

MONKEY MASKS

“Any kind of mask work has to be done with a mirror because every actor knows how to use the language of his own

body,” explains Costume Designer Susan Hilferty. “But once you start changing your body by padding it or with a mask or totally transforming it like these actors, the only way for them to understand what it is they are doing is to watch themselves in a mirror. You know your own face but this a completely different language. You feel like your are someone else or something else.”



Joe Dulude II is the original *Wicked* Makeup Designer and supervises the makeup artists on all the productions. He explained their process to create a new mask: “It starts with the actor coming in for a fitting. They try on multiple masks to see if any fit them. If for some reason

the existing mask sizes do not fit them, then we schedule them to go in for a head cast. This is when they cast the head of the actor so that they can sculpt a new mask on to the plaster head of the actor. A negative mold is made of the mask from the sculpt and the latex is poured into that mold and allowed to set. The mold then is pulled away from the piece and a mask comes out. When they come out the masks are a light yellow color. They then need to have the "hair" punched in. The hair is a thin tube of clear plastic, almost like fiber optics, that is dyed a dark brown. It is punched in through the top of the head, and bent inside to keep it from coming out. Some sort of moleskin is then glued onto the bent inside of the hair to prevent it from poking the actor in the head. Then it is coated with liquid latex and dried so that there is a smooth surface inside the head. The masks are then painted according to the actor's skin color and then the detail, contour painting will go on.



MONKEY MASKS Part 2



Makeup Artist Craig Jessup (at right), who “swings” between the various *Wicked* productions, is one of the makeup crewmembers responsible for Elphaba’s green makeup as well as a few other makeup applications during the show and the maintenance of all the prosthetics and masks. At right, Craig is repairing a spot on one of the Chistry masks. Here’s how he describes the process:



“First, I clean the area with acetone — it’s kind of like a chemical sanding to make the area smooth in order to take the paint. Plus, it will eliminate any dirt that builds up from regular wear and tear. I match up the correct shade of the flesh tone paint. Then, I layer and blend with my fingers, bringing the color up through the mask so the new paint won’t be obvious. Then I will stipple in a darker color to freshen up the contour and

highlight. Then I’ll powder the area to take the shine down and wipe powder away to mat it down.” Craig also prepares the monkey goatees that are hand-woven with human hair into the lace that is used for wig making. A self adhesive tape is attached for the actors to affix them to their chins as they make their monkey entrance. According to Susan Hilferty, “The goatee was in the early monkey sketches, transforming the face, and completing the look.”



Special thanks to Joe Dulude II, Craig Jessup, Susan Sampliner and the San Francisco *Wicked* crew. Photos: Cece Hugo