

COSTUME SYMPOSIUM 2004

Teaching Costuming: Sharing Strategies-Creating Solutions

*Hosted by Mary Washington College
Fredericksburg Virginia*

August 5-7, 2004

We all know the scenario. We get our first teaching job at the State University of Anywhere, and we agree to tackle a 4-4 teaching load in a BA, BFA, or MFA program, designing 2 productions a semester. Then something happens, a slight panic envelopes us as we are sitting at our desks trying to decide how to provide the best education within the confines of our discipline, realizing that our formal training is significantly different than the situation in which we now find ourselves.

This year's costume symposium Teaching Costuming: Sharing Strategies-Creating Solutions, is an attempt to stem that panic by providing participants with three days of intensive sessions geared toward strengthening participants' teaching methods in the classes of the costume curriculum in all academic aspects: BA, BFA, MFA, and conservatory. And by not focusing on one-degree granting environment for the entire symposium, we all can cross-reference ranges and styles of teaching, in order to meet the specific challenges imposed on our discipline by the academic environment.

As costume designers and educators we understand that costume construction skills are costume construction skills regardless of degree level. However, we also know that there are specific challenges imposed on each costume course by the degree focus, and it is not always immediately clear how best to meet those challenges. Hopefully, by defining what we all have in common as well as determining the differences, we can decide what parallels--if any--may be drawn between degree structures, leaving us all with new strategies or affirmations of existing strategies enhancing our teaching.

In a moderated working session format, participants will define challenges relevant to individual costume courses, and then explore possible solutions by sharing personal teaching strategies used to meet those challenges. The sessions are moderated by the conference coordinator and a co-moderator having expertise in the area of the session. In addition, a costume director from a Washington DC professional theatre will share their observations relative to preparing students to function in the professional world.

After an introductory session defining and investigating both general and specific pedagogical challenges related to different degree structures, the symposium will move to focused working sessions for each of the costume areas. Sessions will be devoted to teaching costume construction and technology; costume design; costume history;

make-up design; and teaching all costuming skills in a single class offering. All the symposium participants will receive a CD-ROM with copies of materials provided by members in each session.

And of course, as has come to be expected, there will be a road trip! The second day of the symposium is a day trip to Richmond, Virginia. Participants will be treated to a curator-led tour of the Valentine Museum's costume and textile collection as well as tour the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, that houses an excellent collection of Faberge eggs and related ephemera, as well as exquisite Art Deco and Art Nouveau furnishings and accessories. Finally, a wine and cheese reception at the James Monroe Presidential Museum in Fredericksburg will feature mid-19th century clothing, jewelry, and shoes from the Monroe Family.

*The symposium is **August 5-7**, and will be held on the **Mary Washington College campus in Fredericksburg Virginia**. Fredericksburg is a truly historic city having not only been the site of the Civil War Battle of Fredericksburg (from the college one can walk to the hill-side where confederate soldiers waited for and later fought the advancing union soldiers), but also having been home to George Washington and members of his family. One can visit George Washington's birthplace Ferry Farm, tour Kenmore, the home of the Betty Washington Lewis, George's sister. And of course, one can also visit George's mother's home nestled in the quaint downtown. For those less inclined to answer the call of history, one can take an extra day and head to Washington DC, hop on the metro, and tour G-Street Fabrics, catch a show at the Shakespeare Theatre or Washington Opera, or visit the National Gallery, National Textile Museum, or Cochran Gallery.*

If you have any questions please contact the symposium coordinator Kevin McCluskey at 540 654-1979 or kmclusk@mwc.edu