CLEVELAND BALLET

TUTUS, TULLE, AND TIARAS: A PEEK INTO THE COSTUME SHOP WITH KRISTA TOMOROWITZ, COSTUME SHOP MANAGER



HOW ARE YOU BALANCING PREPARING COSTUMES FOR MULTIPLE SHOWS AT THE SAME TIME: *ROMEO AND JULIET*, *IMPRESSIONS OF PICASSO* AT THE CLEVELAND ART MUSEUM, AND *CHOREOLAB*?

We have a production calendar on the wall that's usually six months out. We prioritize fittings based on which production comes first. If we are building a costume, that process will start months in advance, ideally. We create deadlines for ourselves based on how much work is needed on the costume and when the dancer would like to use it. We also ask up front when the Artistic Director would like to see a finished product, which may be several weeks before the show goes into technical rehearsals.

So, the short answer: it's a lot of staring at the dry erase calendar and list making, that is all subject to change on a moment's notice.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE COSTUME DESIGN FOR THE UPCOMING *ROMEO AND JULIET* PERFORMANCES?

We purchased the sets and costumes from Carolina Ballet. The design is a loose interpretation of a classic Elizabethan silhouette with a more contemporary color palette.

Fun fact, our artistic director was Romeo in the Carolina Ballet production, so his name tag is still in a few of the costumes!

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HOW IS DESIGNING AND PRODUCING COSTUMES FOR BALLET DIFFERENT THAN OTHER PERFORMING ARTS?

I have a costume design degree based in theater and musical theater with some opera sprinkled in. Working for Cleveland Ballet was my first experience with dance costumes. Someone once told me that ballet costumes need to “appear lighter than air but be strong enough to play football in…” or something like that. I also learned about the importance of partnering and how that can affect the choices you make on a costume. For instance, certain kinds of rhinestones may look pretty on a tutu, but they can get snagged on the partner’s costume or hands when they are trying to do difficult lifts or shoulder sits.

WHAT IS THE MOST INTRICATE AND CHALLENGING DESIGN THAT YOU HAVE WORKED ON FOR CLEVELAND BALLET?

We made costumes that required several dye and airbrush processes to embrace the designer’s vision. We had to airbrush each bodice piece separately before we sewed them together. The skirts were ombre dyed and then airbrush toned. Finally, sequins were added to tie it all together.