

Xxxxxx Productions

Is proud to present

Much Ado About Nothing

Costume Design Notes and Sketches

Costume Designer: xxxxx xxxxxx

Welcome to Our Production

Xxxx Production welcomes you to a World of Shakespeare presented to you, new and improved in the 21st century.

One of our first new productions, is our stage play *Much Ado About Nothing*. Set in the modern era in a small town in the heart of Italy, this play is sure to present you with an evening of fun filled entertainment, light hearted humour and a true Shakespearean experience.

Costumes in the play:

Costumes play a vital role in a play. They convey character and personality through the use of colour, fabric and other symbols.

Each costume in this play has been carefully designed and constructed to represent each character portrayed. Some represent a journey which a character has taken in the play while others reflect the characteristics that set one person out from the rest.

Costume plays a vital role in both film and theatre and costumes in this production are no different to the rest.

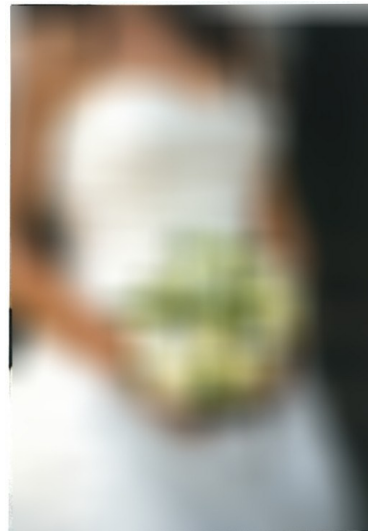
Costume design notes and sketches use general statements to demonstrate some insights into how women are represented in the play

Introducing the Characters

Hero:

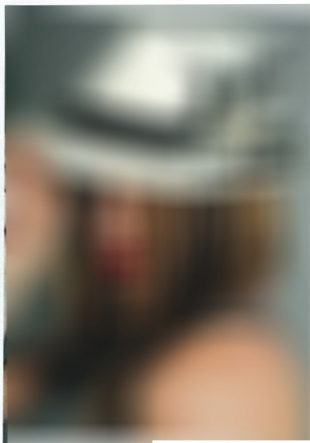
A picture of a woman in a modern wedding dress

A quiet and shy woman, Hero, daughter of Leonato, is one of the play's female protagonists. She is wrongly accused, however maintains her innocence. Costumes in this play will be highlighting this innocence as well as her inability to stand up for herself due to the roll of men in the play



Beatrice:

A modern picture of a woman tipping her hat



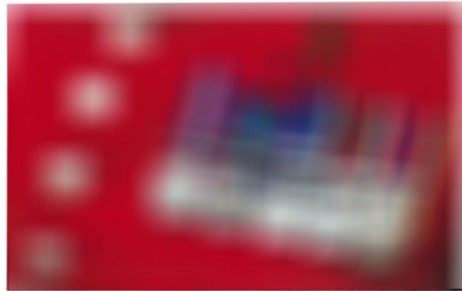
A witty, confident young woman, Beatrice, niece of Leonato, is the play's other female protagonist. She begins the play as a sharp tongued woman who is afraid to admit her love for Benedick. By the end of the play she marries Benedick, a changed woman after standing up for her cousin and opening herself up to being loved. Costumes in this play will reflect this change from a witty tomboy to a

loving young lady.

Claudio:

The returned prince Claudio is one of the play's male protagonists. He falls in love with the beautiful Hero, daughter of Leonato. A shy man Claudio convinces his friend

to tell Hero of his love. However, one thing leads to another and Claudio in the altar. By the end of the play, Claudio realises he always loved Hero and marries her. Costumes in this play will reflect his respectable status and high ranking achieved in war. He will almost always be seen in a military uniform.



A row of medals on a military uniform

Benedick:



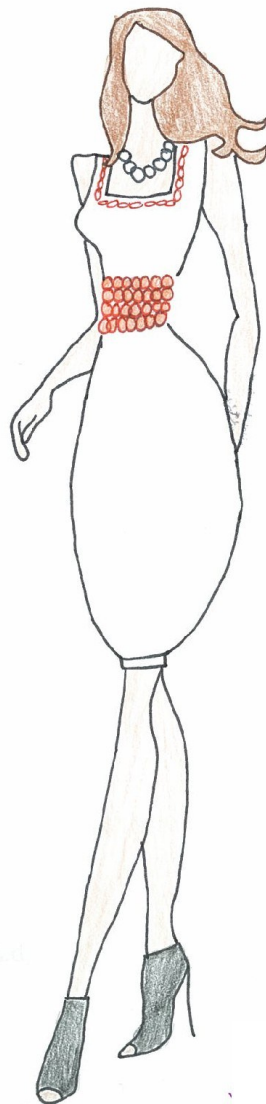
A picture of a Venetian mask

Not unlike Beatrice, Benedick begins the play as a witty and arrogant man, making sharp tongued jokes. However when he discovers that he loves Beatrice, he changes into a love-driven and considerate person. He stands up for what he believes in, supporting Hero through her accusations, as well as mocking his friends they tease him for being lovesick. Benedick's costumes will reflect his pride and honour as well the change from being a witty man to a love-sick man, and, like Claudio, he will almost always be seen in his military uniform.

Hero's Costume

Act 1

Scene 1



About Hero's Costume

In Act 1 Scene 1, Hero is to be wearing a dress with a pearl necklace. This is representative of her good will and her honest nature. Later in the play, Hero will be seen wearing dresses of a

similar style, however the colours will change due to her accusations: they will become a mix of black and primary hues, then gradually become white again as her innocence comes to life.

The Bodice– The bodice is made to Hero's size; it conforms to her waist. This tight hold is representative of the tight hold men have on the women's society; they don't have any freedom. The use of polyester, a heavy and stiff material, symbolizes the stiffness of dolls and objects, the way men sometime viewed women in this play. The white colour is representative of her purity and goodness.

The Skirt– The skirt was purposely created with a large flare to represent a bauble or a large round object. This bauble symbolises how women were represented as objects things that could be exchanged without their consent. The cotton material the skirt is made out of, is thin and light yet durable. Its white colour is representative of Hero's innocence and goodness.

The Waist– The waist of the dress is made of elastic, also representing the tight hold of men in society. The orange colour is representative of Hero's courage and the confidence in herself when she is wrongly accused.

The Necklace– the necklace with alternating large and small pearls is representative of her innocence and beauty.

The Shoes– Hero is wearing deep red, almost purple, pointy stilettos. These are very feminine and suit her age and dress.

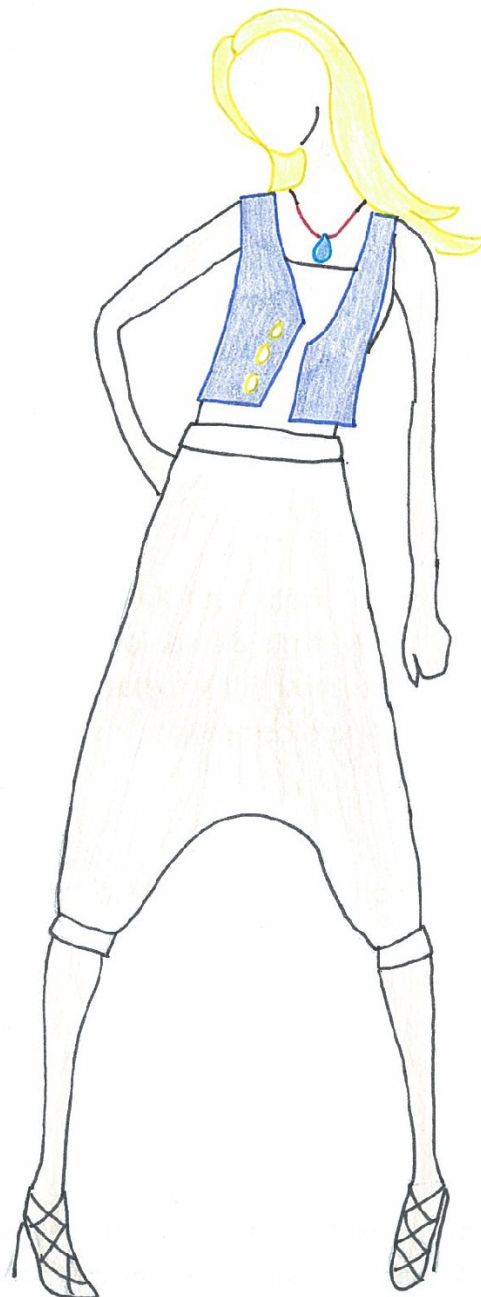
Other features:

- The lines in this design are very straight and refined, there isn't much freedom like the women's lives it is very defined.

Jayden briefly refers to the role of women in the play throughout the costume descriptions

Beatrice's Costume

Act 1
Scene 1



About Beatrice's Costume

In Act 1 Scene 1, Beatrice is seen to be wearing harem pants, a tank top with a vest and single charm necklace. This symbolises her tomboyish nature. As she progresses through the play becoming a less fiery and more feminine person, her costume will reflect that as

she will be wearing more dresses instead of pants and vests.

The Harem Pants– The flare and slight volume to the harem pants are representative of the bit of freedom that comes from the light-heartedness of Beatrice's character. The choice to put Beatrice in pants was in relation to the boyishness and tough nature of her character, however the use of the harem pants still relates to the femininity inside her. The use of cotton material, a durable yet soft fabric is representative of Beatrice's feisty yet gentle character. The colour cream symbolises the pleasantness and the softness of her nature.

The Tank Top– The tightness of the tank top refers to the strictness of female life without any freedom or choice. The choice of a shirt without sleeves, leaves the arms open and free to show off, as was expected of the women to find a husband. The use of cotton represents durability, while the use of the colour white represents her goodness in standing up for Hero.

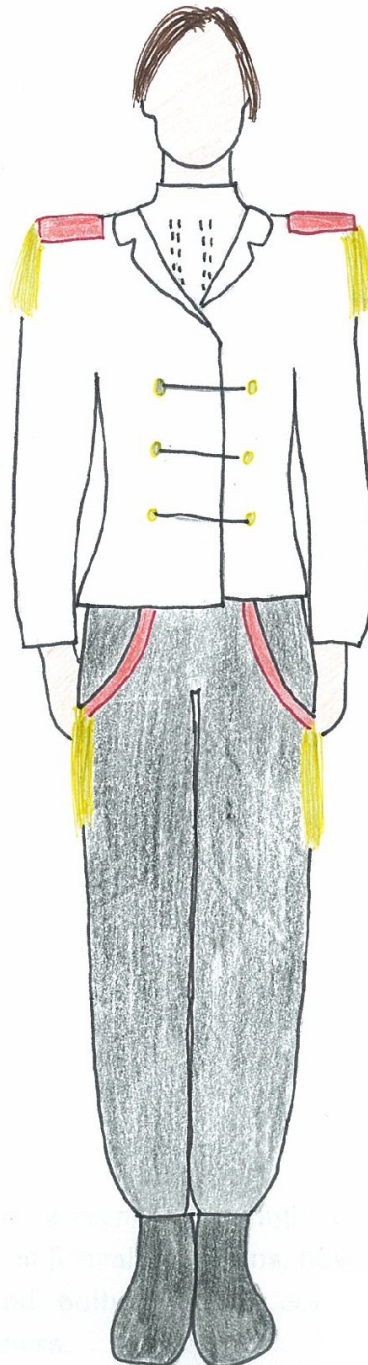
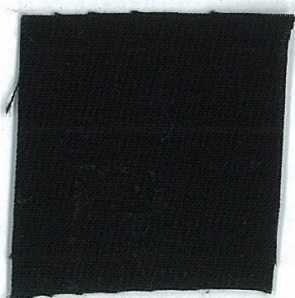
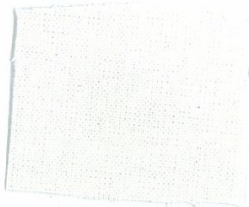
The Vest– In contrast to the femininity of the tank top, the vest is representative of the tomboyish side of Beatrice i.e her 'merry war' with Benedick. The use of denim fabric, a tough and resistant fabric is also reflective of Beatrice's character. The colour blue symbolises loyalty, such as Beatrice's loyalty to her cousin and believing everything she says.

The Necklace– Beatrice may be a feisty, witty and sharp tongued character with a boyish nature but she is still female. The necklace brings out this femininity in her as every female has to accessorize. It consists of a blue, teardrop shaped charm, again representing her loyalty, on a red chain.

The Shoes– Beatrice is wearing sneakers with a wedge heel. They suit the tomboyish side as well as the feminine side of her character.

Claudio's Costume

Act 4
Scene 1



About Claudio's Costumes

In Act 4 Scene 1, the wedding scene, Claudio is wearing his military outfit as it is his wedding. This represents his status and high ranking, due to both his soldier status and being a man as men

held authority in Elizabethan society. Throughout the play, Claudio is seen in pants and shirt casually. Formal scenes like the wedding, he is wearing his military uniform.

The Jacket— The military jacket that Claudio is wearing is seen on all the other returning soldiers as well. This jacket consists of several elements relating to the pride, respect and honour the soldiers carried about with them. The red and gold shoulder pads represent power and prestige. The horizontal fasteners of black and gold reflect formality and prestige. The base of the jacket is made of white felt, a fabric which is known for its strong, flexible and insulating properties as well as feeling soft. The white represents the goodness of soldiers on and off the field.

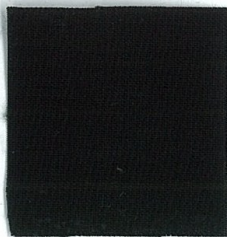
The Pants— The black cotton pants represent formality and honour. The pockets are lined with red symbolising power and with gold symbolising prestige, similarly to the shoulder pads.

The Shoes— The soldiers wore boots for practicality and comfort. They were easy to put on and take off, useful for tramping over various terrains and quick to clean.

The Shirt— Just underneath the jacket can be seen a white collared shirt. This kind of shirt would usually be worn at formal occasions, however here it is worn as a statement of power and authority. The colour white is representative of the good will of the soldiers.

Benedick's Costume

Act 2
Scene 1



About Benedick's Costumes

In Act 2 Scene 1, Benedick is wearing his outfit to the ball consisting of pants, a shirt, a vest and a mask. This is representative of his difference from the rest of the male society; his different views on marriage and women. As the play progresses, and as he falls in love, Benedick begins to wear suits and blend in with

the rest of the male society as his opinions waver.

The Pants– The formality and the manliness of the grey pants is reflective of the authority and power the male society had over the female society. The fabric of the pants are commonly made of polyester with viscose/ rayon. This fabric combination creates a comfortable and luxurious texture as well as creating aesthetic appeal. The colour grey symbolises formality and such as the power of men.

The Shirt– The shirt is worn for more traditional and formal reasons. At a ball, it is only right that a white shirt is worn out of custom. The use of cotton, with it's light and soft qualities, reflects Benedick's light-heartedness and free spirit. The colour white represents his purity and goodness, for example when he is the only soldier to question Hero of Claudio's accusations.

The Vest– Instead of fitting Benedick in a traditional suit and tie, Benedick will be dressed in a vest. The idea behind the vest is to still portray manliness, however set Benedick apart from the rest of the men as he will be the only one in a vest. It is representative of his nature, his different views on marriage and different reactions to situations. The use of the tough and resistant denim is also reflective of his character, while the colour red symbolises power, strength and conquest.

The Mask– This mask was created entirely and purposefully for the character of Benedick. The mask of a joker or a jester is a pure reflection of his light-hearted character and playfulness. It is also a reference to Beatrice's words " he is the prince's jester" (2.1.203). The colours have been carefully chosen for this mask, yellow symbolises his joyfulness, the orange symbolises impatience and the red symbolises his excitement and energy.

Jayden's response would have benefitted from addressing, in more detail, the notion of how the designs are making meaning for the audience

My Reflection Statement

The chance for reflection allowed me to look back on what I created, the choices I made the troubles I had, the ways I overcame these problems and what I could have done better given another chance.

Overall, I am proud of what I have achieved. I am proud of each and every detail in each and every costume made., I am proud of the detail and care with which I wrote my final outcome which is reflective of what I set out to achieve.

I came across many choices while finishing this project. The first of these was what type of play I would choose. I first chose one based on the Disney Princes and Princesses®, however this idea has been discarded. I then came up with a modern day, Italy-based, interactive and interesting play. This play would allow me to create modern day costumes that thoroughly reflected the aspects of the characters wearing them. Creating modern day costumes would be easier to make as well, rather than sewing Elizabethan costumes. The next choices I had to make were what I was going to dress the characters in, what colours to make them, what fabrics to use and how to set about making them. While designing my costumes I found that decisions I made in the outfits would be directly related to what they represented in the play. For example, the colours I chose to dress certain characters in had to be representative of their personality i.e. I couldn't dress Hero or Beatrice in black, that would convey a message to the audience that they are essentially evil characters that turn bad. Therefore Hero and Beatrice are seen in the light shades of colours such as white and cream. The same principle applied to the fabric choice. The different fabric used also had to be carefully chosen. This choice was also related to when I created the costumes for real, I did not use some of the actual fabrics noted as this was a lot of fabric. I also had to make a

The reflection is very personal rather than an analysis of a particular scene and does not address the audience or purpose of the play

decision when it came to buying mannequins of fit my clothes. One of the male dolls I dressed, originally came in a formal outfit, that wore a white shirt and grey pants. I decided to use these items of clothing to save having to make everything myself. This also came in handy when I found myself running out of time to create my outfits. These were some of the most important decisions I had to make in order to complete my project.

Along the way, I met many obstacles and barriers in the way of completing the task. The first came when creating pattern pieces to cut out fabric. If the pattern pieces were wrong the entire outfit would be either too big or too small. It took a long time but eventually I got the pattern pieces right and I was ready to cut out the fabric. When going to purchase fabric, I soon realised that with the small amounts of fabric I needed it would be impractical to buy a little bit of each. Therefore I chose to buy all cotton fabric in many colours to distinguish a difference. The name of the real outfit fabric has been included in the explanation of the outfits, however the fabric swatches are the fabric used in the sewing. Other obstacles included not small enough buttons and having to create them using beads, elastic not sewing by machine and sewing all elastic by hand, adding embroidery here and there to add interest and depth to the outfits. I also nearly ran out of time creating all these outfits as well as the report.

If I had a chance to redo my project or create another one along similar lines there are many things I would do extra or so differently. To begin with, I may have chosen not to make the actual outfits, or in fact create only two or three of all designed. I may have decided to use different characters; it would have been fun to design costumes for the bad characters, maybe Don John and Borachio, or the watchman, maybe Dogberry and Verges. I would have also set about my project differently, I would have designed all

Analysis of a particular scene would have reduced the amount of irrelevant information and allowed deeper exploration of the way costume designs enhance characterisation and engage the audience

my outfits, written my report and then sat down and made the clothing. Doing everything at once was a bit too much and it meant that I was also confused with what I was doing. In relation to this, I would have managed my time better, paced myself, maybe have created a plan. There were many things I could have improved on or done differently in my project, however I am still pleased with the final outcome.

Reflecting back on the 5 weeks or so that it took for me to complete this project, I find myself very proud of what I managed to achieve. There were many things that I could improve on or do differently had I been given a second chance, but the final result is something I am still very proud of. There were also many important decisions I had to make along the way, each important in it's own way to change what the final outcome of the project would look like. There were also many barriers and obstacles along the way that I successfully overcame to create a Year 10 Shakespeare Representation Task that I am proud of.

Xxxxxxx Productions Thankyou for Joining us

Xxxxxxx Productions thanks you for joining us in our World of Shakespeare. It has been our great pleasure to entertain you with our great modern yet authentic Shakespearean experience and hope you will remember it for years to come.

We hope you enjoyed *Much Ado About Nothing*, the first of what we hope to be many Shakespearean productions in our World of Shakespeare.

We hope to see you again very soon. Perhaps even for our 2013 production of *Romeo and Juliet*.

Grade Commentary

Jayden has demonstrated a sound understanding of the play and its characters, with some brief insights into the representation of women by Shakespeare. The reflection statement is a description of the process rather than a discussion of the choices made to suit the task's purpose and audience. Some misunderstandings are evident such as in the referencing of the actual fabrication of costumes. While some connections are made between insights into the play and the forms created, the comments tend to be general and are expressed using straightforward language, structures and vocabulary. Jayden's work sample demonstrates characteristics of work typically produced by a student performing at a grade C standard.