



Amateur Theatrical Costume

A collection by Irene Poole

This exhibition is a display of headdresses and costumes made for amateur dance, acrobatic and theatrical performances.

Theatrical costumes greatly enhance a performance, helping those who wear them to characterise their role and act as a visual aid for the audience.

In contrast to professional theatre companies, amateur dramatic and dance groups generally have limited budgets for costumes, therefore requiring creative sourcing and imaginative use of materials, all the while still producing an authentic result.

Each piece in this exhibition is created using a variety of materials, mostly reused and recycled. Garments and accessories either from charity shops and car boot sales and other items from inexpensive market stalls and 'value' stores are all sourced to get maximum theatrical effect but at low-cost.

Time is taken to research the costume required, and for what type of performance it is being used. For dance and acrobatic roles, the ease of movement, effectiveness of the costume in motion and, of course, the safety element all needs to be taken into account.

The directors and choreographers will have a vision for the piece, including music, lighting and positioning. Stage accessibility for the performers is also a very important factor, as are the costume changes, which often are required to be extremely quick.

In producing the costumes and headdresses, every requirement must be considered from conception, through to design and creation. Perhaps the most valuable tools required in a theatrical costume creator are; access to lots of materials; a vivid imagination, time and patience – although time isn't always an afforded luxury!

