first things I noticed about the script was that there was just as much, if not more, stage direction than there was text, telling me that this was going to be a very active show.

As I continued the process of what I like to call "meeting the script," I continued to make discoveries about the themes of the story. I came around to the idea that a stereotypical theme in the way that the characters looked would be something that I would like to explore while designing the costumes for these characters. This is a story about "Theater People." Although a comedy, it is clear in the script that their emotions are real. We laugh because they are so dramatic, and to them it is the only way of being. Their situations, no matter how big or small are very real to each of these characters. I felt that having them costumed in a way that placed them in the stereotypical roles that they play would aid in the telling of the individual characters' stories as the script uses strong emotional dialogue ultimately forcing the audience to look past their outer shell and hear their story, even when they can't seem to hear each other.

Script Analysis

Continuing with the script, and shifting my focus to analyzing, I turned to Ingham's "Outline for Playscript Analysis," in her book *From Page to Stage* (55-57). It is at first a fact-finding mission, and then an observing of how these facts work with each other within the entirety of the play (Ingham, Covey 10-16). After I am aware of the basic facts, I look for text within the script that clue me into the deeper meaning of the play.

The first stage for me is all about the five "W's" taught to us all in grade school, "Who, What, When, Where, and Why." "This analysis is part of the designer's pre-conference preparation, and the primary aim of the analysis is to help designers be more active collaborators," (Ingham, Covey 11).

"Who are they?" This question not only refers to who each character is as an individual, but also who they are in relation to one another. The chart below lists the characters in the play. Family members are in reference to their relation to Fanny.

The Characters of the Play

Fanny Cavendish	Grandmother
Julie Cavendish	Fanny's Daughter
Anthony Cavendish	Fanny's Son
Gwen	Julie's Daughter / Fanny's Grand-Daughter
Howard Dean	Fanny's Brother
Kitty Dean	Fanny's sister in-law / Howard's wife
Oscar Wolfe	Family Manager
Perry Stewart	Gwen's love interest
Gilbert Marshall	Julie's love interest
Della	Head Maid
Jo	Head Butler
Miss Peake	Family Nanny
Gunga	Native Tony brings home from India
Bellhops/ Paparazzi	Cavendish bellhops
Waif	Servant
Tun-Tun	Servant
Fingers	Cavendish Pianist
Emile	Chef
Tease	Chef's assistant

The next question to answer is "Where are they?" As previously discussed in the initial design meeting, I knew that this show takes place in New York at Fanny Cavendish's home. Through later discussion with the design team, we decided that Fanny's home would be an upstairs apartment.

"When are they?" Also discussed in the initial meeting, the first two Acts would take place in the Fall of 1927 and the third Act a year later.

The next thing to discover about the script was "What happens in the play?" The play opens with servants frantically answering telephones, accepting deliveries and talking over each other, setting a very busy tone for the show. As each character enters the scene, we learn more about their ties to the family. It is soon apparent that this is a very close-knit family who puts great expectations on themselves and their family members to live up to the Cavendish name.

Through the occurrences in this first Act, it is discovered that Gwen believes that she must choose between her blossoming stage career and getting married to the young Perry Stewart. Tony arrives unexpectedly from Hollywood. Howard is looking to cast what he believes will be his first hit. Julie has gotten a letter from a former lover of hers, Gil Marshall, stating that he is in town and would like to see her. Gwen and Julie are soon to begin rehearsals for a play in which they will appear on stage together for the first time. A reading with the author throws a kink in Gwen's plans to meet Perry's mother, causing an argument between the young lovers. When the argument causes Perry to walk out on Gwen, she decides that she is through with the stage. Act I ends in

dramatic fashion as a family dispute ensues when Gwen proclaims that she is done with the stage forever and plans to marry Perry instead.

Act II begins with Tony reciting lines from a fight scene of a play. He soon settles down and reveals to his mother, Fanny, the reason behind his unexpected visit. He explains that he is laying low at her apartment in order to avoid the process server looking to serve him with a breach of promise suit. He plans to set sail for Europe and is trusting that Julie is able to come through in getting a passport for him.

Also expecting something from Julie, Howard comes to ask Julie to cast Kitty in her play in order to keep Kitty from going after the role in his play. Having just arrived home from her matinee performance, and more concerned about her daughter, Julie agrees to help Howard and calls Gwen down to talk. Fanny joins this discussion, which leads to an insightful conversation between the three generations of women, revealing more about their character. Already reminiscing on the past because of the impending arrival of her former lover, Julie begins to reflect on her own life decisions.

The conversation is ended abruptly when Fanny has a fainting spell, a sign of her poor health. Gil then arrives for the first time and catches Julie off guard as she is attempting to meet the demands of her family. Gil's arrival comes as a breath of fresh air for Julie and after their initial greeting he saves the day again. When Tony hears from Julie that she was unable to obtain a passport for him, Gil is able to call in a favor and get Tony an emergency passport.

With his passport in order Tony hurriedly gets ready and leaves to catch his boat. As Tony leaves Kitty arrives to confront Julie about offering her the part. Perry then arrives to check on Gwen. With all of the ruckus, reflecting on past decisions, and seeing Gil again, Julie ends Act II with a renunciation scene of her own. She says that she will no longer let the stage ruin her life, she quit, and she was going to marry Gil Marshall. Just as she proclaims in dramatic fashion that she will never step foot on a stage again, Jo reminds her of the time, and she runs out the door as not to be late for her evening performance.

Act III opens again in Fanny's home, a year has passed since the end of Act II. The family is coming over for a party. Gwen and Perry have married and we learn that they have a new baby. We also learn that Julie is engaged to Gil. Fanny is preparing to go on tour, but through a conversation between Julie and Oscar, the family manager, we learn that Fanny is too ill to travel. Tony returns from his trip to Europe with floor plans of a small theatre in Germany. We discover he has been to India because he brings home with him a native named Gunga. Howard and Kitty Dean arrive and announce their planned involvement in Vaudeville. Gwen excitedly announces that she has been offered a part by the theatre guild and even drops hints about a future stage career.

As the family continues to catch up, Act III comes to a close as the family walks in to find that Fanny has taken her final curtain call as she lies peacefully in her chair.

After becoming familiar with the script, the director requested that I watch the movie, *The Royal Family* that was made in the 1970's. He felt the portrayal of the characters in the movie were dead on and wanted me to get a feel for the direction he was going. Although I was able to get on the same page with him character wise fairly quickly, by watching the movie, I believe more harm than good resulted. After watching

the movie, it became difficult to separate visually what I had seen in the movie and what I wanted to see on stage. It was even a challenge to connect the face of our actors to characters because a connection had already been made to the faces of the actors who played in the movie.

Faced with this visual block I decided to get photographs of all of the actors. I then assigned a manila folder to each actor, which contained their photograph next to their name and character. I hung them all up where I could see them and read the script again. Beginning to take notes on costume references I read the script a third time, eventually overcoming the visual stain left by the movie. I discovered that by overcoming the facial recognition of the movie and its actors I was able separate costume and color scheme more easily.

Research

In preparation for the next part of the process, creating a color palette, I began to immerse myself into the 1920's. I went into this research stage with the idea to simply put me into the world of the 1920's. As an inspirational technique, I would listen to popular jazz music of the time. I continued the broad historical research on the time period. I wanted to know about the culture, economics, and fashion, and how they affected each other. After having become very familiar with the script, and in the research mode, I naturally began individual character research simultaneously as I furthered the historical research. The manila envelopes with the actors' pictures once again proved themselves to be useful as I place them in an expandable file folder and filed away character research pictures as I came across them. From this point on, that file folder rarely left my side.

Color Palette

In response to the script, initial discussions with the design team, and the historical research, my next natural step was to create a color palette. The color palette is an important reference tool not only for the designer in the designing stage, but is often used as a communication tool throughout the process. In preparation for my first one on one meeting with the director in the coming days, it was my intention to create a general color palette and use it as a communication device in that initial meeting. I assembled a collage of fabric swatches, paint chips, as well as photocopies of artwork. As Ingham states, "A color layout separate from the costume sketches, shown to the director in the early stages of the work, can provoke especially good conversation about the play," (77).

Action Chart

Also in preparation for my meeting with the director, I turned back to the script to put together what Ingham describes as an "action chart," which shows, at a glance, each scene and its basic action and which characters appear in those scenes (33). From the action chart I was then able to come up with a rough costume count, which was between 41 and 45 costumes for the entire show. The initial action chart eventually led to a more detailed one, which listed information about when a character enters and exits the scene. This information gives a good idea as to where the quick changes, if any, are going to be.

Taking individual character research further, I collected both emotional research that I felt spoke to the character as well as historical research of what a character might actually wear. All of which will be discussed in the following chapters, which focuses on the design process for each individual character.

Meetings with the Director Begin

With all of the information gathered thus far, I went into my first one on one design meeting with the director. Taking a look at all of the information I had gathered, we discussed general, as well as specific ideas for characters. The color palette opened the door to several conversations about the play. I learned that the director had already been envisioning certain characters in specific colors. Having the color palette there also aided the conversation in that he was able to point different colors as he was talking about characters. He was also able to see different options in front of him, which often would sway his preconceived vision, giving me a bit more freedom in color choice down the road. It was as if I were offering my opinion without saying a word.

I had a list of specific questions that he was able to answer for me. For example, the cast list showed a list of “As Cast” actors. Recognizing that there were quite a few more actors cast than roles in the script, I questioned who these characters were. He informed me that he was adding characters to play a menagerie of servants. This, as well as specific character ideas will also be discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

Sketching Process Begins

Feeling confident about the collaboration with the director, I began the sketching process. Through preliminary sketches and research collages, I was developing a vivid image for the characters as a whole, as well as for certain moments in the play. This led the costume plot to evolve, now prescribing a specific look for a specific scene.

Throughout the design process it was important to keep in mind my resources. In this show, the costumes would ultimately come from a combination of built items, items found in stock and altered as necessary, rented or borrowed items, and bought items. With a more detailed costume plot, I was preparing to explore one of these resources, the LSU costume stock.

Costume Stock

At this point in the process I was asked to help with setting up the new costume shop in the renovated M&DA building in preparation to begin the Fall semester. I willingly accepted, feeling that it would be a good opportunity for me to become adjusted to the new space. In doing so I was able to spend a little time in stock reorganizing and ultimately becoming reacquainted with the resources available to me. Although I had spent countless hours in the LSU costume stock since beginning my program in 2007, this experience was helpful in terms of sizing up what was available while having this particular show in mind. I also quickly discovered, along with the challenge of operating in an unfamiliar space, that the process of pulling options from stock was going to prove itself to be more difficult than it once was. Due to the lack of space in the M&DA building, stock had to retain its residence on the fourth floor of Hatcher Hall, across campus from the costume shop. This would mean that we no longer

had the luxury to quickly access stock for any given reason, therefore each trip to stock would need to be well planned.

This was about the time in the design process where I began to run into challenges dealing with communication due to the fact that the University was on Summer break. One of these challenges came about when preparing, what is known in the business as, the “Bible” for the show. A show bible is a binder containing all of the paperwork dealing with the show. As I began to assemble the bible, I realized that we were missing measurements for quite a few of the actors. More importantly, I did not have measurements for two of the leads in the show. I notified the Stage Manager of the missing information to see about getting the actors in for measurements. She replied and said that because the two leads were equity actors that we would not be able to get their measurements until they arrived for the first day of rehearsal. Waiting until then to pull from stock would have been too late. I had pictures of them so I used my best judgment, and on my first trip to stock I pulled costumes that spoke to the character while estimating the size.

With the first set of preliminary sketches in hand, I met with the director once again. One of the more pressing questions I had for my director was who of the “As Cast” actors was playing what kind of servant. It was also unclear who was playing the bellboys and paparazzi. He had not quite figured that out yet, but I needed to know so that I could determine if we had things in stock or if they would need to be bought—especially since several of the actors varied in size greatly. The director and I had a discussion and came to a decision, which will be discussed in a later chapter.

As the director and I went through the sketches, we discussed everything from color to what is happening in particular scenes. With all of my paper work on hand I was able to explain why I designed them the way I did whether it was due to a quick change or co-ordinance of color with another character on stage at the same time. Some designs were approved while notes were taken on others about things we liked and things that needed to be revised, and will be discussed in the chapters to come.

I returned to the script, research, and drawing board. Then, with my ever-growing expandable file folder, I was once again in his office for our third meeting. Playing out much like the second meeting, I was at a point with the designs where I was able to estimate how many pieces were going to be built for the show.

Due to departmental budget cuts the costume shop would ultimately be one less skilled professional beginning that Fall. The typical three positions in which we were accustomed to operating with had been combined into two. Because it was still undetermined at that point who would be coming in to fill the second position, I felt these circumstances presented a challenge when estimating the number of pieces the shop would be able to build. Six was the number of pieces I settled on. I looked mainly to the designs to determine the number simply because that was the most concrete information I had at that time. I then took into consideration the amount of time we would have to build the show and made a rough estimate on about how long it would take to build each item up for consideration. I communicated this information to my advisor; she felt that six may be a heavy load, but it was a good starting point and we would discuss it in further detail when we all returned to the shop to begin the semester.

As I returned to the drawing board once more after the director and I had met for the third time I laid out the notes and progression of the designs from the first three meetings. I had noticed inconsistencies in some of the details discussed for certain characters. Although they seemed minor at the time, these inconsistencies grew with each meeting we had. By the end of the fourth meeting I knew I had to come up with some other way for the director to maintain a consistent and clear visual of the show we were creating.

I have learned that developing and maintaining clear communication with fellow members of the design team, in particular the director, will ultimately have an effect on the success of the end product. Not knowing the director personally going into this process, but being aware of the fact that every individual has a communication style unique to himself or herself, I felt I was at a point where I was being able to understand his personal way of communicating. I was confident in my designs and to be certain that he was seeing and not perceiving, I needed to shift focus from the actual designs to the way I communicated with the director.

For our fifth meeting, I requested that he come to the costume shop rather than me going to his office. By doing this, I had a chance to set up and spread everything out prior to his arrival. I also made photocopies of the renderings previously approved as well as the ones he would be seeing for the first time. If they were approved, I gave them to him. I did this from that point on. If something changed on a rendering he had, I switched it out with an updated version. As actors came in for fittings over the following weeks, I took photographs of them and put them on index cards labeling them with the character, Act and scene number. This allowed me to discuss the show with him and he could see how they would live together on stage for each scene.

Back in the Shop

By the sixth meeting, all of the designs were approved and finalized. We were back in the costume shop for the beginning of the semester three weeks before students arrived to give us a little time to get started on the show without the hustle and bustle of classes. In preparation to go fabric shopping, I sat down with my advisor to discuss in more detail which pieces would be built. After that was determined I went through the fabric stock in the shop to see if there was anything we could use. I then cut swatches of fabric that I had found and took pictures of anything I pulled from stock that I might need to match.

With a list of fabric we needed, it was time to source the fabric for the items we planned to build. Because of the limited sources of fabric supply in this area, we were off to Houston to source fabric from High Fashion Fabrics. It is the closest fabric supply store with a decent selection of fabric. We were able to find all of the fabrics we needed in a single one-day trip. Although eight hours driving and four hours shopping was intensely mind numbing, I was pleased with all of the selections I had made.

The first thing I did when we returned to the costume shop was cut swatches of all the fabrics purchased and give them to the lighting and set designers. By having swatches of the actual fabric they would be able to make confident decisions about color quickly, where as they may not be able to do if they only had the image of my color

palette board in their heads. In order maintain an open communication with the director, I attached fabric swatches to his set of renderings.

In these first weeks of being back in the shop I contacted Universities in the surrounding states in which we had open borrowing agreements with to see if they had anything in their costume stock that we would be able to use in the show. Running into the problem that most schools had not yet begun the semester, I was met with the general response that their stock was not officially open until the semester got underway. I did all that I could do and sent them a detailed list of items we were looking for, as well as the renderings. Meanwhile, I was able to make a trip to the costume stock of Baton Rouge Little Theatre, a local community theatre. Although none of the items ultimately made it into the show, I felt that it was a good use of my resources. Once the semesters got underway, I received word from the Universities I had contacted. Mississippi State University was the only one who had something that we may be able to use and that was their tuxedos. I sent them a list of sizes we were in need of and they boxed up what they had and sent them to us.

With the beginning of rehearsals one week before classes began, fittings were fully underway. I had begun fittings with pieces I had pulled from stock, taking notes for alterations. I had also begun to do some shopping at local stores in the area. I shopped mainly for things such as shoes, hats, and jewelry. I then met with the makeup designer for the show, We first talked about the overall look of the show. We then discussed the individual characters, going through my renderings as well as the research. We talked about keeping the makeup very real and true to the fashions in makeup of the time period. We established the main challenge would be for the male actor cast to play the female role of Della.

Meanwhile, the new costume shop manager, the head cutter/drafter for the show, had arrived. While settling in from her move and preparing for the classes she was scheduled to teach that semester, she started on the mock up pieces to be built.

Start of Classes

The start date for classes brought about its own set of challenges. With students wandering in and out of the shop, tours of the new building occurring, and all the things that go along with the start of a new school year, the momentum we had established came to a crawl almost instantaneously. With three and a half weeks until *The Royal Family* opened, we had to find our footing quickly.

Although I believe that the slowing of momentum had much to do with the start of classes, I also believe that I unknowingly failed to get everyone on board right away. Upon the return of the students, I was unprepared to communicate the world in which I was trying to create, leaving my team uninspired and somewhat lost. Unapparent to me at the time, this problem adjusted itself as students began to see more and more of the pieces come together

Through the costume design courses, I have been taught that research pictures and visuals are one of the strongest ways to open the door of communication and expression. Typically, I would have compiled research boards early on in the process, used them in design meetings, and then had them in the shop for everyone to see.

Unfortunately, I made the mistake of using research folders as a replacement for, rather than an addition to, research boards. The same folders that I had used to overcome the visual block left by the movie, and the same folders that had aided me in communicating with the director over the previous weeks had suddenly rendered themselves useless. I needed these visuals out in the open, not filed away in folders. Lesson learned—visuals on boards bring people on board.

With an alterations rack that grows with each fitting, we rely on the lab class to take care of the alterations under the supervision of, in this case, our new costume shop manager. The lab class is a main source of labor when it comes to getting the costumes ready for a show at LSU. The problem in this case, as with every show that comes first in the semester, is that the students in this class have not yet learned how to sew.

After a hectic first week, it was clear that some adjustments had to be made to the build list. Specifics are discussed in the following chapters. It was at this point in the process that I began to make purchases from various online stores.

This was also when I recognized a flaw in the way I had approached the design process for these costumes. I had not done enough online sourcing early in the process. Instead, my designs centered around historical research pictures from books and stock photo sites.

At this point in the process, David Lawrence, a friend of my advisor and a professional wig designer arrived from New York to do the wigs for the show. I had previously had a brief conversation with David about the design. I told him that I planned to have five wigs and one toupee for the show. I sent him my renderings as well as pictures of hairstyles I was envisioning for each of the characters to be wigged. With this information, David was able to gather and bring with him the wigs and supplies that he needed.

With David's arrival, and with everyone on board in the shop, the momentum seemed to pick up. Production in the shop moved forward and we went into tech rehearsals without any major problems. A few last minute glitches were straightened out during tech week, which will be discussed in the following chapters. By final dress, I was very pleased with what was on stage.

Chapter 2: Fanny Cavendish

Character Analysis

Fanny Cavendish is the matriarch of the family. She is one member of the eldest of three generations of famous actors represented in this story. She has a brother named Howard Dean, who is married to Kitty Dean. She is a widow and was married to Aubrey Cavendish. She has two children, Julie and Tony, and one grandchild, Gwen. Gwen is Julie's daughter.

The entire show takes place in Fanny's New York City apartment. Lavishly decorated to fit her taste, this apartment acts as a safe place for all of the characters involved. When Fanny reminisces about the past, she speaks with pride. Her entire life has been devoted to the theatre. Her passion and undying love for the art allows her to convince herself that she is still able to perform, although deep down she realizes that her poor health has gotten the best of her.

Design Process

When designing the costumes for Fanny, I saw her much like her home in that she had a classic yet luxuriously comfortable style. She is a sophisticated older woman who enjoys looking nice without sacrificing comfort. I felt that although she never actually left her apartment she would still dress and do her hair everyday simply because it made her feel good. Along the same lines of the "looking good is feeling good" concept, I envisioned Fanny as a natural red head who, after turning grey, would dye her hair as a way to hold on to her appearance.

Although I did look to the fashions of the day as well as the fashions of the years prior, fashionable dress of the time period was not a main source of information when it came to designing for Fanny. I wanted her to have more of a classic style. With "comfortable and classic" in mind, I envisioned Fanny in some sort of a fancy dressing gown.

By putting together the action chart I determined Fanny would need three different looks, one per act. The director agreed with this costume count during the initial meeting. He also agreed with the style of dress I had envisioned for Fanny.

As the sketching process began I looked to my research for inspiration. The second time I met with the director we discussed initial designs, seen in figures 5 and 6. They were relatively well received, but most importantly, these sketches opened up a door for discussion about the character. By using these initial sketches as a communication device, the director and I were able to come to a unified vision for Fanny. For example, he had previously communicated to me that he wanted Fanny's costumes to gradually get darker. When we spoke with the initial sketches in front of us, he was able to explain to me that he wanted her final dress to be dark and velvet because he wanted it to be dramatic. Meaning the dramatic element he was looking for would be conveyed by the richness a velvet would provide and the contrast of seeing her in a darker color.

With a solid visual image of what I wanted Fanny to look like, I returned to the drawing board. I also returned to stock and found a few options for an under dress,

which she would most likely need for all of her looks. I also unearthed a few options for outer gowns as well.

Over the following meetings with the director, the designs were finalized. Details of the design process for each of the costumes are discussed further in the following paragraphs. With the approval of the designs, it was time to go fabric shopping. Out of the initial six pieces we intended to build, two were to be for Fanny. In search for fabric to build Fanny's Act I and Act III gowns, the trip was met with great success as I found the perfect materials to bring each of my designs to life.

Fanny had two pairs of shoes for the show. For the first two Acts, we had ordered a pair of ballroom dancing shoes. The shape of this type of shoe fits right in with the style of shoe worn in the time period. Since they are made for dancing, they are extremely lightweight and comfortable. These shoes quickly became a favorite of the actress; she actually purchased them from the department at the end of the run.

Although Fanny is widowed, the director and I both felt that her character would continue to wear her wedding ring. I bought coordinating jewelry for all three of Fanny's looks. I wanted to keep her jewelry minimal, so I chose to have her adorned in simple yet bold pieces. For example, her earrings for the first two Acts were large pearl studs, adding subtle elegance to her looks.

Act I—Costume 1

As I thumbed through research for Fanny, I came across a fashion plate of the time, which depicted a silk wrap by designer Paul Poiret seen in figure 7 (Lepape and Barbier). This wrap represented a similar style in which I had envisioned for Fanny and I thought it would be interesting to recreate a vintage designer piece from the show's era. After all, the probability of her owning designer fashions was very likely.

While designing for Fanny I found a lace gown on eBay that very closely resembled the under gown rendered in my design. After exhausting stock for this piece, I placed the order for the one I found online. This piece was intended to be a base piece to be worn under most of Fanny's costumes.

Due to technical reasons, the design for this piece, seen in figure 8, evolved the most out of all of the designs in the show. With a start of the new semester and the need to cut back on the build list due to the lack of labor force in the shop, I first decided that I would attempt to build this piece in between fittings, shopping, and getting the show up.

I came to this conclusion by taking into consideration that one piece of this costume had been ordered and was being shipped. I had also found a caplet in stock that was very similar to my design, so I was able to get a basic pattern from that piece. With a few small changes to the pattern, I cut out and put together the caplet out of the purple burnout material seen in figure 9, which was purchased for this particular piece.

At about the point in the process that I was cutting the fabric for the caplet, I came across a beautiful burnout velvet robe from an online store called Unique Vintage. Although it did not resemble the design, it was a piece that would have fit perfectly into Fanny's wardrobe. With time still to attempt to make the original design, I pressed forward while keeping the robe in mind as an option. Knowing that the robe could possibly replace the original design, I had the actress try on various coordinating under gowns from stock.



Figure 5 Initial Fanny Sketch



Figure 6 Initial Fanny Sketch



Figure 7 Paul Poiret Research (**Lepape and Barbier**)



Figure 8 Final Rendering for Fanny's Act I Costume



Figure 9 Material for Fanny's Act I Costume

I then ran into trouble with the under gown I had ordered from eBay. After the gown was shipped and returned to the sender because of a misprint in the shipping address, I weighed my options.

With little time remaining it was necessary I made a decision. I decided to abort the mission to complete the first design and I ordered the robe from Unique Vintage. I paired the robe with a coordinating gown from stock and as seen in figure 10, the overall look was stunning and fit perfectly into my design scheme. When she made her first entrance at the first dress rehearsal, the director gave the “thumbs up” from a few rows down and later said that he liked it better than the original design. (Although I like the idea behind the original design better, I agreed with the director.)

Act II—Costume 2

During one of my initial trips to LSU stock I came across a jade green hammered satin robe with lavender trim which fit perfectly into my color pallet and was a perfect fit for the character. After a few alterations to adjust the fit, the robe was perfect, and ended up being Fanny’s look for Act two. Fortunately, the robe came with a separate, lavender under dress, which took the place of the original one ordered from eBay that never arrived.

However, the under dress did not have a high neckline, which I felt was an important detail in order to portray her refined disposition. So, I gave her a Victorian style blouse to wear with the under dress. I finished off the look, which can be seen in figure 11, by adding a beaded choker to be worn over the blouse. During dress rehearsal, I decided to have the actress remove the blouse for the second part of Act II, when she is seen after resting from a fainting spell. In doing so, the character appeared less substantial and more fragile, ultimately, visually supporting the state of her health.

Act III—Costume 3

The initial design for Fanny’s Act III dress exhibits style lines closely related to the art deco architecture of the proscenium. The walls of the theatre, as well as the scene itself, inspired the design of this dress. Because Fanny’s death comes in this scene, I began to think of it as “Fanny’s final curtain call.” I envisioned a curtain closing. I could see two curtains coming from the left and right, racing toward one another as their bottoms dragged the floor until they finally butted up against one another. With this imagine in mind, I sketched the center front to close flush and cut away at the bottom. My original sketch for this piece, seen in figure 13, was dramatic with a sweeping train and adornment at the cuffs as well as down the front and back of the gown. During an initial meeting, the director liked the concept behind the design, but felt that she was too decorated. He was also concerned about the idea of a train because of the stairs on the set. He felt that the actress would have too much trouble walking and did not want her to trip. As I sat down to revisit this design, I sketched her without a train and less all the adornment, as seen in figure 14. In attempt to compensate for the things I had taken away from the original design, I decided to have her in a sheer caplet with large sleeves that would hang down as she moved her arms around. When I approached the director with this version, he liked the simpler silhouette but did not like the idea of the caplet with the large sleeves. Feeling like my design was being stripped of all its fun, I revisited the idea of a train. I told him that due to the nature of the design, I felt that it would look

odd if the hem stopped short of touching the ground. I explained that the horizontal stripes running along the edge of the gown at the back would give it a “chopped off” look. We discussed the look and functionality of a very small train and came to the conclusion that this was the best compromise.

The burnout velvet I found for this dress was my most exciting find during our fabric-buying trip to Houston. Fabric swatches, as well as the final rendering and production photo can be seen in figures 12, 15, & 16. It was destiny, from the floral design to the rich purple color of the velvet with splashes of sage green, this fabric and my design were meant to be together. I also found the coordinating satin and purple velvet to use as the bands around the edge. With the “adornment” coming from the fabric itself, all of my feelings that this design had been stripped of its fun had disappeared when I laid eyes on this fabric.

I planned to have Fanny wear the same lavender under dress and blouse combination with this gown as she did with the green one in Act II. But, when I saw the progression of her costumes unfolding in dress rehearsal, I decided to change it up some. I decided to try it without the blouse, but doing this left her neck too bare. I then pulled a few different options of scarves and had the actress play with them until the one to complete the look was found.

On stage, this costume was stunning, and I was very pleased with the final outcome. Once the show opened, it was exciting to hear when others would comment on Fanny’s final costume as being their favorite. Particularly because this was a piece produced in our costume shop and seen on stage with other fancy clothes which had been bought.



Figure 10 Fanny's Act I Costume



Figure 11 Fanny's Act II Costume



Figure 12 Fanny's Act III costume



Figure 13 Initial Sketch for Fanny's Act III Costume



Figure 14 Second Sketch for Fanny's Act III Costume



Figure 15 Material for Fanny's Act III Costume



Figure 16 Final Rendering for Fanny's Act III Costume

Chapter 3: Julie

Character Analysis

Julie Cavendish is the glue that holds this family together. As a daughter, mother, and sister, Julie has fallen into the trap of putting the wants and needs of others before her own. As the events of the play unfold, Julie recognizes that she has spent her whole life striving to make others happy.

Seemingly going through a mid-life crisis, Julie feels as if she has been so caught up in her stage career that she has let her life pass her by. This realization is brought about by two main events in the play. With the resurgence of a former lover into her life, Mr. Gil Marshall, Julie cannot help but reflect on the past, leaving her to wonder what might have been. She is also faced with seeing her daughter, Gwen, struggling with the pressure to live up to the Cavendish name.

Julie feels that much of the reason she chose a stage career over marrying Gil twenty years prior had everything to do with the pressure that stemmed from the expectations of her mother. At a turning point, and in a fit, Julie begs Gwen to marry Perry to avoid making the same mistake she did. Julie then realizes that her life is not over and she still has time to marry Gil. Julie feels like this is her chance to finally stand up and do something for herself, in turn, she will finally be happy.

After the dust settles, Julie begins to think that maybe she was happy all along. She is, after all; a Cavendish, the stage is in her bones.

Design Process

The director would continuously refer to Julie's character as "America's Sweetheart." This was a phrase that was important to keep in mind throughout the design process because it instilled a vision of what she was expected to look like. It was important for this character to always appear to be pulled together even while she was having mixed emotions and thoughts about her life decisions. Her stylish wardrobe, in ways, became a sort of mask for her to hide behind.

During an initial meeting, the director expressed an interest in starting Julie out in lighter colors and gradually getting darker. I approached him with the idea of taking inspiration from the metallic color scheme of the renovated proscenium. He liked the idea, so I designed the costumes for Julie with the idea that she progress from silver accents to gold, then to bronze at the end.

When discussing Julie's wig with David I felt that it should be an auburn color, slightly darker than her mother's, and styled in the fashionable finger wave style of the day. The color David decided on was a nice compliment to the actress's skin tone and also worked in conjunction with Fanny's wig color, making the two a believable mother-daughter pair.

Over the course of this three Act play, Julie ultimately had four different looks. Two of them for Act I, and one for each of the following Acts. The evolution for each of these looks is explained in the following paragraphs.

Act I—Costume 1

This Act opens in Fanny's apartment one morning in the fall of 1927. Julie is first seen wearing her pajamas as pictured in figure 17.

The director was very adamant about having her in pajamas for the beginning scene for staging purposes. He said that since he would have her doing stretches and yoga type exercises on the floor, she would need to be in pants. I compiled a collage of research pictures from the twenties of women wearing silk pajamas. With an idea of the style of pajamas worn in the 1920's, I turned again to the pictures I had taken of the Shaver Theatre. While sketching, I took a particular interest in Art Deco design on the sides of the seating bank, seen in figure 18. I ultimately adapted this design from the seats to create the design around the cuffs of the pants and sleeves of the robe, as seen in the final rendering for Julie's pajamas in figure 19.

There was lots of discussion on how to go about getting the design on the pants. We talked about painting, stenciling, and possibly having them silk-screened. This problem was solved in our fabric-buying trip to High Fashion Fabrics in Houston. I found the fabric seen in figure 20, and planned to add it to the appropriate place on an existing pair of pajamas.

Going with the color scheme, I decided to have Julie in a baby blue night set with a silver robe. Surprisingly, those particular items in those particular colors, turned out to be very difficult to find. I ultimately found the baby blue night set at the local goodwill, seen in figure 21. The robe was purchased online, and when it arrived, it was much lighter than I had perceived it to be on the computer screen. Feeling that it would appear bright white on stage and under the lights, I decided it needed to be a bit darker so we put it in a batch of grey dye.

Act I—Costume 2

Julie's second look would also come in Act I. She changes as she prepares to leave the apartment to attend a play reading for an upcoming show.

Early on in the design process, I had come across a very dainty chiffon cream dress with blue and lavender flowers on it at Goodwill. I was really excited about it because it was a modern interpretation of a 1920's style dress and it fit the actress perfectly, as seen in the fitting photo in figure 22. As the weeks went by and everything started to come together I felt like it was not quite to the level of glamour that it needed to be, especially for the scene. Julie had just been pressured into breaking plans to see Gil in order to attend a play reading. I felt like this was a perfect opportunity for her character to dress very stylishly in order to mask the fact that she really did not want to be there.

After scouring the web for the previous weeks I pretty much knew what was out there and had several items in mind for different characters as options for backup. This was the case for this dress, so I knew exactly where to go when I came to the realization that this look needed to be more fanciful. I ordered the beaded green shift seen in figure 23 from the online store "Unique Vintage." I could not have been more satisfied with the decision.

In order to look polished and ready to leave the safety of Fanny's apartment, I wanted Julie's look to be complete with all of the fashionable accessories that she would have been expected to wear in that time. The milliner built Julie's grey felt cloche adorned with a rhinestone button, seen in figure 24, for this scene. Because the green dress had not yet arrived, I chose to have the hat trimmed in a green to coordinate with



Figure 17 Julie in Pajamas for Act I



Figure 18 Art Deco on Seating Bank



Figure 19 Final Rendering for Julie's Pajamas



Figure 20 Trim Material for Julie's Pajamas



Figure 21 Julie in Pajama Fitting



Figure 22 Julie's Original Act I Dress



Figure 23 Final Look for Julie's Act I Dress



Figure 24 Julie's Pulled Felt Cloche

both the cream and green dress in case, for some reason, I would ultimately have to revert back to the cream dress.

Carrying on the metallic color scheme, I put Julie in silver ballroom dancing shoes, which coordinated with a silver beaded purse and the silver beading on the dress. Julie's fashionably red nails popped the reds and oranges in the beading of her dress, making the hassle of sending her for a manicure, discussed later, well worth it. Completing the look, Julie also had a fur-trimmed coat adorned with a silver and rhinestone brooch that went with her earring and necklace set.

The first time Julie descended the stairs in this costume during dress rehearsal, the "oohs and ahhs" started and only got louder with a packed theatre on opening night. With just the audience reaction I was hoping for, I felt it was a pretty good indication that I had chosen the right dress for the scene.

Act II—Costume 3

At the beginning of Act II Julie is coming in from her matinee performance. As she stumbles through the door disheveled by the media storm outside, she is wearing a completely recreated ensemble from the 1920's. The coat, dress, and hat were all built based on research pictures of the time. The final rendering can be seen in figure 25

All of the fabric, pictured in figures 26 and 29, was found on our trip to Houston except for the faux fur trim on the floral coat. Monkey fur was a bit too pricey and wig wefts did not work very well. I was also unable to find faux fur fabric within the budget that had a long enough pile to achieve the look I was going for. So, I decided to purchase a faux fur bathroom rug cut to the proper size to trim the coat.

Although the coat and hat, seen in figures 27 and 28 were shed about thirty seconds into the scene, I felt they had served their purpose, as Julie made quite an entrance for this scene. I also felt like these pieces added a nice element of surprise. Once she shed the outer layers, revealing the stunning coral dress underneath, it was almost as if she had made a second entrance.

Figure 30 (Photobucket Corporation) shows the photo of original 1920's dress that I wanted to replicate. The director liked the dress, but had in his mind that he wanted her in lavender for this scene. I felt strongly that the coral color of the original was a stronger choice for this particular style. In order to open a dialogue about color choice with my director, I decided to render the dress in lavender, seen in figure 31. The following time I met with him, I was able show him the original coral version of the dress next to the lavender version I had rendered. In doing this, I was able to make the point that the coral chiffon fabric put that dress in the time period just as much as the cut of the dress.

Julie is seen in the coral dress for quite some time. One of the more important qualities that I wanted this look to have was the dramatic element added by the flared sleeves. In true Cavendish fashion, Julie delivers a theatrical renunciation speech where she flies across the stage, jumping atop furniture, proclaiming that she is through with the stage and she will never act again. I felt the large open sleeves would add to the drama of the scene as her arms flailed around in the air, as pictured in figure 32

Transitioning from silver to gold with the metallic color scheme, I chose gold lace to be appliquéd onto the dress rather than a silver lace used on the original dress of the



Figure 25 Final Rendering for Julie Act II



Figure 26 Fabric for Julie's Hat



Figure 27 Julie Act II



Figure 28 Detail of Julie's Act II Hat



Figure 29 Fabric for Julie's Coat



Figure 30 Picture of Original 1920's Dress (Photobucket Corporation)



Figure 31 Rendering of Dress in Lavender



Figure 32 Julie's Final Look for Act II

time. Complimenting the gold lace in the dress and the gold stitching in the coat, Julie wore a pair of gold ballroom dancing shoes. I also polished off her look by giving her pearl earrings and a long stranded pearl necklace. I had her wear the pearl necklace tied in a knot, which was very fashionable of the time.

Act III—Costume 4

Act III opens with Julie dressed, and ready for everyone to arrive for the party.

Following the metallic color theme I knew I wanted her to be in a copper color. In the script, Kitty refers Julie's attire as a "smart tea gown," (3.98). Looking through research of the time period, tea gowns were typically long, and much like the style of clothes I had designed for Fanny. So, going with what I knew, I rendered the dress seen in figure 33. I designed the pattern for the beading of the dress by taking inspiration from the art deco style plasterwork within the renovated M&DA building seen in figure 34.

After some thought and discussion with the director, I came to the conclusion that this style did not fit in with Julie's aesthetic and needed to be shorter. Unable to find material or appliqués with the appropriate beading style in Houston, I did some shopping and found the beaded frock seen in figure 35. With the color and the art deco inspired beading, it was the perfect dress for this scene. The frock was worn over a gold shift, which was built in the shop of a crepe back satin material.

This look was completed with a pair of golden, t-strap ballroom dancing shoes, earrings, a necklace, a bracelet, and an emerald engagement ring. I chose emerald instead of the traditional diamond because of what is discovered about Gil during an exchange between Fanny and Julie in the first Act. Speaking of Gil, Fanny questions her daughter, "What is it that they call him? South American Diamond King?" To which her daughter replies, "Emerald, mother. Much nicer." (1.500-501).

When dress rehearsal came around and I was able to watch the progression of Julie as a character through her costumes, I was pleased with what I saw. I truly felt that the choices I had made helped to tell the character's story.



Figure 33 Original
Rendering of Julie's Dress
for Act III



Figure 34 Detail of
Plasterwork in the M&DA



Figure 35 Julie's Final Look
for Act III

Chapter 4: Gwen and Perry

Character Analysis

In this story, Gwen is Julie's daughter and therefore the granddaughter of Fanny Cavendish. Gwen is a young woman in her mid twenties. Gwen is at a point in her life where she feels she must choose between her blooming stage career and the young Perry Stewart. Her ancestors have created a legacy in the theatre and she feels as if she is being pressured into continuing that legacy.

Gwen's story is one of self-discovery. In the beginning she is caught up in a whirlwind and seems unable to take a step back and see the whole picture. As outsiders looking in, everyone around her seems to not understand why she feels she must choose between a stage career and a family. She only feels this way because it is the example that has been set for her by her mother and grandmother.

On the opposite end of the spectrum is Perry Stewart. Much like Gil, the love interest of Gwen's mother, Perry, is a businessman. He loves Gwen but cannot comprehend the art of theatre in which his love was born into. Perry's ignorance for the art leads him to make Gwen feel as if he belittles her work.

Gwen ultimately decides to give up her stage career and marry Perry Stewart and by Act III, which takes place a year later, she has a baby. It is not until the end we discover that maybe being a starlet really is in her bones. She excitedly announces her casting in a small role with hints to how this role could help her to get future roles. All the while, Perry is standing there completely oblivious to what he has gotten himself into.

Design Process

Gwen and Perry, like Julie, have four looks for the three Act show.

In designing for Gwen, I saw her as youthful and fashionable, yet not quite as "flashy" as her mother. During my initial meetings with the director, he would refer to her as being the character that was "most connected to the outside world." Her short, bobbed hairstyle was a very fashionable style of the day. I chose the straight blunt style and dark hair for Gwen because I felt that it was a great way to separate her from her mother and Grandmother. The wig David styled fit the actress's face shape nicely.

I envisioned Perry, not part of the acting scene, very tailored and polished looking. With his slicked down hair and pencil thin moustache, he fit perfectly into the time period.

Act I—Costume 1

Gwen and Perry burst through the doors of Fanny's apartment smitten with each other in the first Act. According to the script, they had been out riding. I started by researching riding uniforms of the time, many of which were cut very full through the hip. I felt like that particular cut of pant would make them look goofy to the modern eye. Since they were supposed to be this dashing young couple, goofy was not the look I was after. I decided to look for a more modern fitting trouser. In effort to use the resources available to me, I had looked into borrowing riding uniforms for the LSU equestrian team. When that did not work out, I turned to the option of renting them. I found some from "Broadway Costumes," In Chicago.

I had the actress playing Gwen in for a fitting once the rental pieces arrived. Even though we had sent the measurements to the rental place, the riding jacket they sent for her was much too big. With a phone call we discovered that they did not have a smaller riding jacket; they did, however, have the jacket to an 1850's style bloomer costume, which closely resemble the riding jacket I was in search of. I had them ship it and it worked perfectly. The final look can be seen in figure 36.

Act I—Costume 2

As Perry leaves, he tells Gwen he will be back to pick her up for tea at his mother's house. As people enter and exit, the house carries on being as lively as the characters in it. Gwen lingers back and forth between her bedroom and the living room shedding her riding uniform until she comes down in what she intends to wear to meet Perry's mother for the first time.

Seen in figure 37, this plum wool 1920's remake was ordered from Etsy, an online source, and has an interesting story of how it came to be part of this production.

My original idea for this look was that it would be very classy and stylish with playful sophistication. Ultimately that is what I got, but only after going full circle to get it.

I initially wanted to make a daytime dress which would have some sort of art deco motif on it. Inspired by the proscenium, I did a few rough sketches of what I wanted the motif to look like. Looking through research photos of fashionable women of the time, I came across a photo of a woman in a white dress with a black motif on it that was very similar to my sketches. She wore a long black coat trimmed with short pile, black fur over the dress. The simplicity of the two colors was strikingly sophisticated and I decided that this dress spoke to Gwen's character. However, I soon decided, after taking a step back, that the black and white dress did not allow Gwen's character room to evolve from this point in her life to where she ends up in the final act. It was missing the girlish quality and worked better as a third act piece rather than the transition piece that this act called for.

As I sat down to sketch, I referred back to my research. Combining the styles of several different lace dresses from the period, I designed the dress in figure 38. I envisioned it made of a brocade material, having a texture resembling lace, and marrying the styles in the research pictures. Paired with the structure of the peplum, it felt like it had the right amount of girlish sophistication this look needed.

Thinking I could find something in our own stock that could be repurposed, I did not anticipate that this look would be a problem. I was very wrong, I could not find anything that would work so, I turned to the internet because we certainly did not have the resources to add another dress to the build list. I came across a few things that could work, but nothing like I had envisioned. It was at that point I came across the plum dress on Easy. I thought it was beautiful and wanted to use it, I just could not quite put my finger on where in the show it belonged, so I printed out a picture of it and tucked it away.

The search continued as I decided to go in to rehearsals one day to see how things were coming along. They happen to be rehearsing this particular scene. The more I watched, the more uncertain I grew.

She is preparing to meet her future mother-in-law when her mother confronts her with an obligation regarding an upcoming play they are in together. Having canceled plans herself, Julie tells her that she cannot go with Perry and she must put work first. When Gwen tells this news to Perry upon his arrival, he storms out. Left alone for a mere second to gather her thoughts, Gwen announces that she is quitting the stage in order to live a normal life. This of course is met by a tidal wave of questions and judgments by the entire family.

In previous conversations with the director, he had always referred to her as being “the most connected to the real world.” I had interpreted this scene as being highly emotional, with Gwen remaining the most grounded.

This was not the case. Rather than being the rational one putting her foot down and stating her case to her family in a creditable manner, she completely broke down. She would stamp her feet and even claw at anyone who tried to come near her. She fell to the ground seemingly unconcerned with keeping up the appearance of the young, sophisticated role she was striving to prove herself to be.

After seeing this, my image of her for this scene changed. I found a dress in our stock that struck me as a little girl version of the research picture with the ladies in lace dresses. A photo of this dress can be seen in figure 39.

Stuck between two extremes, I called a meeting with the director. I showed him pictures and we talked about her character as a whole, coming to the conclusion that the white lace dress fit the temper tantrum, but it did not allow her character to evolve. She got dressed with the intentions of meeting her future in-laws. I knew immediately what I had to do. It was not until then that I placed the order for the plum dress with the perfect mix of girlish sophistication for which we were looking.

The dress did not arrive until the second dress rehearsal, luckily needing no alterations. Seeing the scene done in both the white and plum dresses, made me feel confident that I had made the correct choice. The bold color combination paired with the girlish style was right on target.

Before she learns that she must cancel her plans with Perry, Gwen is seen descending the stairs dressed and ready for Perry to arrive and pick her up. I wanted her to be fully dressed with all of her outer garments to appear anxious for his arrival. The milliner built the pulled felt cloche, which was trimmed with black velvet and adorned with an art deco style broche. Her knee length black coat was pulled from stock and trimmed with a faux fur fabric.

Perry, being a businessman and relatively boring, is in a nice but simple suit when he arrives to pick up Gwen to meet his mother. His deco patterned tie, and polished look put him right into the time period, as pictured in figure 40.

Act II—Costume 3

For the second Act, Gwen is in her nightgown throughout. I originally thought she would be in a twenties style tap pant set with a matching short robe. Paired with the difficulty to find such an ensemble, I felt something of the sort might be too revealing for the petite, yet curvy actress. I felt it was acceptable for her to exude some sex appeal, but it was more important for her to appear pampered. As seen in figure 41, I cut a long slip into a short nighty and paired it with a long sheer robe. With the marabou feathers attached to her slippers, her look was complete.

Perry appears in the second half of this Act. He has come to check on Gwen. Being that he is just “dropping by,” I wanted to have him in something a little less formal. I dressed him in slacks, a button down shirt and tie under a sweater to give him the sporty look fashionable for the day. This final look can be seen in figure 42.

Act III—Costume 4

Planning to build the black and white dress, for Act III rather than Act two, I purchased black and crème crepe on the fabric-buying trip to Houston. After returning to the shop, the decision to build the white dress with the black deco motif was once again questioned. As other characters’ costumes for the final act were being finalized, Gwen’s dress, although sophisticated, seemed to lack luster and looked informal compared to all the others on stage. She was to arrive at the apartment with Perry who would be dressed in a tuxedo. Also taking into consideration that the labor force to build these pieces was reaching capacity, I decided to go further with the online shopping.

I soon found this black lace flapper dress seen in figure 43 at Unique Vintage. Fitting right in with the color palette, the black on tan lace was the perfect look of sophistication and formality for Gwen in this scene.



Figure 36 Gwen and Perry in their Riding Outfits for Act I



Figure 37 Gwen's Final Look for Act I



Figure 38 Sketch of Gwen for Act I



Figure 39 Fitting for Gwen Act I Option



Figure 40 Perry and Gwen
Act I



Figure 41 Gwen in Nightgown Act II with
Fanny and Julie by her Side



Figure 42 Perry and Gwen in Act II During
Julie's Renunciation Scene



Figure 43 Gwen Act III

Chapter 5: Howard and Kitty Dean

Character Analysis

Providing much of the comic relief in this show, are the characters Howard and Kitty Dean. Howard is Fanny's brother, making him an uncle to Julie. Kitty is his flamboyant, slightly arrogant wife.

Howard and Kitty truly are two peas in a pod. Constantly bickering, the highly dramatic pair of not so successful actors are depicted marching in and out of Fanny's apartment as if they own the place. Throughout the script there are references that have the couple snacking and never turning down food offered to them. This not only showed the greedy nature of the characters, but also allowed for an opportunity for physical comedy. Although the actress playing Kitty was naturally slender, the director envisioned her character as robust.

The director would describe the pair as "trying too hard." Everything they did, from the way they dressed to the way they handled their stage careers, they had the tendency go slightly overboard and only they were blind to this flaw.

Design Process

Both Howard and Kitty had three looks in total, one look per Act. A fat suit was also built for Kitty to give the appearance that she was fat. This presented a problem in the way that the 1920's style silhouette fit the actresses' altered body shape.

I chose Kitty to have a blonde wig for a couple of reasons. One motive for this choice was the fact that I wanted her to stand apart from the rest of the Cavendishes. I also wanted it to appear that she had dyed her hair that way in a failed attempt to be fashionable. I think the idea was clearly delivered with the combination of the badly styled, bleach blonde wig and the thick dark eyebrows and yellow skin tone.

Act I—Costumes 1

At the beginning of Act I, Howard enters the apartment alone as Kitty trails in behind, nagging him. The costumes for both of these characters were pulled and altered from the LSU stock. Howard is in an older style, double-breasted suit, which is slightly ill fitted, paired with a polka dot bowtie and striped socks. Kitty is wearing a reproduction of a 1930's dress that we altered to fit over the padded body suit and added sleeves to hide the actress's skinny arms. The pair can be seen in figure 44.

The director expressed the desire to have Kitty in a different silly hat each time she came on stage. I felt that Kitty's character would have attempted to be a fashionable woman, but like everything else, she just cannot quite get it right. Taking inspiration from very stylish fascinator hats of the day, I discussed with the milliner the idea of having her in a fascinator that was over the top and obnoxious. I gave her research pictures and we discussed different options on how to make this work. Kitty's first hat, seen in figure 45, was coined "the cat toy" hat for its moveable feathers and fluff, which added the right amount of physical comedy without being overbearing.

Act II—Costumes 2

Howard and Kitty are both seen relatively little in the second Act. Howard comes to ask Julie for a favor and Kitty later comes to confront Julie for granting Howard the favor. Howard is wearing the same suit as in Act I, only different accessories and shirt.

Kitty is wearing a 1920's style lavender dress which was also found in LSU stock and altered to fit her altered body shape, as pictured in figure 46.

Kitty's "fruit hat," built to complete this look certainly added to the comical nature of the scene. See figure 47.

Act III—Costumes 3

For the final Act, the director wanted all of the Men except for Howard to be in Tuxedos. He felt that at this point, the Dean's may have come into a little bit of money, therefore he would be in a nicer suit, but not necessarily a tuxedo. Conceptually, I agreed, but knowing that it may not look cohesive once dress rehearsals came around, I had a backup tuxedo for him. In this scene, Howard's character is attempting to look younger. I decided to have him dressed in a light green, three-piece suite, which ultimately made his final Act entrance all the more striking due to the contrast of his purposefully bad toupee.

Kitty also makes quite the entrance for the party. All decked out in sparkling spandex, beads, and sequins, Kitty is costumed in a flapper style dress. Since "flapper" is a term known for describing a slender and sexy young woman of the time, this added to the humor because Kitty, in all of her robust glory, dressed herself as if she had the figure of a 12-year-old-boy. The pair can be seen in their party attire in figure 48.

I chose the black and copper color scheme because of a snide remark she makes to Julie about Julie's copper dress. She walks in anxious to display her taste in clothing only to see Julie dressed in the same color, unintentionally one-upping Kitty as always, and adding to the comedy.

The dress was ordered from Costume Hub, an online costume supplier. The matching gloves and turban came with the costume. The beaded shawl was ordered from Unique Vintage. This piece was attached to the dress, once again helping to disguise the actress's skinny arms.



Figure 44 Howard and Kitty
Act I



Figure 45 Kitty's "Cat
Toy" hat for Act I



Figure 46 Kitty Act II



Figure 47 Kitty's "Fruit
Hat" Act II



Figure 48 Howard and Kitty
Act III

Chapter 6: Tony and Gunga

Character Analysis

Fanny's son and Julie's brother, Tony, hauls in just as much drama as he does luggage each time he comes for a visit to his mother's apartment. At a time when the stage was golden and film was new, Tony was all Hollywood. He is a charismatic character who travels the world and cannot seem to stay in one place for too long. He is a free spirit who is bored easily and is always searching for the next big thing.

This concept resonates in his fashion sense. He is the type of guy to set a trend and move on quickly. His character is always fashionable yet never trendy, pulling off attire most men could not.

Design Process

Designing for this type of character is always a challenge. He had to look fashionable for the time without looking like every other man in the 1920's. He needed his own sense of style without looking silly. The director would explain his look as "dashing."

Tony had six different looks; two in Act I, three in Act II, and one in Act III.

Act I—Costume 1

Tony's arrival in the first Act is unexpected. Mid way through the scene he stumbles through the door after being pummeled by the paparazzi just outside the door. He does not want anyone to know that he is there and pays hush money to the doormen and various other people who helped him get there. He does this with Julie's money of course.

Upon his arrival, Tony needed to look as if he were dressed in disguise for purposes of the storyline. Not only is he hiding from the paparazzi outside in this scene, but also in order for him to leave again in Act II, a clever switch is written into the script. The idea is that he trades his outer clothing with a bellboy, allowing the bellboy to leave dressed as Tony. This distracts the paparazzi and allows Tony to leave dressed as a bellboy.

In order for this to work, Tony's outer wear in Act I needed to be something recognizable in order for the audience to buy into the trick when the body double is seen leaving in Act II. Not only that, but also this piece also needed to be stunning enough to fit into Tony Cavendish's wardrobe. In my opinion, nothing says style and drama like a long fur coat. I was thrilled when I found one in stock to work perfectly.

Figure 49 shows the real Tony entering the apartment for the first time in Act I. The suit in figure 50 is worn under the fur coat for his arrival in Act I, and was purchased for this scene. I chose the suit mainly for the coordinating peach colored vest that spoke as a fashionable color of the time. Paired with a white silk scarf and white Godfather style hat, Tony fit the part of a "dashing" and stylish ladies man.

Act I—Costume 2

Tony's second look in Act I is one that developed during the rehearsal process. Soon after Tony's arrival he heads upstairs to take a bath. Not long after he comes back down for the rest of the Act. Following the assumption that he had not had the chance to actually take a bath due to all of the chaos, I sketched him in a robe over his suit. I thought by doing this, it would appear as if he were still in the process of preparing for

his bath. This was before rehearsals had begun and, at that point, the director felt that it would be a better choice to see him in his boxers following the assumption that Tony had taken a bath when we see him again.

Over time these two concepts would meld. I pointed out to the director that we see Tony in his underwear in Act II, and having him in his underwear in Act I would take away from the shock value of him rushing out in his underwear in Act II. He agreed and we settled on the robe seen in figure 51. The towel on his head is a product of the actor playing around in rehearsals. He found a towel backstage and did the scene with it on his head, the director like it and told him to keep it. I really enjoy moments born this way. I had not thought of it, but it completely worked for his character. In order for it to be more secure, the milliner made a towel hat that appeared to be wrapped but was actually stitched.

Act II—Costume 3

Act II begins with a sword fight, surprisingly. With a few different servants standing in as his opponent, Tony opens the scene rushing down the stairs with his fencing sword reciting lines from a fight scene.

Just as if he were a child playing pretend, I wanted it to look as if he had gone into a trunk of old costumes left over from past productions and stored away at his mother's house. As he flew down the stairs, he proclaimed to be the ".....niftiest little swordsman in all of Gascony," (line) Since he was playing a character, I used these lines as a starting point for this costume. Through my research, I found that Gascony is an area of Southwest France and the home to the inspiration of Alex Andre Dumas's character in *The Three Musketeers*.

With this as an image as inspiration, I sketched out a costume for Tony, seen in figure 52. This costume was not too elaborate, therefore, maintaining the believability that this was something he would find in his closet. I managed to find a shirt and a pair of slacks in stock, which only needed minor alterations. The final look for this scene can be seen in figure 53.

Tony Act II- Costume #4

Ever since Tony has arrived he has been speaking of plans to sail to Europe, apparently to get away from the trouble he caused in Hollywood. Being the ladies man that he is, he gives brief details of affairs with women that have turned sour. He is relying on Oscar, the family's manager to secure a passport for him. Just as Gil arrives to the apartment and reconnects with Julie for the first time in twenty years, Oscar calls informing them that he was unable to get a passport. Being the dramatic character that Tony is, he has a conniption fit, running around, yelling, and paying no mind to Julie's situation. As Tony runs off to drown himself in misery, Gil, being the powerful man that he is, calls in a favor and is able to get Tony an emergency passport. After hearing the news, we then see Tony run out in his boxers, trying to pack his things.

The original sketch, seen in figure 54, depicts historically accurate men's underwear. The director did not want him in a one piece because he thought it would make him look silly. He was very adamant about having him in boxers. Since boxers as we know them today were not made to be worn as underwear until the 1930's (Tortora and Eubank 413). My final rendering, seen in figure 55, is inspired by the look of the 1920's underwear. I put him in



Figure 49 Tony's Arrival Act I



Figure 50 Tony's Fitting for Act I Suit



Figure 51 Tony in Robe and Towel Hat Act I



Figure 52 Final Rendering for Tony Act II



Figure 53 Tony's Swordfight Costume Act II

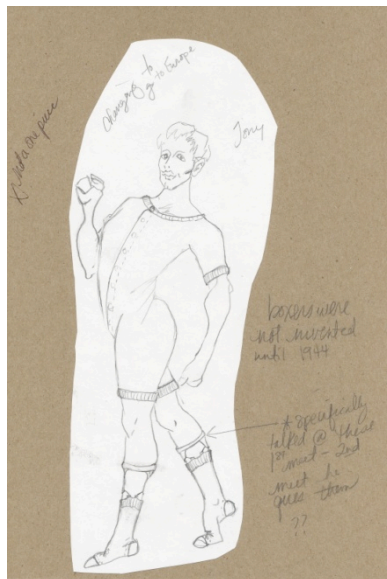


Figure 54 Initial Sketch for Tony's Underwear Act II



Figure 55 Final Rendering for Tony's Underwear Act II

separates, with the bottoms looser than the way they were worn in the 1920's, yet not as baggy as the modern day boxer.

This was another scene that continually developed throughout rehearsal. In figure 56, we see Tony with his arms around Julie and his shirt not completely off. The joke is that he is so upset when he hears he is unable to get a passport that he consumes massive amounts of alcohol in a short period of time, as we see him half dressed and with a flask in hand. By the time he is informed that Gil pulled some strings to get him one he is already inebriated. During the rehearsal process, the director decided that he also wanted to see Jo, the servant, in his boxers as well, seen in figure 57. The joke here being that Tony is running around frantic and yelling for Jo's help and since Jo does everything that Tony does, he follows alongside Tony.

Tony Act II Costume #5

Nearing the end of Act II, figure 58 shows Tony's body double coming down the stairs and out the door in disguise. The key to believability for this particular switch was the fur coat. By having Tony arrive in the beginning wearing such a memorable piece such as the fur coat, the audience recognized the coat the second time as Tony's, in turn tricking them into believing that it must be him. Once the paparazzi have cleared, believing that Tony has left, Tony appears dressed as a bellboy, as seen in figure 59. Tony explains to his family his little trick and ends the act by leaving the apartment dressed as a Cavendish bellhop.

Act III—Costume 6

Tony's final look was a difficult one to come around to. Tony, once again shows up to his mother's apartment unexpectedly after he has been away for a year. We know that he has traveled to India because he enters with a native named Gunga. He states that Gunga saved his life from a Tiger in India. We also know that he spent some time in Germany because he reveals floor plans of a theatre he purchased while he was there.

In meeting with the director for the initial discussion of Tony's return home look, I talked about how I envisioned him in a safari inspired look. The director did not envision the same thing, so we discussed the scene a bit more in depth. I left the meeting with a few things to research and a better idea of the director's vision.

Like always, Tony had to be "stunning." The director felt that although he had been to India, it was the theatre in Germany that would be freshest in his mind. He had after all, been so inspired by the space and the performance of the Passion Play, he purchased it. Because of this, the director felt that Tony would not be wearing pieces of traditional India costume. Gunga, the native returning home with him, however would be dressed as an Indian.

Looking at this from the angle that Tony had been inspired by the Passion play in Germany, I came to the next meeting with the sketch seen in figure 60. This look was inspired styles worn by different figures in various pieces of Christian art.

I also came to this meeting with a sketch of Gunga, seen in figure 61.

Through my research, I discovered a traditional article of clothing worn throughout time in India known as the "Dhoti." This long rectangular piece of cloth was worn wrapped around the waist and between the legs. It traditionally is cream or an off white shade and made with cotton or silk fabrics, although, today dhoti made of a variety of colored fabrics can be found.



Figure 56 Tony in his Underwear Act II



Figure 57 Jo in his Underwear Act II



Figure 58 Tony's Body Double Departure Act II



Figure 59 Tony's Departure in Bellboy Uniform Act II



Figure 60 Initial Sketch of Tony's Act III Costume



Figure 61 Initial Sketch for Gunga

The notes on the upper right hand corner of the Gunga sketch read, “less clothes, more native,” and reference to a film. The director wanted him to look less domesticated; he was, after all, in search of a monkey for Gunga to carry on stage.

We then discussed what I had come up with for Tony’s look. He thought Tony would be less inspired by the “Passion Play” and more inspired by the country of Germany and their style of dress in everyday life. I pulled out research pictures I had gathered of German men of the time, who were not dressed much differently than American men of the 1920’s. I then showed him research pictures of German military men of the time and he said he liked the military theme. He then went back on a previous statement and said that he would like to incorporate various clothing items from his travels as if Tony had picked up pieces along his trip. The notes I took from this discussion read, “something soviet, Hitler belt, Stalin hat, military coat, Indian pants like Gunga, and slippers.”

I knew incorporating all of these things would look random, but I got the general idea that the director wanted Tony to look inspired by his travels. So, I went back to the drawing board and came up with the idea of having Tony wear some sort of tiger pelt.

Upon his arrival, Tony explains to his family that Gunga saved his life from a tiger. Assuming that Tony brings Gunga with him to America as a way of saying thanks for saving his life, I thought it would be fun for Tony to have a tiger pelt draped across his shoulder as if Gunga had skinned the tiger and given it to Tony in exchange for taking him along.

The director thought this was an interesting idea and asked me to sketch something for him and show it to him later that day. Figure 62 depicts the sketch with notes taken at that meeting.

The notes read, “Tiger pelt—Good! Have it cover less of the front. Want jacket and Sam Brown belt to show.” “Hat with tiger on it—Gunga should have tiger on him too (little bit).” “Jacket even shorter.”

Leaving that meeting with the impression that this idea for Tony’s final look was well received, I did the final rendering with the few adjustments we had discussed. The next time we met, I showed the director the final rendering, seen in figure 63, only this time he did not seem to like it as much as he had the first time around.

He expressed to me that he still liked the tiger pelt idea, he just thought that Gunga should be wearing it, not Tony. He also decided that he would rather see Gunga as the only one in the traditional dhoti pants and Tony in slacks. I agreed, this choice would ultimately allow Gunga to seem more foreign, being the only one on stage wearing them. This would also decrease the possibility of Tony looking too silly. The director then alluded to my original idea, asking if the “safari” style jacket was out as an option.

Seemingly going nowhere with sketching for this particular costume, I decided to do some shopping. I found the perfect tan suit with a military/safari theme represented with pockets and stylized buttons. Figure 64 shows this final look. I choose the red shirt, as the director still wanted a nod to Stalin; I felt it looked nice without being blatantly offensive.

As for the evolution of Gunga’s costume, I went back to the drawing board and returned with the sketch seen in figure 65. The director wanted even more skin to

show. He wanted Gunga to be topless. Venturing farther from historical accuracy, he wanted his pants to go shorter still. I returned with the sketch seen in figure 66, which is the final rendering. Figure 67 is an action shot of Gunga in his final costume.

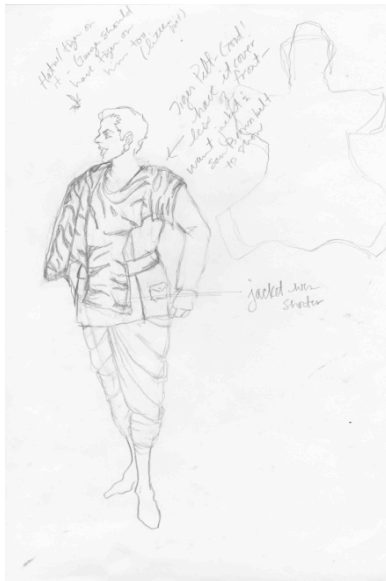


Figure 62 Sketch for Tony's Act III Costume



Figure 63 Sketch in Progress for Tony's Act III



Figure 64 Tony's final Look for Act III



Figure 65 Sketch for Gunga



Figure 66 Final Rendering for Gunga



Figure 67 Gunga's Final Look

Chapter 7: Della and Jo

Character Analysis

Della and Jo are the head servants in the Cavendish home. They consider this their home and are just as much a part of the Cavendish family as anyone. Della and Jo keep things in the house running, often avoiding potential disasters without missing a beat.

Setting the tone, the play opens with Della and Jo zipping around tending to the everyday needs of the Cavendish home.

Design Process

Through conversations with the director, we decided that we wanted Della and Jo to have a classic look to their uniform. In keeping them looking sharp, there is a message of mutual respect between employer and employee.

I also wanted there to be a distinguished difference between these two characters and the rest of the servants in the home. I did this by designating a color to be consistent with the other servants' uniforms while keeping Della and Jo in a monochromatic black, grey, and white scheme. I felt this helped in keeping with the "classic look" we were aiming to achieve. The two can be seen running the home in figure 68.

Research photos of male servants of the 1920's often depicted men dressed in a formal suit with tails following the style of the period. White waistcoats and well as white bow ties were fashionable at this time.

Other than the bow tie, which was ordered to match the Bellboys, Jo's costume was found entirely within the LSU costume stock. Apart from visual interest, I decided to have him in the light grey tailcoat and black tuxedo pant (seen in figure 69) to set him apart from the other men entering and exiting the home throughout the play. Paired with his white waistcoat and gloves, Jo was perfectly polished and fit for the Cavendish home.

Costuming Della, on the other hand, did not go quite as smoothly. From the beginning, the director wished to cast a male to play this female role. The questions started rolling. Why? Is the character now male? Is it a man playing a woman or a man playing a man in drag? What and how much do you want the audience to know? He answered by saying that he wanted Della to be pretty; although she was born a man, she has always believed she was a woman and, therefore, has always dressed the part. He said that he wanted the actor to be so believable as a woman that, in the beginning, the audience may actually believe that the actor was female. He continued, saying that throughout the show it would become more and more obvious that Della's character was actually being played by a man. He talked about her running on stage at some points with her wig crooked or still dressing and fumbling with the buttons of her blouse, even "accidentally" dropping her voice.

Through these initial conversations, I was under the impression that his reason for wanting to do this was strictly for the physical comedy. This was partly true, but as the character evolved through the rehearsal process, it became clear that this choice was made to demonstrate more than just comedy. It ultimately drove home the premise of acceptance and that this apartment was a safe place for all of the characters connected.

Turning a man into a believable woman was the first challenge. Because the actor cast was a slender guy, I was not too concerned about finding an appropriate maid's uniform in stock as a base. The twist came a few weeks into the process. The actor cast as Della left the production and Della's character had to be re-cast.

I panicked a bit when I heard the news; I then panicked a bit more when the re-casting announcement was made. Re-cast in the role of Della was an actor with the body of a football player. Knowing that we had nothing in stock that would remotely fit him, I once again turned to the internet to do some online shopping.

His chest measured 40" without breasts. I found a bra with a band to fit his chest and filled it out with stuffing while strapped onto a mannequin his size. I was then able to get an appropriate bust measurement clueing me in to what size dress would fit him. I ordered basic black maid's uniform, which most closely resembled the shape of the period maid's uniforms from my research. To soften it up, we puffed the sleeves. We also built the apron from material we had in the shop. I chose to round the bottom of the apron and pocket to contrast and again soften the broad shouldered actor. The hat was also built and is a more elaborate version of the other female servants in the house. Della's final look is pictured in figure 70.



Figure 68 Della and Jo Busy Running the House



Figure 69 Jo



Figure 70 Della

Chapter 8: Wolfe, Tiger, and Mrs. Peake

Wolfe, Tiger, and Mrs. Peake are all characters that work for the Cavendish family. Like Della and Jo, these characters have worked for the family for many years and are considered part of the family.

Wolfe

Oscar Wolfe is the family's manager. He has managed the family for years and cares deeply about the Cavendishes. Through dialogue with Julie, it is learned that Wolfe got his start as a manager because Fanny gave him a chance when he was just a young man.

The director wanted him to take on the appearance of a typical manager, wanting him in dark colors, dressed as his fellow managers of the time. Although he is a businessman, he is not the same type of businessman as Gil and Perry, therefore, I wanted to set him apart. I felt that Wolfe would be more a trend-setter, closer to the aesthetic of Tony. This was accomplished by giving him accessories that were distinctive to his character. For example, he nearly always appeared wearing a fedora. He was also always seen with an ascot and a pocket watch. The final rendering for Wolfe can be seen in figure 71. Wolfe is seen in figure 72, arriving to the apartment in Act I, wearing a cape, which gave him just the right amount of panache

Tiger

Tiger is Julie's boxing trainer. Tiger is seen first with Julie at the beginning of Act I as they run down the stairs finishing their morning workout, as pictured in figure 73. It is clear from their interaction with one another that they are carrying on an affair. As Julie playfully flirts with Tiger, the rest of the family turn a blind's eye and pretend to see nothing.

Taking inspiration from photographs of famous boxers of the day, I was able to convert a modern pair of men's linen shorts into boxing shorts for Tiger. Removing the closure, I used a canvas belt from stock to make the shorts sit higher on the actor's waist. Using a rope belt in this manner was also a detail I had run across quite often in the research pictures. Since the style of boxing boots worn in the 1920's have not changed much to the ones worn today, I was able to order those fairly easily.

Mrs. Peake

Although Mrs. Peake is only seen for a brief moment at the very end of the play, her entrance is just as grand as any other character. Mrs. Peake is the assumed family nanny. She enters the party at the end carrying Gwen and Perry's baby.

The director felt as if this character would probably have cared for both Gwen and Julie, therefore making her fairly old. He wanted her to have a "grim reaper" feel to her because of Fanny's speech about her husband which is a prelude to her own death just moments later. Holding the baby, Fanny says, "He's a Cavendish, and he's going to carry on! We always have, and we always will. 'When one drops out there's always another one to take his place. When one drops out there's always been another ...'" (3.620-623(Kaufman and Freber))(Dennis)(Cullen)

Knowing that the director and I wanted her in all black, and after researching iconic images of Nannies, I went to stock to see what I could unearth. In the fitting I mixed pieces of costumes to come up with the final look, seen in figure 74.

Although the massive Edwardian hat and gown were a set, I had initially had Mrs. Peake in the gown with a black net pinned in her hair and covering her face. During dress rehearsal the director and I both felt that she needed something more substantial as a headpiece. So the original hat was incorporated into her costume.

In order for that style of hat to stay on the actress's head, we now had to put a wig on her. The wig chosen by the wig designer helped with the other issue we were having with this character, which was the fact that she looked too young and too pretty. I also discussed with the makeup designer about having the actress in old age makeup.

After those changes were made, Mrs. Peake looked to be the grimmest nanny to ever lay hands on a baby.



Figure 71 Final Rendering for Wolfe



Figure 72 Wolfe Speaking to Fanny in Act I



Figure 73 Tiger Boxing with Julie



Figure 74 Mrs. Peake with the Baby

Chapter 9: As Cast

One of the elements that made this show so unique and entertaining was the eclectic ensemble of “as cast” characters. Aside from the bellhops, these characters were not part of the original script, and their existence was completely fabricated by the director. Despite this fact, they played a major role in reinforcing the theme of acceptance.

At the beginning of this process, these characters were simply listed as “as cast.” All that was known is that they were servants of some kind. Since there is no script to clue us into whom these characters are, designing for these characters was a much more organic process. The director and I both wanted all of the characters to have a specific role to play in the Cavendish house, rather than having a handful of actors playing the role of “servant,” reinforcing the theme that each character was just as important as the next. In an initial discussion with the director I came up with the idea that maybe we had different types of servants, as a way to distinguish them, like a chef, gardener, and so on. The director really liked the concept and his imagination ran wild, before I knew it, he had given them names.

I had extensive conversation with the director over the course of the design process in order to figure out who we wanted these characters to be. Although there was lots of discussion during the design phase, due to the nature of these characters, it was only natural to expect that a large amount of development and growth would not happen until the rehearsal process was underway. Because I was unable to be there in rehearsals as the actors made discoveries about their characters, I relied on keeping an open dialogue with the actors as they came in for fittings.

Paparazzi and Bellhops- Stiltz

As discussed with the director during our second meeting, there were a total of three actors cast as bellboys and three actors cast as paparazzi and only one of the actors doubled as both. Because of some recasting issues, we ultimately ended up with two actors playing both the bellboys and the paparazzi.

Due to cost constraints, I was unable to purchase the bellhop uniforms in the colors in which they were originally rendered, seen in figure 75. However, in order to resemble the rendering more closely I was able to change the shape of the hemline on the jackets that we were able to purchase at a price that fit the budget. I had to take a step back to look at the color palette and decided to go with a maroon jacket. Since another maid was wearing that color, maroon made sense as a “uniform” color for the Cavendish servants.

For the transformation into the Paparazzi, the bellhops would throw on a trench coats and fedoras. The director originally planned for the paparazzi to be seen quite often and clearly. Through the rehearsal process, and as the set began to go up, he decided that only their silhouette would be seen through the window, therefore there was no need for a complete costume change.

Waif

Waif, seen in figure 76, is a house servant who doesn’t really seem to do much of anything productive. The director explained this character as fragile and almost more a

house pet. He said he thought Waif found his way into the house by being taken in by Julie after she saw him curled up in a Macy's window on the most frigid winter's day.

Without much direction as to what this character actually looked like, I decided to put him in a bellhop vest and bow tie, as if they gave him uniform articles of clothing from spare uniforms to make him feel like he was one of the servants. I decided to pair these with slightly stained plus fours and a newsboy cap as if those were his own clothes that he kept.

Tun-Tun

Tun-Tun, seen in figure 77, was definitely a character that developed later in the rehearsal process and continued to grow throughout the run of the show. I chose to put her in a very simple maroon maid's uniform, sprucing it up by adding buttons as well as a miniature version of Della's apron and hat. Not until the wig designer decided she should have a finger wave wig was the look complete, also allowing the actress to discover who that character was. Soon there was a mole on her face, and then a unibrow. By the time the run came around "Tun-Tun" had become the intermission entertainment, as she played up the physical comedy of her character a while doing the practical job of a scene change.

Emile and Tease

Chef Emile and his kitchen helper Tease, added to the layer of "secret" love affairs happening between characters in this show. Figure 78 shows the two having a flirtatious moment in the background of a scene, adding to the layers of action, which encompassed the show.

The director knew that he wanted these two particular actors to have some sort of love affair as servants. He also wanted this particular actress to be "sexy and Spanish," no matter what kind of servant she was. I brought up the idea to make the pair a Chef and a sexy kitchen helper. He liked the idea, and we ran with it from there.

Originally, the director wanted Chef Emile to be dirty and sloppy looking, which is how he is rendered in figure 79. However, when the director saw him before the costume was distressed, we decided that we liked him clean instead. It gives the impression that he doesn't do much actual cooking, probably because he can't keep his hands off of his assistant, Tease.

At one point, through the discoveries happening in the rehearsal process, we talked about having his chef's jacket adorned with different military metals and patches. I felt that this would be too busy and would not make sense so I changed the original red buttons on the jacket to gold. This gave a hint of a military look without being too overwhelming.

The costume for Tease changed once we got into dress rehearsal. I had found a red square dancing skirt with white lace trim in stock. The skirt was altered in a way and paired with a white top and suspenders to resemble the approved design seen in figure 80. Once we got into dress rehearsals, I felt that her costume made her look more frumpy than sexy. I had remembered seeing a red dress in stock that I had considered for Tease, but at the time I already had her costume taken care of, so I passed it by, but kept a mental note of its existence. So, I returned to stock to retrieve the red dress. By pinning up the skirt and tacking the neckline to make the actress appear curvier, I was able to achieve just the look I was going after.



Figure 75 Final Rendering for the Bellboy Uniforms



Figure 76 Bellboy and Waif



Figure 77 Tun-Tun

Adding to the sex appeal, I had Tease in a pair of pinstriped thigh-highs, which were chosen because I felt they resembled chef pants. To complete Tease's look, I had her in a pair of matching red shoes and an apron and hat, which coordinated with those worn by the other maids in the house.

Fingers

Last in our ensemble, is "Fingers," seen in figure 81. This character served as the live pianist for the show. The director incorporated him into the show by putting him on stage with a baby grand. The idea for Fingers was that he had been hired by the family to play for a party and simply never left, becoming a fixture in the Cavendish home.

Fingers not only added to the comedic drama with the chords he struck, but he was also often seen napping or drinking out of the flask.

For the beginning, Fingers looked sharp in his tuxedo, dressed as a fashionable man of the time. His look was topped off when another character dropped a white carnation into his tip jar and he attached it to his lapel. However, as the show went on, he was seen drinking and sleeping, and his appearance began to become a bit more disheveled as a result.



Figure 78 Chef Emile and Tease



Figure 79 Final Rendering for Chef Emile



Figure 80 Final Rendering For Tease



Figure 81 Fingers

Chapter 10: The Production

When we entered the dress rehearsal stage of the process, I was very anxious to finally see everything on stage at once. During the first run through, I focused solely on the costumes—looking out for fit, color clashing and evolution of character. The major issues that arose are discussed in the previous chapters.

The following run through, I broadened my critical eye and began to focus on how the costumes interacted with the other technical aspects of the production. At one point during Act II, the lighting designer had a coral color light coming in through the window to indicate that the time of day was dusk. As beautiful as the light was coming through the window, it was a problem because Julie is seen wearing her coral color dress in this scene. In a discussion with the production team, it was decided that the best solution would be to change the color of the light rather than to change the dress. With the idea that it was now later in the evening, the lighting designer changed the color of the light, and the problem was solved.

Another thing I noticed was that as Julie made her first entrance at the top of the show, her blue pajamas were the same color as the blue walls. For this particular moment the sound designer had “Fingers” playing theme music on the piano, which alluded to a grand entrance. However, because she blended in with the walls, her entrance seemed to lack luster. This especially bothered me because I felt that it was not an accurate first impression for the character.

I broached the issue with the set designer, who reassured me that the final color of the walls would be darker than the color that was on the walls at the time. He explained that they still had to put a second coat and apply a stippling treatment, both of which would darken them.

By the time first preview was held, the walls were far enough along for me to see that the problem persisted. I approached the director to see how he felt about the issue. I got the impression that it did not bother him as much as it bothered me. He liked her pajamas and did not want me to change them. Knowing that there was not enough time to come up with something that would have been half as successful as what she had, there was nothing I could do about it.

If I could do it all again, the one thing I would change remains to be Julie’s pajamas. In knowing the blue color of the walls, I would have put Julie in a lavender color. I think lavender would have allowed her to pop out against the blue walls giving that entrance the oomph it needed while remaining true to the nature of the character.

As a whole, I felt that all of the technical aspects came together beautifully. One moment that I found to be particularly enjoyable, in which the sound and costume design complemented each other perfectly, was when Gwen comes out from her room in Act II. After taking a few steps out into the hallway at the top of the stairs, she is noticed by her mother and dramatically runs back to the safety of her room. As she turned and ran off, the air caught her long, sheer gown, and it seemed to dance to the sounds of the live pianist on stage playing theme music. I felt that all of the aspects working together ultimately amplified the drama that was the character’s reality.

Another moment burned vividly in my mind’s eye, came during the final moments just before the curtain closed—as Fanny lay lifeless in her chair with Julie by her side. The theatre was silent and the lights slowly faded out. In those moments,

when the light captured the distinct and similar auburn color of the women's hair it was a gentle reminder of their relationship. The beauty and intensity of those final moments was magical, as all of the elements came together to create a stunning theatrical experience.



Figure 82 Final Moments after Fanny's Death

Throughout the dress rehearsal process I continually made small changes in order to get everything just right. I wanted to eliminate anything that might catch an audience member's attention, taking them out of the world of the play. For instance, some pieces, like Tony's shirt for the fight scene, were blindingly bright white under the lights so we dipped them down and they were not a distraction.

By "pay-what-you-can," which was technically our fourth dress rehearsal, and the first of two previews with an audience before opening night, all of the small changes had been made. I felt very relieved, especially because I think I got to a point where I became a little bit obsessive over the smallest of details. There were the fussy details like buying shirt studs and cufflinks for the men—nit-picky, but still in the realm of rational. Then there were the things like choosing a nail polish color for Julie.

On the day of "pay-what-you-can" I brought the actress playing Julie in to get a manicure. As they got started on her they told me to choose a color to paint them. In previous discussions with the makeup designer, I knew we wanted them to be red—I must have tested twenty different shades of red before I narrowed it down to five! Finally choosing "Big Apple Red," because of its name, as I walked out of the salon, I came to the conclusion that it was time for me to let it go. I had done all that I could and all that was left for me to do was trust in myself and in my designs.

Opening night came around, I was excited to see my parents and my grandparents, but I was also nervous about meeting expectations. Not only the expectations of my family, but those of my colleagues, the department, and the community of patrons who have supported Swine Palace and the Music and Dramatic Arts College over the years.

As I sat in my seat, I had to practice great restraint in order not to get up to sneak back stage to “check on things” one final time. I kept imagining all of these terrible things happening to the costumes, but through a series of reality checks, I convinced myself that even if all of the costumes suddenly disintegrated into a pile of ash, there was not really much I could do (especially since stock was across campus).

The lights went down in the house, it was finally happening. As the curtain rose, the stage was revealed, and the audience gasped at the beautiful set, which they would come to know as Fanny’s apartment. Feeling excited for them, I could not help but smile as I thought about the show that they were about to see and the surprises that were in store for them.

During the show, I found myself taking mental notes on the tiniest things, as if I were still in dress rehearsal. I kept having to repeat to myself, “Let it go. Let it go.” Also, I could not help but look around at the faces of the people in the audience, hoping for a facial expression that would clue me in to what they might be thinking. I was awkwardly caught “staring” a few times, and oddly enough, I did not care if they thought I was crazy, I just cared about what they thought of the show.

The audience seemed to enjoy the show, laughing at all the appropriate moments. It was exciting to look around and see so many people actively engaged in something that I helped to create. As for me, sure—I thought it was great—I could not really expect to be surprised by some “deeper meaning,” after all, I had just seen it five nights in a row and every waking moment of the previous four months had revolved around this show.

Following the show a reception was held in the lobby, at which time I was flooded with compliments about the costumes. It was all very exciting and I felt very proud of my work. It was particularly exciting when the head of the department walked over and congratulated my family. He also told us that he had just had a conversation with a patron who jokingly asked him, “So, what hot shot costume designer did you fly down from New York to do the costumes, and how much did that set you back?” Smiling, he replied, “Not a penny. One of our Grad students designed them!”

As the weeks passed, our production of *The Royal Family*, was deemed a great success. In a review in *The Advocate* newspaper, it was described as a “visual feast”(Cullen). All of these things were exciting to hear. As the initial excitement wore off, and I moved on to other projects, the play continued to run for about two and a half weeks.

I continued to get compliments on the costumes and although I was still proud, I began to lose the sense of ownership. I often thought that more credit was due to the decade in which it was set. The 1920’s is known for glamorous clothing so I felt like no matter what they wore, as long as it was period, they were going to look good.

Closing night came around and I decided to go see the show one final time. Having never sat in the balcony before, I decided now was as good of time as any. Because there was no need for the audience to use this space, I was the only one in the balcony.

The view was different from way up there and as I looked around and studied the splendor of the Art Deco plasterwork, I suddenly became the only person in the theatre. I was brought back to the first day I stepped foot in the Shaver. Remembering how, with

my camera in hand, I walked up and down the aisle, taking pictures that would come to inspire so much of what was about to be presented before me for the last time.

The curtain went up and funny enough, I was anxious to see what happened. Not focusing too meticulously on the costumes, and looking at it with an appreciative eye rather than a critical eye, I was able to relax and enjoy all of the aspects of the production work together. I was so proud of our team.

Sometimes all it takes is a step back. As I sat there, physically as far from the stage as I could be, and having had moved farther away from the production mentally and emotionally over the previous weeks, I have never felt so close and as part of something as I did during that final performance. For the first time, I was an audience member and I felt as if I were experiencing the story for the very first time.

Reminded that the first time I had read the script was the true first time that I experienced the story, I began to regain some of the ownership of my work. I think that since I was closer to the production stage of things, where it is mostly about making it look good, I had forgotten about all of the thought and meaning that went behind each of my designs. I was reminded that I had not just put a bunch of pretty clothes on people; I had helped to bring a character and a production to life.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

In being given this design opportunity, I have learned that the ability for adaptation while remaining true to your aesthetic is a delicate balance, essential to the end result. The end result—the play, on stage, in the Shaver Theatre—was deemed a great success. I was very proud of how my designs added value to the production as a whole. There are so many aspects that go into such a production, the direction, the acting, the set, lighting, the sound design, -and my part- the costumes. I have learned that designing is an arduous collaboration of work and talent that through communication and trust can weld magnificent portrayal of stories and the characters in them.

In retrospect, one of the most valuable lessons learned is the importance of getting my team “on board” immediately. I believe I focused too heavily on my own tasks and did not engage my team and get them on a progressive track. I have also learned that an awareness of an inevitable obstacle does not render that obstacle easy to overcome. It simply means the ability to remain flexible is all the more important. Although it was known that it would be challenging to get a show up and running so soon after moving into to a new environment, as well as operating with fewer shop staff, we persevered and got it done.

In conclusion, I believe that the technical and design courses taken throughout my graduate career here at LSU, as well as the abundance of practical opportunities, gave me the tools required to have confidently undertaken the Costume Design of *The Royal Family*. In turn, I feel I have gained the knowledge and skills required to be a professional in the field of Costume Design.

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Appendix A: Cast

Glenn Aucoin II	Fingers
Joshua Ryan Dawes	Perry Stewart
Jason Duga	Della
Alexander Galick	Jo
Michelle Guidry	Kitty Dean
Josephine Hall	Julie
Richard Holden	Howard Dean
Justin Huff	Stilts
Kurt Krause	Emile
Sam Malone	Tiger
Anthony Marble	Tony
Chad McClelland	Waif
Cristine McMurdo-Wallis	Fanny
Natalie Mejer	Miss Peake
Yohance Myles	Gil Marshall
Thanh Phan	Tun-Tun
Nick Rhoton	Oscar Wolfe
Emily Rodriguez	Tease
Sarah Smith	Gwen
Maxwell Oliver Thornton	Gunga

Appendix B: Production Staff

Production Manager/Technical Director	James L. Murphy
Scenic Designer	Ron Keller
Scenic Technician	Brad Smulyan
Scene Shop Assistants	Steven Bailey, Christine Baniewicz, Joshua Ryan Dawes, Peter Le
Properties Master	Jim Bussolati
Assistant to the Prop Master	Whitney Whetstone
Lighting Designer	Ken White
Master Electrician	Ken White
Graduate Lighting Assistants	Nick Rhoton and M.F.A students
Light Board Operator	Adam Waguespack
Sound Designer	EJ Cho
Assistant Sound Designers	Almeda Beynon, Jacob Sullivan
Sound Board Operator	Melissa Laplace
Sound Shop Assistant	Alex Galick
Stage Crew	Taylor Barton
Wig Designer	David H. Lawrence
Make-up Designer	Lauren Wilde
Costume Crafts and Millinery	Michelle Hathaway
Costume Shop Foreman	Billie Jo Fisher
Costume Stock Manager	Natalie Mejer
Wardrobe Supervisor	Ryann Pinkerton
Wig and Make-up Supervisor	Sara Boyd
Wardrobe Crew	Katie Slaughter, Chelsey Payne
First-Hand	Tracy Robinson
Drapers	Billie Jo Fisher, Robin McGee, Katie Johnson
Stitchers	Sara Boyd, Caroline Cormier, Jessica Griffin, Artie Johnson, Elizabeth Texada, Abbey Vitrano
Vocal Coach	Joanna Battles
Dance Choreographer	Molly Buchmann
Fight Choreographer	Nick Erickson
Fight Captain	Jason Duga
Composer	Glenn AucoinII
Director	John Dennis
Assistant Director	Robert E. Lee, Jr.
Assistant to the Director	Annemarie Stassi
Stage manager	Karli Henderson
Assistant Stage Manager	Garrett Gilbeau
Assistant Stage Manager	Victoria Ruiz
Dramaturge	Neal Hebert

Vita

Originally from Welsh, Louisiana, Katherine Johnson, informally known as Katie, is the daughter of Wayne and Carla Johnson. After graduating from Welsh High School, Katherine attended the University of Louisiana at Lafayette where she received her Bachelor of Science degree in apparel design and merchandising. Upon graduation, Katherine plans to pursue a career in creature/character design and special effects makeup .