DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 355 594 CS 508 128

AUTHOR Aiex, Patrick K.
TITLE Theatrical Makeup Enhances the Drama.
PUB DATE 93
NOTE 7p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Creative Expression; *Dramatics; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; *Production Techniques
IDENTIFIERS Drama in Education; *Theatrical Makeup

ABSTRACT

With a little practice, even an amateur or classroom technician can learn the fundamentals of simple theatrical makeup. The principles of stage makeup and its application begin with a knowledge of the materials and the tools used to apply them. Base, liner, rouge, eye shadow, lipstick, and finishing powder are the basic materials. Base comes in four forms: greasepaint, cream stick, liquid, and cake. Only two applicators are needed: sponges and brushes. The base must be applied evenly on all exposed parts of the body. Other considerations are special makeup needs, such as prosthetics, scars, bruises, aging devices, and other effects. The end result should be the creation of a dramatic world where, very often, nothing is as it appears. (PA)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Patrick Aiex
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

# Theatrical Makeup Enhances The Drama

Patrick K. Aiex

1993

ED355594

The world of theatrical makeup is a world where illusion is king. The practitioners of the craft are masters of the arcane art of making what is already there more pronounced, and in many cases, make the impossible a reality.

With a little practice, even an amateur or classroom technician can learn the fundamentals of simple stage makeup.

The principles of stage makeup and its application begin with a knowledge of the materials. Like street makeup, they each have a role designated by their names.

Base, or foundation makeup, is to create an even tone that closely matches the actor's actual skin tones, except with higher degree of pronunciation that is suitable for exposure under the brilliant stage lights (unless, of course, the actor is portraying a character of different racial origins than his own). Base comes in four varieties: greasepaint, cream stick, liquid makeup, and cake makeup. Greasepaint is inexpensive, and many small theatrical companies favor it for this reason. It does have the drawback of coming in a limited range of colors. The greasepaint can, however, be mixed to create almost any shade imaginable. Care must be taken with greasepaint; if it is not applied with sufficient care, it can often have the appearance of a mask, or it may streak. A last note of caution: powder the coat of makeup adequately. If this is not done, the makeup will have a shiny or greasy appearance under lights.

CS508128

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Cream stick is more expensive, and hard to find. It is in most cases only carried by stores specializing in theatrical makeup. Cream stick is perhaps the most common types of foundation used by theatrical or film professionals. The reasons for this are many: it has more duration than greasepaint, and comes in a wider variety of shades.

Liquid is generally used for body painting, and can be found in many cosmetic stores, or again in specialist stores.

Cake makeup is used most by film and videotape makeup people due to its easy availability, broad range of color, and the fact that it never runs under the type of lighting used in those two applications. Available in both professional and cosmetic counter-quality, it is perhaps the most widely used foundation of all by high school and college theater groups.

Liner is primarily for under the eyes and cheekbones. It is used to bring these features into view of the distant audience. If such liner were not used, the eyes would disappear, and the cheekbones would appear flat. Eyebrow pencils and mascara are equally essential to bring out the eyes.

Highlighters come in two broad classes: eye and cheek. These highlighters give character and additional color to the face of the actor. Cheek highlighter is better known by its street name, rouge. Lipstick is also considered to be a highlighter. It saves the lips from becoming pale, thin lines on stage.

Finally, there is powder. Powder is used to soften the sometimes harsh makeup effects for a more realistic look, and it has

the further benefit of making the makeup coat resistant to sweat damage.[1]

Almost of as much importance as the makeup is the material to remove it. Cold cream is easily available and inexpensive, but there are many products available in specialist stores specifically formulated for the removal of stage makeup.[2]

The tools used to apply the makeup are again almost identical to street tools. Brushes are used for the eye shadow, cheek rouge, and for fine detail work. Sponges are used for the application of the base.[3]

Application is relatively simple; only a few rules need to be remembered. When applying the foundation makeup, cover all areas that will not be concealed by costume. This means the entire face and neck, right up to the hairline and down to the collar line. The earlobes and back of the neck are usually left out by amateurs, and this is painfully obvious under stage lights. The front and back of both hands must be covered with special care. Many gestures by actors call attention to their hands, and if uncovered by makeup, instantly destroy the illusion that the actor and makeup technician worked so hard to build.

---

[1] Cummings, Richard. Simple Makeup for Young Actors. Boston Publishers: Boston, 1990. pp. 8-10.

[2] Ibid., pg. 7.

[3] Ibid., pg. 11.

The eyes must be lined in the so-called "Cleopatra" style to make them visible to the audience, and then blended to prevent any sharp, obvious lines. Shadow is added to the lids, and pencil to the eyebrows. Cheeks are lined with pencil, then rouged and blended.[4]

The most critical key to any successful makeup job is to blend the makeup as carefully as possible. Without blending, the makeup often looks "fake" and does not look natural. The word "natural" in reference to a makeup job is perhaps the greatest compliment a makeup tech can be given. It is the goal of the tech to create a believeable character with his makeup, and to prevent anyone from finding anything that may make it impossible to suspend disbelief.

After all, it is the willing suspension of disbelief that makes theatre the experience that it is, and it is in large part the makeup technician who is responsible for the actor's visible transformation into the character the actor portrays.

Special effects are a large part of the work for a makeup tech. Aging, including wrinkles, warts, grey hair, and other such things are routine in many plays, particularly Shakespearean drama.

Colored hair sprays are used for the hair, and pencil can be used for wrinkles. Warts can be as simple as balling up pieces of tissue paper, coloring them with the appropriate shade of makeup,

---

[4] Egan, Jenny. Imaging the Role: Makeup as a Stage in Characterization. Southern Illinois University Press: Carbondale, 1992. pp. 77-92.

and then glueing them to the actor's face with spirit gum.[5]

In some plays, more drastic special effects are called for. Bullet wounds, scars, and other deformities can be handled with relative ease by today's makeup tech.

Bullet wounds can be made many ways: with scar putty (also known as "mortician's wax," or "nose putty"), which is a semi-soft substance that becomes pliable when worked in the hand. It is common practice to glue scar putty appliances to the intended area with spirit gum, as scar putty is affected by muscle movement.

The second method is to do it with prosthetic appliances that are fast becoming available at specialist stores for a reasonable price. Again, a word of caution: these prosthetics must be carefully painted to match the rest of the makeup, and then blended with equal care so as not to destroy the illusion.

Scars can be made in the same fashion as bullet wounds, with scar putty or prosthetics.[6]

Other deformities include broken noses, which is a simple matter of shading the nose in a crooked fashion.

The world of theatrical makeup is a fascinating one. It is a world where very often, nothing is as it appears. Men become women. Women become men. The young can be aged to biblical proportions. The old can be made to appear younger. Across this broad continuum, any combination or extreme can be made. It is

---

[5] Egan, Jenny. pg. 102.

[6] Ibid., pg. 102.

often from the delight of an audience that the makeup technician receives his highest praise.

In my own experience as a student makeup tech, I had the opportunity to be makeup head for a production of **Native Son**, a play adapted from the novel by Richard Wright. I had to create makeup designs for twenty-six characters: seven white, the rest black. It was the most challenging job of my career as a makeup tech, and it was from an audience member that I got my highest reward.

After opening night, a gentleman in his seventies walked up to me, and told me that the makeup was so well-done, that he found himself believing that a twenty-year old college sophmore woman was actually a sixty-year old woman.

Bibliography

Cummings, Richard. Simple Makeup for Young Actors, Boston Publishers: Boston, 1990.

Egan, Jenny. Imaging the Role: Makeup as a Stage in Characterization, Southern Illinois University Press: Carbondale, 1992.

Perrottet, Phillipe. Practical Stage Make-up. Reinhold Publishing Corporation: New York, 1967.

Terry, Ellen and Lynne Anderson. The Theatre Student: Makeup and Masks. Richards Rosen Press: New York, 1971.