

# Theatre People: Head of Wardrobe

The Head of Wardrobe co-ordinates all the elements of the production process. They work closely with the designer and come up with an overall plan for how to make the costumes within a given budget. Together they decide which costumes can be shopped, taken from stock, rented, or built. They also assess the design's scope and scale, think about the work that needs to be done to execute it, and make sure that there are enough staff to do the job.

The Head of Wardrobe is employed by the theatre throughout the season. In a large company that produces shows with many costumes and requires lots of staff to get it done, the Head position is a full-time job. In other companies, the Head might also be cutting, sewing, coordinating, or buying costumes, and only hiring on extra help occasionally.

## Tasks and activities in a typical day

- Discussing requirements of show with the designer – looks, fabrics, movement...
- Discussing details of the show with Stage Management – timings, actor needs...
- Meeting with Head of the backstage dressers to discuss costume details
- Contacting and scheduling staff
- Attending production meetings
- Discussing production plans with Director of Production/Production Manager



Tools of the trade, featuring costume renderings for *The Three Musketeers* by Kurt Wilhelm

## Skills that Head of Wardrobe uses

- Time management
- Keen attention to detail
- Ability to multitask
- Good communication skills
- Excellent organizational skills
- Be able to adapt quickly to change
- Staying level-headed when things are stressful
- Ability to lead and motivate a team
- Cutting, sewing, and tailoring

## Building Abilities

There are probably lots of things you are already doing, and things you can start to do, that will serve you in a career as a Head of Wardrobe.

- Take on leadership of projects
- Participating in team or group activities to practice team-building and working together
- Learn how to sew, tailor, and make patterns – taking textiles classes in school, doing cosplay, and watching Youtube DIY videos are all great ways in!
- Learn how to analyse plays or books in English or Drama class
- Watch plays or movies, paying close attention to costumes and how they are worn
- Find organizational and time management systems that work for you
- Practice communicating effectively