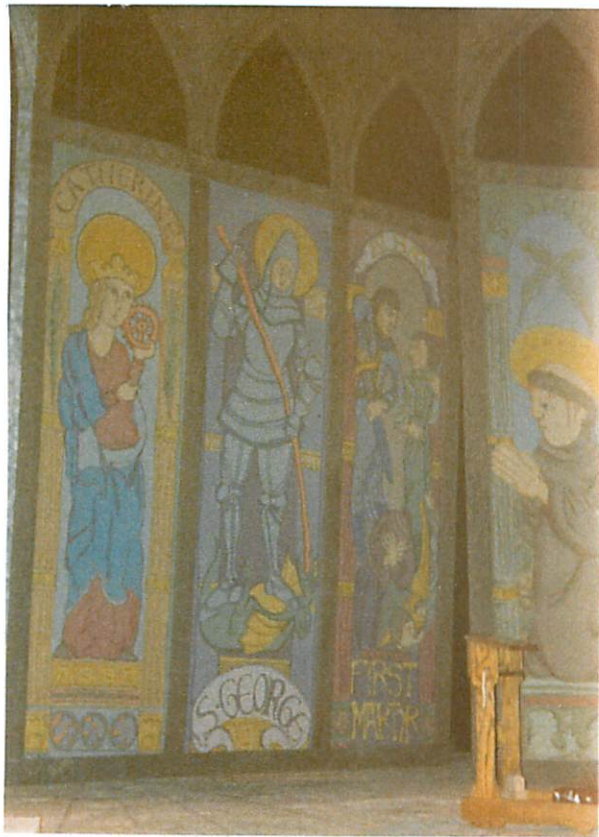


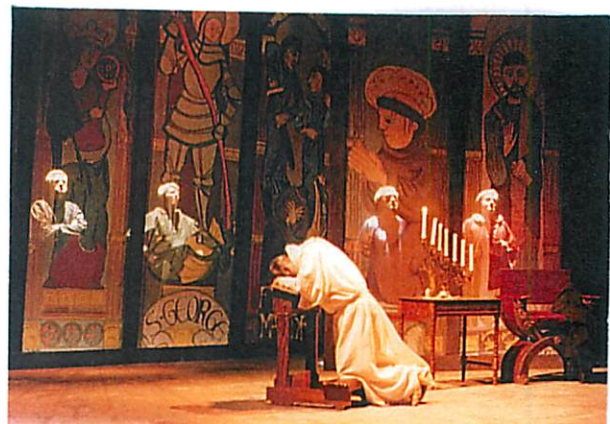
SCRIM

Scrim is an open-weave fabric, like stiff cheesecloth or very dense netting. Without any light behind, it is opaque. With light on it or just behind it, audience can see through it. It can be coloured with very thin paint or with dye. For outlines of images on the scrim, use permanent felt-tip markers. They also work as a "stop" to help prevent paint and fabric dye from bleeding from one area to another (rather like lines of wax in batik work).

1. Outline design onto large paper. Lay scrim on the design. Trace outline onto scrim with permanent felt-tip marker. Use smooth, even, long strokes. While tracing, hold scrim firmly to prevent it from bunching up. Alternatively, draw the outline directly onto the scrim without using a paper pattern.
2. Brush dye or VERY thin paint into areas to be coloured. SUSPEND the scrim between tables or chairs so that paint or dye does not spread across areas.
3. Scrim can be painted before or after being stapled to its frame or hanging support.
4. If scrim is flown in and out during performance, it may need weight ~ thin dowel ~ at the base to prevent it from floating too freely or from being entangled in stage lights.
5. If lines and shading (like a drawing) are desired, use oil pastels. Work on a hard surface, not in mid-air.



Murder in the Cathedral ~
scrim stained glass windows
Above: no backlighting on murderers
Right: murderers visible with top-lighting



WOOD GRAIN

If a specific type of wood grain is desired, especially if reference is made in the dialogue ~ eg: "lovely oak paneling" ~ check patterns in a decorating handbook or paint store pamphlet about wood finishes. Often, a general sense of wood grain is all that's needed because of the audience's distance from the set.

1. Base-coat the entire surface with 2 or 3 tones of brown. (see 2-tone roller wap-wap, or brush slap-slap)
2. If a woodgrain rocker is being used (a 3-star job), work in sections of the surface to be "wood". Apply a thin coat of the darkest brown to a section. Immediately, use the woodgrain rocker to create a grain pattern. As the rocker is dragged along the paint, in a straight line, gently rock it up and down. Be careful not to follow the same pattern of rocking all the time. Otherwise, knotholes will line up unnaturally. Apply a thin coat of the darkest brown in the next section to be grained. Repeat the process until the entire surface is covered. IMMEDIATELY clean wood rocker grooves THOROUGHLY to keep them in good shape for later painting.
3. If graining is done with a brush, work in a free-hand motion with a variety of thickness of brush. This is a 4-star job since the painter needs to have good control and the ability to visualize the effect from a distance, while working close-hand.
4. To create the sheen which is typical of woodwork, brush on a thin coat of water-base verathane. Depending on the final look under stage lights, use satin finish. Apply with a brush or sponge, NOT a roller. The roller tends to create milky bubbles and spoil the paintwork. **NEVER SHAKE VERATHANE**. It will turn milky and wreck all the hard work. Just stir gently with a stir stick.

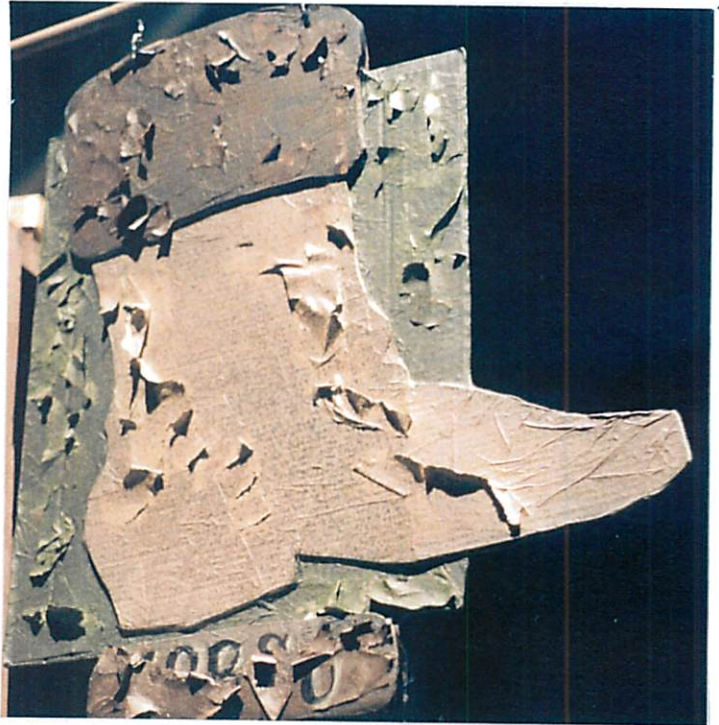
Below: wood grain rocker in *Trap for a Lonely Man*



WEATHERED WOOD AND PEELING PAINT

Pictures of actual peeling paint and weathered wood are useful guides.

1. Base-coat or prime with 2-tone roller wap-wap in colours suitable to set, in case this first coat ends up showing through subsequent layers of paint.
2. Using 2 colours suited to set design, do a 2-brush Slap-Slap. If suitable, let evidence of bristles show, rather than trying to smooth over their traces. For weathered wood, ensure the brush lines (if they show) logically follow the wood pieces, whether they are attached (as if they are real) horizontally or vertically.
3. If bits of peeling paint sticking out from the surface are desired, brush in bits of brown paper towel, torn into small pieces AS YOU PAINT. Let paper bits stick out. There is enough glue in latex paint to adhere paper to the surface. White cleaning paper towels will not work. Brown paper or tissue wrapping paper are best.
4. Spritz two final colours for strong effect of texture and ageing.



MARBLE

Major advice ~ Know what different kinds of marble look like.

For instance, Breccia, Sienna, Egyptian, Italian, Red Derbyshire, Vert Antique, and St. Remi are distinct in colour, veining and texture.

1. From set design, determine what type of marble is desired. Pictures from paint shops and decorating handbooks are useful guides for the right "look".

A ROUGH GUIDE

2. Do a 2 or 3-tone roller wap-wap over entire surface with 2 or 3 tones of colour. A rounded surface may not suit roller treatment, Instead, use a 2 or 3-tone brush slap-slap or 2 or 3-tone sponge tap-tap.
3. Use sponges and brushes (both bristle and foam) to added markings and blotching.
4. For a typical marble sheen, cover surface (once entirely dry) with water-based verathane. Avoid glossy verathane, since it may reflect too much stage light. But satin or semi-gloss may serve the purpose. **IMPORTANT WARNING: DO NOT SHAKE VERATHANE. STIR GENTLY.** Otherwise, it bubbles on the set as you paint.



Left: marble walls in *Ring Round the Moon*
Above: Sploosh & splatter as marble "base"

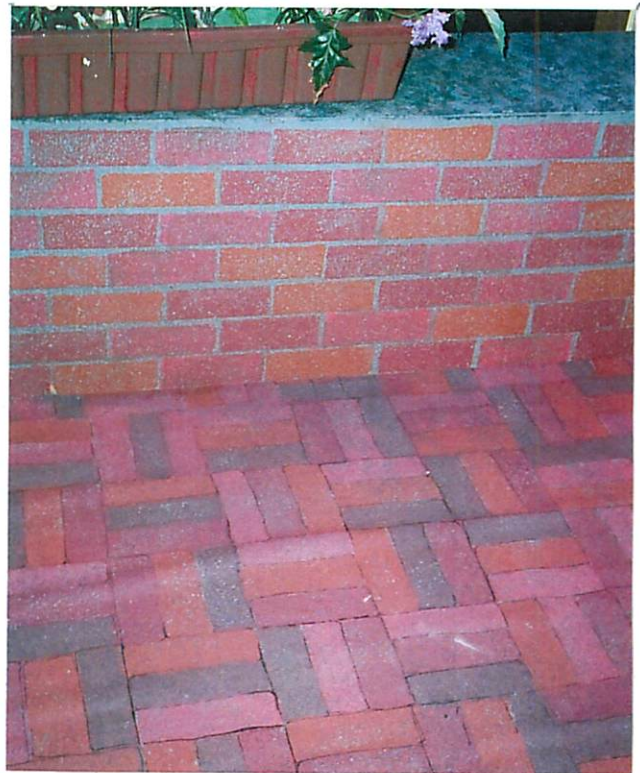
BRICKWORK

1. From set design, choose brick colours ~ same or varied. Decide mortar shade. Beige? Grey? Dark grey? Is there a pattern to the brick colours or brick shapes?
2. To enhance texture, paint the entire surface in 2 tones of mortar colour.
3. Measure for the width of the brickwork horizontally. Include ONE dimension for the mortar plus one dimension for the thickness (height size) of brick. If sponges are a realistic brick size in width and height, use that measurement as the guide. When mortar paint is dry, mark brick measurements up edges of surface to be bricked. Work from the same end, so that lines don't end up crooked ~ as might happen if lines are marked DOWN one edge of a flat and UP the opposite edge.
4. Use carpenter's chalkline with blue powder to snap horizontal guidelines. Chalk can be GENTLY wiped off the surface once brickwork is done. If a chalkline is not used, a piece of wood can guide pencil lines IF THE WOOD IS ABSOLUTELY STRAIGHT.
5. Prepare trays of brick colour(s) to dip brick-sized sponges in. Gently touch the entire surface of the sponge onto the surface of the paint. Be sure that the edges and corners are coated slightly with paint, to get the full brick shape. Scrape the sponge gently along the edge of the tray to wipe off excess paint. That helps ensure the paint doesn't ooze into the mortar. GENTLY lay the sponge into position along the brick line. GENTLY press the entire sponge. For a brick wall, start at the bottom of the wall. As in real-life bricklaying, ENSURE THAT THE BOTTOM ROW IS A LINE OF BRICKS, NOT MORTAR. Work horizontally along a guideline. Leave a realistic vertical straight gap of mortar between each brick. **To prepare brick sponges, dampen them slightly.** Totally dry sponges won't work. Neither will really wet ones.

TIP: Hardware / painting stores carry attractive brick and stone wallpaper, which is easy to apply and remove. If the budget allows for the purchase, considerable time is saved.



Sponging bricks onto flat



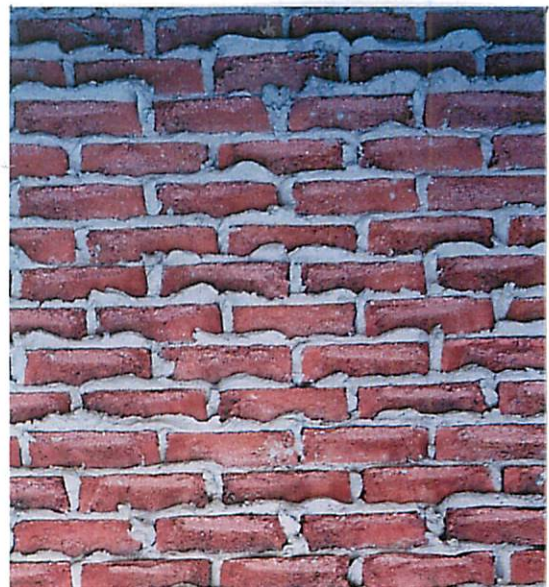
sponged brick wall & patio

BRICKWORK ...continued

6. For the second row of bricks START WITH A HALF-BRICK so that the vertical mortar lines are staggered as in real life. Otherwise, the wall looks wonky. The brick sponge doesn't need to be cut in half. Just gently press half of it onto the wall.
7. For realistic texture and to increase the look of light and shadow, one side of the brick sponge can be dipped on one colour and then immediately dipped in a second related colour. Then, one colour is pressed gently onto the surface, and the sponge is turned over to gently press the second colour into the same spot, even while the first paint layer is still wet. Otherwise, two separate sponges can be used. Fairly soon, the sponge will be simply all the same colour as the wet paint merges on its surface. Wash the sponge. Squeeze it ALMOST DRY. Continue sponging.
8. Depending on the final visual effect desired, high lights and shadows can be brushed into logical position. For realism, use irregular strokes with a thin brush, to avoid getting an unrealistic line of consistent thickness.
9. For really rich texture, once all work is complete and carpenter's chalk has been removed, spritz two tones of brick or mortar colour not already used. The final effect desired will determine of the order of spritz light, dark, or even medium.



Sponged bricks on flats



Real brick walls

FLAGSTONE ~ Walls, Patios, Pathways

1. Consult set design to determine the look of the flagstone area. What are the stones laid on ~ dirt? concrete? gravel? Are stones fairly uniform in colour? Or do they vary with some dark, some light, some medium? Are there reddish or brownish tones?
2. Prepare paint colours according to design needs.
3. Use **Two-Tone roller wap-wap** to cover entire surface in the colours which will appear between the stones ~ dark earth-tones? Dark greys? Light greys?
4. Consult set design for sizes and shapes of stones ~ rounded? very angular?

IRREGULAR, NATURALISTIC EDGES ALONG STONES

5. When background is dry, use 1" wide painter's tape to lay out the pattern of the stones. What is being taped over is the dirt / concrete/ gravel onto which the flagstones are laid. Keep varying the width of the tape by folding it over on itself to create a realistic variety of spaces between stones. Ensure the tape is firmly positioned so that new paint doesn't creep underneath it and spoil the "outline" effect. 1" masking tape can also work. But avoid leaving it on the fresh paintwork too long, lest it picks up paint as the tape is being removed.
6. Sponge various stone colours into the stone shapes now outlined with tape. Some of the "background" colours may be allowed to appear in the stones to add texture.

GEOMETRIC, SHARP-EDGED STONES (see pictures below)

Use 1" wide painter's tape to "map" out the pattern of stones. Be sure tape is firmly attached so that paint won't creep underneath and roller won't lift it up. Use Two-Tone or Three-Tone Roller Wap-Wap as colours of stones.

7. **GENTLY** remove tape. This step can be done before the sponged paint is totally dry. **WARNING** * Ripping away tape in a big swoop can ruin the work just done!
8. If desired, brush on naturalistic highlights / shadows ~ depending on source of light in the play. For instance, is there moonlight or sunlight or electric light?
9. If possible, SPRITZ on two tones. Whether a light or dark is the final tone depends on what will work best on stage under lights for "the look" of the play. For instance, a comedy could have lighter flagstones. Darker flagstones might suit a tragedy.



FAUX STAINED GLASS

1. Use matte shower curtain liner as glass (cheap at most "dollar" stores). Avoid shiny plastic. It reflects too much stage light. To get rid of folds, hang the plastic for a few days before colouring it. Use chisel-tip permanent felt-tip markers. Sharpies are my favourite brand. **Work on a smooth work surface to prevent any texturing on the work space appearing in the felt tip work.**
2. A pattern / design needs to be drawn on paper, using a black permanent maker.
3. Cut the plastic 2" larger than the design. That margin is needed to staple the plastic to the window frame, once the colouring is done.
4. Tape the paper pattern to the back of the plastic so that the plastic doesn't move while it's being coloured. Use "invisible" tape. It has a matte finish so that you actually can see it on the plastic (despite its label). Painters tape is useful, too. But masking tape can leave a sticky trace. Fold over a bit of the tape end so that it's easy to find and grip when it's to be removed.
5. With black marker, trace the outline of the glass shapes onto one side of the plastic. Use smooth, even strokes to capture the look of leading used for stained glass work.
6. Gently remove the plastic to colour **THE BACK SIDE**, according to the design. If coloured markers are used on the same side as the black, it can smear into colours.
7. With smooth, even, long strokes, add colours according to the pattern. Since black outlines are on the reverse side of the plastic, take the colours into the black lines **JUST A BIT** to prevent clear gaps which would look like holes in the glass. It may be necessary to intensify the colours or eliminate marker stroke lines. If so, re-colour the same shape on the same side of the plastic but work in a different direction.
8. When colouring is done, re-draw the black "lead" lines **ON THE COLOURED SIDE**.
9. If necessary, re-colour shapes on the first side, avoiding black smudges / smears.
10. Staple the plastic to the back of the window frame. Work the way artists stretch canvas. Staple opposite edges so that the plastic can be stretched taut **WITHOUT BEING RIPPED**. Depending on the size of the plastic, this step can be a 3-person job (at least) ~ people to hold the plastic in position + people to staple. Use a JT21 stapler, since a T50 staples might tear the plastic.
11. Once the plastic is in place, do a visible black outline around the entire glass window. This signifies leading that frames glass work and attaches it to the window frame.



Stained glass in *Mousetrap* window



Stained glass in *Ring Round the Moon*

FABRIC AS WALLPAPER

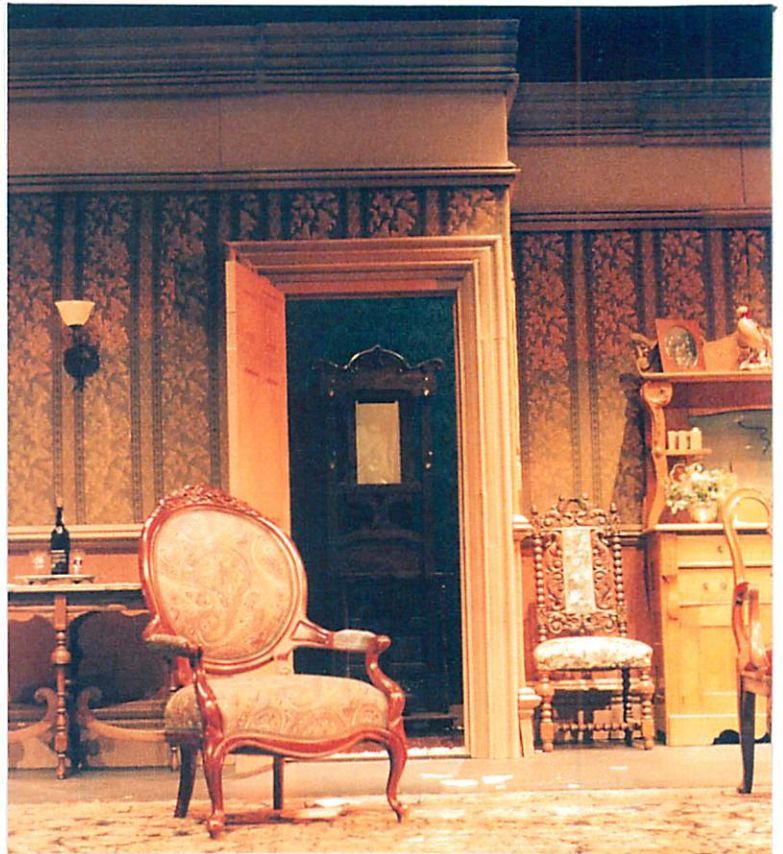
Wallpaper can be done as a stencil. But if a large area is to be covered, and if the budget permits, fabric can be stapled to flats. A lot of time can be saved. So can the fabric. Sometimes, fabric stores have big sales! A JT21 stapler is better than a T50, since its staples can tear fabric and be hard to remove.

Aligning the pattern can be tricky. It's easier to work flat rather than upright, especially if ladders are required. Receding side-edges of flats that show need to be included in calculations and patterning, if a $\frac{3}{4}$ round isn't used at the join, as part of the woodwork.

Wallpaper fabric in *Mousetrap*



Wallpaper fabric in *When We are Married*



SCENIC ARTISTRY ~ QUALIFICATIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCENE PAINTING COORDINATOR, HEAD SCENIC ARTIST, AND SET DESIGNER

SCENE PAINTING COORDINATOR

QUALIFICATIONS of PAINTING COORDINATOR

- good on detail and organization and likes managing activities
- enjoys working CALMLY with people of widely varied ages, types, and levels of expertise
- has a car and credit card for running errands and fetching equipment and materials
- doesn't mind waiting a bit for reimbursement, instead of working from an advance

RESPONSIBILITIES

- establish painting schedule
- assemble painting crew (**THE SCENE TEAM ~ WE WORK IN STAGES**) from group members, the community, schools
- ensure materials / tools / equipment are ready for painters (see checklist below *)
- ensure that set / scenery / pieces are ready for painters to work on
- record students' Community Service Hours, sign their log books, write letter for portfolio
- ensure painters tidy and clean up after each painting session
- take snapshots of The Scene Team in action & make collage for front of house display (if approved by production team. It seems to encourage people to volunteer for scene painting.)
- keep orderly way of working so that tools aren't misplaced during or after painting session
- ensure brushes & rollers are thoroughly cleaned for later use & to reduce costs
- on opening each new can of paint, use long nail to hammer 8-12 holes around top of rim so that paint runs back down into can. This practice makes easier re-sealing of paint can.
- label and number flats in order for set up in theatre **THIS IS CRITICAL!**
- pack materials & equipment that may be needed for touch ups at theatre after move-in
- assemble small crew for touch ups at theatre after set is up
- supervise touch-ups with head-scenic artist

* EQUIPMENT / MATERIALS CHECKLIST FOR THE SCENE PAINTING COORDINATOR

- paints according to set designer's directions / colour charts
- long AND short stir sticks and paint can openers
- rubber mallet to close paint cans. **DO NOT USE HAMMER.** It ruins lids & causes dried paint and makes cans difficult to re-open. Or simply stand on the paint can to press lid in place. Don't stamp on the can!
- brushes (bristle AND sponge), rollers, long handles, trays (at least 8-10) to occupy big team
- rubber gloves (separate into 2 clear plastic bags, labelled Left & Right to make easy finding of pairs of gloves, or just one)
- paint roller spinner to clean rollers efficiently
- sponges (especially brick-sized ones. NB: the huge rounded sponges are not particularly useful. Their outline shows too easily. Their density creates inefficient painting. Their smoothness doesn't suit texturing. They can't be cut into useful sizes / shapes). Have plenty of sponges to occupy large team working with several colours at the same time.
- carpenter's measuring tape, pencils, crayons, yard sticks (**NOT METRIC** – theatre is Imperial)
- 4-6 pairs of SHARP, strong scissors. Include at least one squeeze type for lefties.
- carpenter's chalk-line and re-fill powder
- plenty of masking tape in various widths
- painter's tape (green, for masking and defining edges ... removed **SOON** after painting!)
- white gift-wrapping tissue paper (for texturing and covering cardboard / styrene)
- carpenter's glue
- big 5-gallon empty plastic pots with lids for mixing / storing big supplies of paint
- pump sprayers for final spritz as breaking down (after all the building up)

continued....

HEAD SCENIC ARTIST (head scene painter)

NB: Head Scenic Artist MAY be the same person as the painting coordinator, but not necessarily. The difference is that the **Head Scenic Artist MUST be artistic and understand painting for theatre**. The painting coordinator doesn't have to be a 3-star painter. It helps, when making painting decisions. But fine-tuned decisions come with practice. The coordinator is more an activity manager than a visual artist.

QUALIFICATIONS of HEAD SCENIC ARTIST

- must have artistic sense of colour, texture, detail, composition
- must be able to "see" the large picture AND the details TOGETHER at the same time
- able to mix suitable colours from given paints if they aren't bought new to designer's plan
- know the suitable consistency of paint for applying to scenery
- be creatively resourceful in solving problems of colour, texture, etc. that may arise
- understand how to get visual effects desired by set designer and director
- understand how to do break-down techniques, after colour & detail have been built up
- able to mix and apply spritz as final layers of texturing & breakdown

RESPONSIBILITIES

- capture designer's intentions for the set – colour, texture, detail, breaking down
- demonstrate & coach painting techniques
- ensure consistent OVER ALL "look" is being maintained
- mix the paints for required colour and suitable consistency
- spritz final breakdown or special effects. **CRITICAL to spritz flats IN THEIR ORDER on stage**
- ensure pump sprayer for spritzing is PERFECTLY CLEAN AFTER EACH USAGE
- after set-up, help with touch-ups that require theatrical / artistic eye and hand

SET DESIGNER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- in consultation with director, establish visual interpretation of play
- do rendering and or sketches, model, floor plan, construction diagrams, elevations
- advise on stage props and set decoration (set dressing) for consistency with design intentions
- explain model and visual concepts at first read-through of play (or when desired by director)
- attend occasional rehearsals in order to see how set is being used / played on in order to ensure that the set serves the conceptualization of the play AND the actors' actions. Adapt set to suit alterations that may be required as rehearsals progress and ideas develop.
- provide colour schemes and fabric swatches for scene painting, costuming, lighting
- consult with set construction team to resolve problems they may encounter and to adopt solutions they may create
- consult with lighting designer to coordinate best visual effects to capture the play's intention
- give OC technical crew the floor plan, elevations, and hanging necessities before move-in
- be at move-in from very beginning to ensure positioning of set and hanging necessities
- during move-in and technical rehearsals, ensure touch-ups are completed. Critically examine set from every vantage point in the audience – front & back rows, extreme sides, centre

IDEAL TIME-LINE FOR SET DESIGNER (at least a 6-8 month lapse of time)

- consultations with director from concepts to details
- script analysis for set requirements (Jane Coryell's workshop lists the steps in detail)
- period research (if necessary) and consultation with director
- sketches and consultation with director (and SOON with lighting designer, head of construction, costume designer, set dressing team for stage pops & set decor)
- scale model, diagrams
- explanation at first read-through
- consultation with painting coordinator and head scenic artist
- check-ups of on-going set painting for consistency of intended effects
- move-in guidance
- final check of touch-ups between move-in and opening

ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE SET

Handbook of Scene Painting

Dr. Jane Coryell

Pictured below ~ Jane painting set for *Amadeus*
West End Studio Theatre, Oakville, 2002

Since 1979, Dr. Jane Coryell has designed over 100 sets for community theatre groups, schools, and professional companies in and near Oakville, Ontario. She has received 9 awards and 6 nominations with Theatre Ontario. In 2002, the Oakville Centre for Performing Arts recognized Jane's outstanding contributions to theatre with their prestigious annual Appreciation Award. In 2006, she received the Oakville Community Spirit Award for volunteerism in the Arts. For 20 of her 30 years of high school teaching, Jane taught Creative Drama from grades 9-11. For 15 years of her teaching career, she taught Visual Art. Her PhD is in Art Education (1995, University of Toronto, O.I.S.E.). On most of her productions, she was head scenic artist and painting coordinator. This handbook is based on that expertise and experience.

