Is There a Doctor in the House?
#1b - Argon

PEACE CRIMES
MIKE

Hay Fever
Sorel Allen - Act I

www.claponcue.com
Jason Lee Resler
Costume Designer

jason@claponcue.com
www.claponcue.com
Is There a Doctor in the House?
Minnesota Centennial Showboat, St. Paul
2009

Artistic
Director: Kenneth Noel Mitchell
Music Director: Denise Prosek
Scenic/Properties Design: Kit Mayer
Costume Design: Jason Lee Resler
Lighting Design: Marcus Dillard
Sound Design: Martin Gwinup

Cast
Argon: Skyler Nowinski
Toinette: Elizabeth Griffith
Cleante: Noah Puttermann
Angelique: Katie Weber
Bonnefoy/ Beralde: Dustin Bronson
Beline/ Nurse: Anna Hickey
Thomas/ Louison: Mikaela Krantz
Diaforus/ Flourant: Michael Mercier
Male Understudy: Nathaniel Nesheim-Case
Female Understudy: Jessica Blum

Is There a Doctor in the House?
#2 – Cleante

Is There a Doctor in the House?
#6 – Angelique
For The Pope and the Witch the director Bob Rosen and I were faced with the challenge of a comedy set in the Vatican. It was important that the various characters be clothed in the uniform appropriate to their position, and the director was keen to show the extensive hierarchy that exists in the Catholic Church. However, the costumes needed to not get heavy and solemn, as could easily happen with liturgical wear. With Sister Gabriella we wanted to emphasize her status in the play as a working nun. She is the personal attendant to the pope, a somewhat lowly role when surrounded by the various cardinals, bishops and priests, however she is a trusted confidante. In the second act, when the pope is in danger from conservative followers who dislike his new doctrines we wanted to show her new importance through the clothing and so we chose to add a cape and change the shoes to something more appropriate to her new found status.
For this production we wanted to add a bit more of a back story for the second cardinal, a part that typically is treated as a supernumerary. We chose to make him the head of Vatican security and a friendly foe to Cardinal Pialli, the Pope’s advisor. One of the things that I liked about the photos I found of cardinals was the small variations in the way they wore the uniform of their rank and how that was able to convey so much about personality. As the younger cardinal he is eager to prove himself and advance in position. We chose to use extra lace on his rochet and to have him wear the biretta hat to show his over exuberance. As the play progresses and the Pope’s life is in danger he becomes a more prominent figure in the Vatican as security becomes important, therefore he adds the full cape as well as the dark glasses and an earpiece. Pialli counters by wearing the biretta as well and adopting the same red shoes the Pope wears as he hopes to be considered as the next Pontiff.
In the play we see two Swiss guards, one a captain. From the beginning I knew that they needed to be in the traditional uniform of the guard, however, upon researching further I discovered that the uniform is different for captains. The captain’s uniform is similar but made of burgundy velvet with gold trim. The Director and I decided that the iconic image of the Guard is really a more interesting costume and we also wanted them to act as a pair for the majority of the show. Therefore, we decided to keep them both in the multicolored uniform. We did, however, adopt the different colored plumes to signify which was captain and which was guard. I also chose to go with the ruff style collar since it is more unusual and, in its way, comical than the standing collar option.

For the little friar the director wanted to expand this role in the play. The original text only refers to the friar in the last scene of the play. In our production the friar was present throughout the play as an occupant of the Vatican. The play opened with the friar using a dust buster on the rug as preparations for a papal audience are being made around him. Later during another scene he is cleaning the windows, dust busting the curtains and lint rolling the pope.
For the costume design of the Pope himself we wanted to show the weight of the church that rests on his shoulders. The first time we see him he is in a look that we referred to as his “underwear”. This is what he wears under the cassock, no one would ever really see him in this but we decided that he is running around like a little kid not wanting to get dressed, avoiding the guests who are waiting for him. As we near the end of the first act the Pope must finally greet the children that have come to see him. The director and I wanted to make this process a ceremony. The pope was dressed on stage by two nuns to music provided by his on stage musicians. For this to work out the director and I worked closely determining exactly what garments to use, what order they were put on and how they were worn. There were rehearsal items pulled, and as soon as the actual pieces were ready they went into rehearsal for the actors to work with so that it would feel like a daily ritual. The designs on the garments were imagery and iconography of Jesus because the director and I wanted to make a connection between the Pope, who dies for his beliefs, and Jesus. The garments of the Pope design were as follows: the “underwear/ tunic,” the cassock, alb (with rope belt), rochet, stole, cope, zucchetto and mitre.
Postcards from Earth was a devised piece written over the course of the rehearsal process. The piece was a series of scenes that loosely related to each other. Some scenes were continuations of previous scenes from earlier in the play and some were single scenes, poems and musical or dance pieces. The entire production was based around the social responsibilities of people today, so they included things like global warming, land development, disease, fame, politics and love. The design was all about creating looks on the spot as things developed over the tech process. The director and I decided on an all black base costume that would serve as the neutral base for the many characters they became during the piece. As we began to pull the show together the director, cast and I found ways of incorporating characters into multiple scenes. This meant they would be a supporting character in one scene and then a primary character in another fleshing out a more rounded understanding of each by tracking them through the show.
For Hay Fever director Sari Ketter and the design team chose to emphasize the theatricality of the family in the design. I chose to put the family in bright colors and theatrical garments, something like one might think of as part of a Gilbert and Sullivan opera. Sorel was one of my challenges in the design process. She does not really fit in with the rest of the family. Everyone else has an occupation or hobby, and Sorel just seems to have none of that. With that in mind Sari and I determined that she was the awkward daughter, not really fond of her family but part of it none the less. For the first act I chose a pants look for her as Sari and I were trying to tie the family to the “bright young people” movement which was happening in England at the time. Pants on women was one of the trademarks of the movement. The top was chosen for the ‘tom boy’ quality and angular design as I wanted to create an angular motif for the family.
For Judith’s first act costume we wanted to create a garden dress that would be theatrical while still being stylish and would draw attention as soon as she appears on stage. We chose red and gold as Judith’s colors, and created a dress in a golden yellow that would both fit her color palette and stand out on stage. Judith is the consummate actress, and the goal of the design was to help her always upstage everyone else.

For Simon I decided upon a collegiate look. The director, Sari, and I decided that Simon was in college and at the time of the play was at home for the summer break. He fits into the collegiate type though he is not necessarily interested in school he is just going because it is expected that he attend his father’s alma mater.
As I began to design the guests, I decided to separate them visually from the family. They are intruding on a foreign world of theatricality that they are about to get sucked into. I decided that the guests would be in more neutral and pastoral colors, the colors of the English countryside. I also wanted the guests to be less theatrical and more realistic in their dress while still maintaining color relationships with their “pair” in the family. For Richard, the director and I wanted him to be an English gentleman. Proper and stiff, he is the opposite of the family, which is the reason Sorel likes him so much. To that end, for the first act we put him in the Norfolk jacket with plus-fours. This decision allowed him to be a bit funny, yet still wear the clothing that would be appropriate for a weekend in the country. I also liked the conservative feel of the Norfolk look; though popular, the style was tried and true by the 1920’s and certainly something that Richard would approve of. The fabric I chose for the suit is an excellent moss green color, perfect for the English countryside, with a rust colored plaid that matches Sorel.

For Act two we wanted Judith to be in her signature red and we wanted her to be stunning. This is, after all, the act in which she works her magic on the guests. The vibrant red keeps her at the center of everyone’s attention, while the addition of rhinestones enhance her theatrical nature. The bias cut nature of the dress complements the actress’s figure and the simple lines provided a flattering shape to the garment.
In act three we had two objectives for the costumes, I wanted to reinforce the distinction between the family and the guests and also couple the guests together as we hope they will end up after the play ends. This means visually pairing Richard with Myra and Sandy with Jackie. Within the family we wanted to meld the various color palettes of the individuals together and bring Sorel into the color palette of the family to show her acceptance of her status as a member of this crazy family. For Jackie specifically, we chose her to be the only guest to come to breakfast not fully dressed. We decided that she would be dressed in a barrowed a robe from the Japanese room where she slept, and which has given her nightmares all night.
Artistic
Choreography of “Set and Reset” by: Trisha Brown
Direction of “Set and Reset/Reset”: Katrina Thompson Warren
Assistant Direction of “Set and Reset/Reset”: Will Swanson
Composer: Laurie Anderson, “Long Time No See”
Lighting Designer: Deepa Dharmadhikari
Set Re-Design: M. Maria Lopez
Costume Re-Design: Jason Lee Resler
Video imagery created by the performers
Rehearsal Director: Will Swanson

Stage Manager: Stephanie (George) Miller
Assistant Stage Manager: Cameron Nelson
Director: Toni Pierce-Sands

Cast
Lindsay Bullock
Emily King
Tristan Koepke
Jin-Ming Lai
Chris LaPlante
Nick LeMere
Stephanie Shirek

Understudies:
Katherine Lung
Renee Starr

Costume and Set Designs based on the elements of the original design for “Set and Reset”:
Original Costume and Set Design by: Robert Rauschenberg
Original Lighting: Beverly Emmons with Robert Rauschenberg

Based on the movement and choreographic structure of “Set and Reset” created by Trisha Brown in 1983.

Due to the boundaries set by the original choreographer (Trisha Brown) my costume design for “Set and Reset/Reset” needed to remain similar to the original Robert Rauschenberg design. Katrina Thompson and Will Swanson, who reset the original choreography, wanted to make some small changes to make the design our own. I retained the basic shape and the see-through quality of the fabric while making small changes to the design of the pants and the women’s shirts to remain similar enough to the original to meet the design requirements while adding our own take on the piece. The printed fabric was created specifically for the piece with an airbrush stencil process.

Photos by: V. Paul Virtucio
Peace Crimes was an original production produced by the University of Minnesota in conjunction with the History Theatre of St. Paul. The play chronicles a few years in the lives of eight young men, mostly University of Minnesota students, who raided several draft board offices around the twin cites and were arrested. The group had previously raided the state director’s office successfully and destroyed the draft cards of thousands of young men living in the twin cities, allowing them to choose whether to re-register or not. For the ensemble we choose to look at protest photos. The director, Ron Peluso, early on commented that the play is a protest, not a parade. That became the inspiration for the piece and specifically the costumes. I looked at pictures from protests both for and against the war, and pulled looks from those images to populate the play. The members of the ensemble have to play a number of roles, some against the war and some for it. Sometimes they are simply reporting statistics or information.
For the eight guys we chose to remain true to what they described as their look during that time period. However, the director and I chose to limit their color palette to red, white, blue, and black in order to tie them together as a group and also to tie in the design of the set, which included an American flag floor treatment. The costume design for Cliff was a challenge because he is presented as a conflicted character. Facts about the real person are vague as Cliff was not very well known by the other members of the group. He also took a plea deal after his arrest, and was the only member of the group to not serve jail time. He did not remain in contact with the other seven raiders. His character was pieced together from the few stories the others remembered and conjecture, so understanding exactly who he was is quite a task. In the end the Cliff was to be the sort of everyman of the story, the average young man who, when faced with an A-1 status, chooses to fight the system.
Above research:
Mike Theriault and The Real Minnesota 8
Is There a Doctor in the House?

#11 – Madame Nurse