

Runway ready

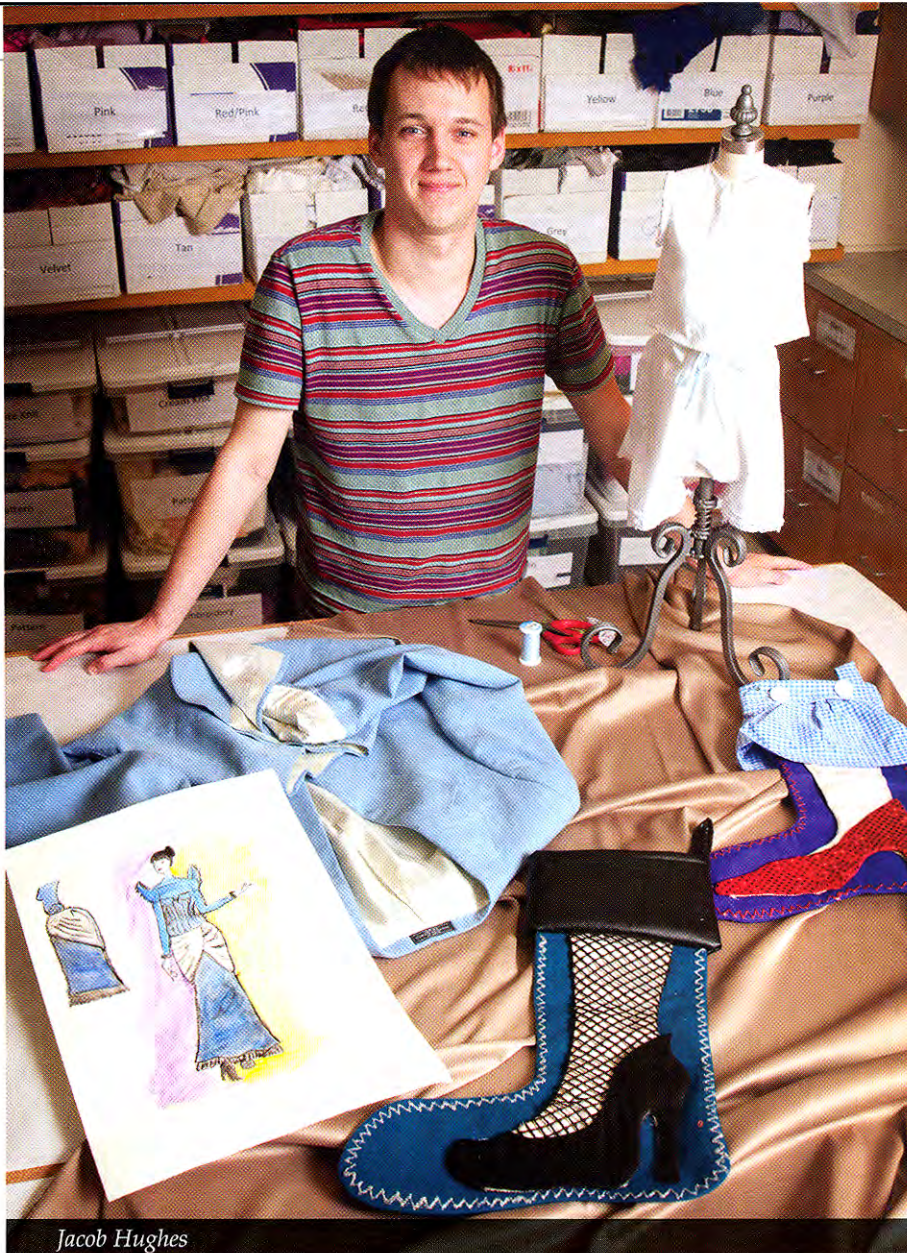
by Holly HARVEY

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Transforming into a terrifying zombie with bloody gashes and shredded clothes or an aging octogenarian with cascades of wrinkles dressed in a crisp suit is just another day for students in costuming and makeup classes. Turning makeup and fabric into something theatrical takes more than adding a superfluous swipe of eyeliner or an extra skirt ruffle. For months, students in Collin College's theatrical costuming and makeup classes research, study and manage materials to create looks that encapsulate their style as artists and designers. Before threading a needle or dabbing on blush, students learn about the design process and basic elements of design.

"Fashion aesthetic is a global way of communicating and involves elements such as texture and color, the basic elements of design," said Collin College theater professor Gina Love, who teaches the makeup and costuming classes. "The students get to explore style and design without barriers or boxes. Students learn to visualize characters through costuming and makeup and translate that through a variety of design and technical skills. They learn how to communicate through sketching, textile selection and silhouette, while pulling ideas from their own life experiences."

Students learn about the history of fashion and makeup as well. The goal



Jacob Hughes

of the costuming and makeup classes is to create accurate and inspired "looks" for a theatrical production. Students also have the chance to put their unique spin on a design, such as transforming a typical Victorian-era gown in an edgy leather bodice covered in hundreds of metal studs.

"It's an intensively collaborative process," Love said. "Students discuss the script with directors, scenic and lighting designers and other producers. Through collaborating, we determine what colors and moods communicate visually and ignite a particular feeling in the audience."

From there, students assist in the design process creating mood boards, which feature images, textures and more to capture inspiration. The

sewing studio and makeup workspace the students use come alive with the hum of sewing machines and the din of wig steam curlers.

"Going in, when you're designing a look, you pull everything out and start with a plan but everything can change," say former Collin College student Jacob Hughes, who learned all about patterns and designs in the costuming class. "When you get your hands on the fabric and you're about to start manipulating it you can be inspired to do something different—it's a great feeling."

Skills range from advanced to beginner—Hughes himself learned how to sew through the costuming class.

"Fashion design can be an intimidating craft," said Love. "But

when you think with the perspective of 'Look, almost everyone wears clothes,' it's less intimidating. The course is accessible to everyone, and we take the time to learn the basics of sewing and patterns."

For student Mitzi Barajas who aspires to be a fashion designer, the ability to improve her skills while being creative, made the classes attractive.

"I learned so much about how to sew correctly and how to sew different patterns," Barajas said. "Working with the fabric and makeup is so hands-on and allows me to be creative. The sky is the limit in terms of what I can design and create now."

Through individualized labs and apprenticeships, students practice their art with hands-on experiences in innovative makeup techniques, as well as sewing and designing costume pieces.

"Some students come in thinking only about exploring grander glamour-type makeup," said Love. "They're very surprised when they experiment

with other types of makeup, such as a full rainbow of character and aqua cake body makeup. We also work with prosthetics, mustaches and beards, masking eyebrows and adhering decorative embellishments on the face and body."

Besides learning how to manipulate fabrics and colors, students learn abstract skills as well. Time management is a huge component in designing and creating a look that can translate to a stage. It takes weeks of practice and hours sewing and applying makeup to be ready.

"Things like time management boil down to even simple things such as, 'How long does it take me to iron this? To finish hemming that?'" Love said. "Students develop the ability to come to the table at deadline with the sketch that can be produced and is on budget. They learn critical thinking and teamwork skills."

Practice makes perfect, according to Hughes, who spent weeks re-

searching his designs before finally assembling them.

"You have to practice and be confident in your design," Hughes said. "When it comes down to cutting the fabric you really don't want to make a mistake in the fabric that cost \$200."

After taking makeup and costuming classes, students can further their passion by taking related arts and drama courses such as figure drawing, sculpture and stagecraft.

"With the classes, it's sort of like being on the show *Project Runway*," Love said. "So many times, the student finds a way to make it work while learning a new skill and interjecting their personality into a design."

For more information about the Collin College theatre program, visit www.collin.edu/academics/programs/theatre.aspx. ❖

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Photo: Nick Young, Collin College.