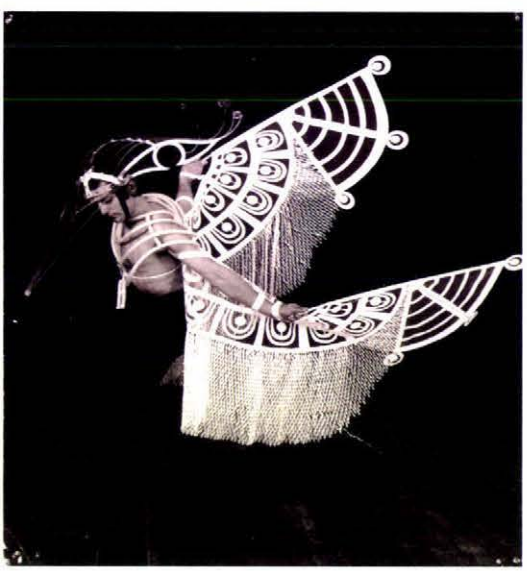
Costume Design

In

New Zealand:

Designers and their Design Processes



Green are the Islands, 1970. Japan Expo.
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Abstract

One of the aims of this research was to increase the knowledge base in the study and practice of costume design in New Zealand theatre through an investigation into the design processes and the working relationships of the costume designer and the director. The aim was to find a model for the design process used by the costume designer that is indicative of New Zealand. Is there evidence for a New Zealand aesthetic and do political, social and cultural influences affect the design process? As performance theatre ultimately depends on collaboration, the significance of the working relationships between the director and costume designer were explored.

The primary source of data was semi-structured interviews involving ten costume designers and directors currently working within the theatre industry. These case studies provided data that were divided into categories, reflected on and then analysed. Comparisons were made between the published literature and oral data in order to discover the similarities, disparities, and connections in the perceptions of costume design and the processes involved in its creation.

Key steps have been identified within the collaboration of director and costume designer that have formed a model for the design process that may be used in the production of a performance. The researcher has identified three categories; **Preparation, Production and Evaluation.** In the aesthetic of costume design for theatre, interviewees considered it inappropriate to show strong styling, as the vision generated from the script and design team is primary. Interviews suggested traits which are considered 'Kiwi' are more a flavour than a design styling and appear in approach, not aesthetics.

Results of the interviews suggest that the theatre community in New Zealand is maturing, albeit it is conscious of the need for an adequate management and communication infrastructure in the light of the current economic situation facing the performing arts. Although technical skills needed to produce costumes are an asset, costume design is frequently combined with set design and the ability to communicate ideas is regarded as being of higher value.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.0 Motivation

In 2000 I was asked to support the National Dance Archives by buying a calendar depicting costumes from various ballets performed in New Zealand in the 1960s. It included illustrations of designs plus biographical information on a well-known costume designer, Harry Baker (Figure 1.1). I realised then that information of this nature was not widely available and that it could provide valuable inspiration especially for those working and studying in theatrical costume design. This realisation triggered my desire to investigate New Zealand costume designers and the principles, processes and influences behind their work.

Figure 1.1 *Children of the Mist*, 1960. Costumes: Harry Baker. Reproduced by permission from Leigh Brewer.

Why become a costume designer? Costume design, even at a national level, attracts limited public recognition or financial rewards, unlike acting or directing. For me, costuming fulfills a passion for creating theatrical costumes and seeing a performance breathe life into them, as only actors on the stage can do. Equally, a satisfaction lies in being part of the creative realisation of a live performance. Echoed by many dedicated costume designers is the conviction that the rewards far surpass the pitfalls (Harrison, 1989).

1.1 Costume Design in New Zealand

As a small, relatively isolated country with a meager theatre audience, what impact have our origins had on the role of the costume designer and the evolution of New Zealand costume design? For much of New Zealand's history it has been difficult, if not impossible, to make a living from designing costumes full-time (Samways, 1997). Costume design may have been marginalised in New Zealand, especially during the 1990s, partly as a result of limited audiences and budgets. Most costume designers in New Zealand are artists who divide their time between two or more modes or disciplines. For example, many tend to be interdisciplinary; that is, they move between different modes of practice; for example, set design / fashion design / textile design / ceramics / art work (Calder, 1993). Working on set and costume within a single production would enable the designer to accommodate both tasks and also lessen the production budget. Also, more than one discipline could have other advantages, for example the transfer of knowledge and sharing this among the disciplines. However, there could be also disadvantages, such as the disparity of wages associated with the part-time nature of each practice.

There is currently little published information on how costume designers in New Zealand pursue their professional practice. Such information could be of use, not only to those practising in the field of costume design but also to those teaching and/or studying this subject. There is clearly a need for research and documentation of the influences on the working design principles of New Zealand costume designers. In general there is ample published literature on design and fashion (Spooner, 1993), yet there is little information to date on how principles of design and fashion design have been applied to theatrical costuming within New Zealand. Information from the past forms and builds our concepts for today's design world.

To what extent has a local aesthetic and philosophy developed in New Zealand? The effects of our unique heritage on costume design for theatre have not been fully examined. Is there evidence of the evolution of a specifically New Zealand styling discernible within theatrical design and costume design? Do New Zealand costume designers follow a process supported by design theory, or is the process mainly intuitive and based on professional experience? Establishing the nature of the connection between costume design for theatre and the New Zealand culture is one of my aims in presenting this thesis.

In order to identify how costume design defines itself, research is needed into the context of the design - that is, the theatre and the production process. These influencing factors will help to build a picture of the environment in which the costume designer participates (Fortier, 1997).

The majority of the literature pertaining to theatre and costume has been published overseas, but it is possible to make associations with reference to New Zealand. In the few New Zealand publications accessed for example: Downes, 1975; Greenwood, 2002, Harcourt, 1978, Strange, 2000, the content consisted of New Zealand theatre, but included very little on costume design. Other information that has assisted in providing an insight into New Zealand costuming has been found in journals and periodicals.

In this thesis the focus will be on the act of theatre as opposed to the interpretation of drama. The difference between drama and theatre, as explained by Fortier (1997), is the major role of the latter in the material realisation:

> *"Drama is concerned with words on the page, whereas theatre is the enactment of these words on stage"* (Fortier, 1997).

Theatre is part of the performance, but it not only concerns the written component of theatre, but also the productional aspects (Fortier, 1997). Furthermore, Russell (1973) agrees in the importance for the designer to craft visually what is experienced in the script.

Conversely, Ingham (1998) does note that there are costume designers who have existed through their entire career of creating costumes without using anything except the visual images in books for inspiration, without ever turning to the literary critics or theorists. Many designers use researched ideas and processes to form their visual responses without analysing the theories connected with interpretation of the performance with which they are working with (Ingham, 1998). However, the study of theoretical aspects can enrich the completed designs substantially by informing practice (Reinelt & Roach, 1992; Russell, 1973). Thus, the attempt to find these connections and theoretical definitions within the work of the New Zealand costume designers is an exciting prospect to investigate.

The difficulties - for a practitioner – of pursuing work in the industry while maintaining the following study have become quite clear to the researcher with regard to, and throughout, the assembly of this thesis. It was observed, while accessing information on costume design, that literature is usually not written by practitioners in the industry (Milling & Ley, 2001). This has resulted in a narrow choice in available supporting literature, which may seem to be slightly dated (e.g. Russell, 1973). However, as relevance to the subject is sought these limitations were unavoidable.

1.2 Research Aims and Objectives

Preliminary reading and investigations suggested some questions which may be asked of costume designers in New Zealand. These were formulated and are listed below:

1. What sort of role for the theatrical costume designer is currently emerging? And how is this role developing?
2. Has costume design been marginalised in New Zealand's theatre history? How does this relate to the development of a theatrical culture?
3. What design principles have New Zealand costume designers applied to the production and designing of costumes for New Zealand theatre since the 1950s?
4. What have been the key influences (e.g. political, philosophical, social and cultural) governing the design processes?
5. Is there evidence to show a distinct local and visible aesthetic style indicative of New Zealand in the history of costume design?

6. What is the significance of the director's role in working with the costume designer?

Objectives of this research are:

1. To identify factors that influence costume design in New Zealand theatre (e.g. political, cultural, and aesthetic).
2. To examine the roles and working relationships among the costume designers and directors.
3. To develop a model for the design process for costume in the performing arts in New Zealand.

In this study, the history of New Zealand costume design within the Performing Arts is reviewed with particular emphasis on the post-1950s era as this period signifies the burgeoning of the costume designer. An attempt is made to identify a design process applied to costume design in order to see whether an indigenous styling has developed in New Zealand. Through interviews with selected contemporary costume designers and directors, the factors influencing costume designing will be investigated and used to support the models. In this investigation the relationship between the costume designer and the director and its impact on the design process will be examined. To date, there is very little published literature on this topic. Therefore, the aim in this study is to enhance the knowledge base on theatre costume design in New Zealand.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

1.3.1 Historical Context

In Chapter Two an overview of what is known is provided through an examination of published literature about the theatrical history of New Zealand post - 1950, with an attempt to find any existing information as evidence of the working conditions of the costume designer. In this research the social, political, and cultural influences governing New Zealand costume designers are investigated. An exploration of how the evolution of New Zealand theatre has influenced the climate in which costume designers work is conducted. This historical background is used to build a picture of the theatrical practitioner in New Zealand today. Emphasis will be placed on the years after 1950 to the present, when the documentation of theatre productions in publications begins to mention an actual

costume designer. Before the 1950s, a person involved in the costuming of a production was often termed a 'wardrobe mistress' and there was very little mention of costume designers in New Zealand at all. The name given to the wardrobe mistress role today would be 'wardrobe supervisor' or 'costume realiser'. Also, the time period chosen for study encompasses the years wherein the interviewees have been practising in the theatre industry. This time also includes the period of modern professional theatre when the costume designer becomes part of the production team.

1.3.2 The Roles within the Performing Arts

In the next section of the literature review the definitions and perspective of the roles accommodated within the costume design process are investigated. Initially, an attempt is made to identify the expectations placed upon a designer. In view of the costumes being the first focus for the audience, Cunningham (1989) identifies the fact that the role of the costume designer is regarded as of primary importance.

As the director is a major part of the design process, associated contributions were investigated. As Russell (1973) indicates, the director usually starts at the initial vision. Thus the director needs to have not only visual flair, but also an ability to conceptualise these visions into reality. The director is often more than the driving energy, and often has a role of leadership behind the production (Dowling, 1980; Rubin, 1998). This authoritarian role of the director and the importance of collaboration within the design and production crew are questioned within the context of contemporary performance companies within New Zealand. Various perspectives are the results of ongoing discussions pursued within this thesis to discover the realities pertaining to this role.

1.3.3 Fashion and its Place in Theatre

Although fashion is considered another, discipline it envelopes theatre in everyway. It can have a major significance within theatre, as fashion can be used to indicate the time period of the chosen play. It is impossible not to bring the present time influences into designs, even by way of materials that are accessible and used. Many authors have covered fashion, however Kaplan and Stowell (1994) - who see fashion as a concept peculiar to western society - relate the use of fashion in theatre alongside 19th century modernism. Le Pechoux, Little, & Istook, (2001) indicate the

introduction of fashion represents this quest for change and is strongly dependent on time and context.

1.3.4 Culture

Culture is unavoidably linked to research into costume as it provides an important contribution to the system and signs of the language of clothes (Calefato, 2004). Culture encompasses all the meanings of social experience. Reinelt and Roach (1992) explain this interpretation more contextually and comment on the aspects of culture locally and arranged into levels of consumption: mass culture, high culture, and popular culture.

The question is whether or not costume designers interpret their relationship to New Zealand's theatrical work from the traditional English influence, which may be termed 'Colonial', or a more modern move, which aims to incorporate a Postcolonial approach. Are they challenging the adopted culture, or is there outright rejection, reappropriation or reformulation of cultures in the production of costume design (Reinelt & Roach, 1992)?

1.4 Design Processes

One method for developing a design consciousness is to assist in the process of costume design, which involves the analysis and interpretation of design elements and principles. Russell (1973) encourages the investigation of these elements and principles as it enables the designer to access a wider range of senses and capacities. The creative process has also been analysed within the work of Beach (1998) and has assisted in finding a model within this design process. This model is used as a framework from start to finish in the execution of a production, and may be used to explore physical limitations such as budget and time. The elements and principles can then be used for the actual practical implementation of design work (Cunningham, 1989; Russell, 1973). In this thesis these models have been used as a comparison with the discoveries derived from the interviewees to establish a model for the New Zealand costume designer.

1.5 Methods and Structure of the Thesis

Methodology will include a review of published literature covering theatre history and the costume design processes, post-1950. The published literature comes in book form, unpublished work as in thesis research, archival research, and magazine and newspaper articles.

The principal method of data collection will be the recording of oral history. Selected costume designers and directors will be interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire to identify their design principles and processes and what factors influence these. The oral history will be used to gather information with emphasis is on understanding the design process alongside the context (Robertson, 1995).

The research and interviews will be used to develop a process model, and images will be used to support the data where needed to illustrate styles. The images will help place costume design into context with regard to the political, cultural and social environment. A particular time period and culture predetermine the ability to absorb and interpret visual information. (Collier & Collier, 1992). The findings from the interviews conducted are presented in Chapter four and analysed with the research from the literature review in Chapter five. This is done to find relative similarities, disparities and corresponding relationships. Chapters four and five should be seen in relation to each other, as the contents are a necessary development in forming the model that has evolved. The conclusions in Chapter six have thus been derived from these developments.

The Arts around the turn of the 21st century have been moving through significant changes in their roles and the expectations of the public and practitioners (Wickham, 1992). Is the costume designer happy to continue as a wardrobe mistress or has this role been redefined? Is the role of the costume designer evolving alongside the creative cooperatives of contemporary theatre (e.g. the Seeyd Co-operative in Wellington)? Is there a distinction between a theatrical designer, who just designs costumes, and the costumier who wishes not only to design but also to realise the end product? Both positions require an understanding of design and the technical knowledge to support the depth and value of the completed design.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.0 Research Overview

A brief outline of the New Zealand historical and social context, but with a focus on performance theatre and costume design after 1940, will be presented in the first part of this chapter. The reason for emphasis on the later part of the century is twofold:

- This was the principal time period in which the participating interviewees produced work;
- The changes in the role of the costume designer from that period were of major importance in establishing the developing trends and philosophies in the industry.

In the literature review, design theories and roles relevant to the performing arts industry are also evaluated. The roles include the positions occupied in a practising company for the production of a performance, which directly impinge on costume design. Selected published theories regarding the surrounding influences on methods of costume design have been evaluated.

2.1 Historical Investigations

2.1.1 Theatre and Costuming: pre-1940s

Although there is some published literature about theatre in New Zealand (Atkinson, 1984; Carey, 1999; Downes, 1975; Millar, 1972; Rubin, 1998; Strange, 2000), there is very little information on the topic of costume design specifically. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries most New Zealand theatre performances tended to be produced by amateur groups or by larger touring companies arriving from overseas. Advertising posters, some with photographs of actual performances, give little indication of the identity of the costume designers.

The costumes mentioned were usually attributed to the person who coordinated them. Many references to the costuming for the shows performed in the late 19th century may be found in performance programmes stored in the archives at the Turnbull Library. The documentation often states that costumes were imported from England and Europe and these costumes were often attributed to design houses or prominent retailers (Turnbull Library archival flyers). In the programmes, it was usually the fashion designers of the time who were associated with the costumes; this was the predominant practice until into the 1950s. The title and role of costume designer had yet to be defined within the performing arts.

The touring theatrical company owned by J. C. Williamson brought many shows consisting of musicals, opera and drama to New Zealand from the 1880s until well into the 1900s. J. C. Williamson set up a wardrobe workshop in the 1890s in Melbourne, with Miss Emily Nathan as wardrobe mistress. Melodrama was very popular during the late 1800s and early 1900s and Julius Knight (Figure 2.1), an actor who specialised in these melodramatic roles, earned high admiration for his, quoted by Hurst: "*romantic swash-buckling parts*" (Downes, 1975; Hurst, 1944). A romantic arts and crafts adaptation, resembling a Rosetti tafferel, of the classical toga has been applied to the costumes in this J. C. Williamson production of *Sign of the Cross* (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1 *Sign of the Cross*, 1897. Julius Knight and Ada Farrar. Costumes: Paquin of London, Wardrobe: Miss E. Nathan. S.P. Andrew Collection, Turnbull Library.

The fashionable style of theatre at the time was an exaggerated attempt to portray a graphic realism that was true to life. This form was called 'Hyper-realism' and eventually the size and detailing of these epic productions became too burdensome to handle and many companies suffered heavy losses. Downes (Downes, 1979) and Harcourt (Harcourt, 1978) reviewed this development of theatre in New Zealand from the 1840s to around 1910 as the gradual decline of theatre. This decline was attributed to the introduction of motion pictures, and financial restrictions reducing imported performing shows. Although these two authors (Downes, 1979; Harcourt, 1978) associated the decline in theatre with the decrease in the number of the imported and ostentatious productions there was, in fact, a very strong amateur movement developing within the Education Institutions.

James Shelly, who was appointed the first Professor of Education in Canterbury University in 1920, and Ngaio Marsh were pioneers of the theatre movement at that time. Shelly was very active in the drama society within the University, and built the Little Theatre in 1925. Workshops were held in the Little Theatre that covered subjects in stagecraft, stage management, lighting, costuming, set management, set construction, make-up and production (Strange, 2000).

Strange (1994, p. 80) implies that Shelly and Marsh were the start of a *"renaissance"*, in drama. He calls this time *"the golden years of New Zealand theatre"*, not to be confused with the same praise given by (Hurst, 1944), describing the entertainment in the 1880s. I would take resurgence to refer to the regular use of the classics, although Marsh brought momentous innovation to New Zealand theatre at that time. She introduced a contemporary styling, especially in the costumes, as opposed to the traditional theatrical approach. A good example was the production of *Hamlet* in which the design was modelled on a production Marsh saw in England by Tyrone Guthrie at the Old Vic in 1938, in which they wore contemporary outfits (Strange, 2000).

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This enlightenment happened at the same time as important developments within the visual arts (Strange, 1994). The students were contributing to the performances by creating the set design and costumes. Undoubtedly, this training Shelly and Marsh provided was a milestone with regard to training in the craft. These efforts forged the growth in literature and art of the 1940s and developments in later years

(Edmond, 2000). The results were reflecting an independence from colonialism and a control in shaping New Zealand society.

2.1.2 Developments in the 1940s

Support for the arts in the 1940s gained impetus with moves by the Labour government under the Prime Minister, Peter Fraser, who was sympathetic to the arts. There was an attempt to create openings for young practitioners, by adopting a grants system and bursaries. Although Labour was defeated in the next election, this incentive by way of training was continued by national performing arts committees (Harcourt, 1978). This period can be considered the birth of indigenous theatre in the New Zealand community. There was an emerging consciousness in New Zealand in the 1940s that continued through to the 1950s, during which artists and writers started to interpret their landscape and question society's apparent conformity, uniformity and cultural colonialism (Greenwood, 2002).

In 1943 the New Zealand Drama Council and in 1946 the Community Arts Service had been formed to assist amateur theatre (Atkinson, 1984; Harcourt, 1978). In 1946, the Arts Council of Great Britain was also established to provide funding to support existing theatres and to provide better training facilities (Wickham, 1992). Many current New Zealand practitioners benefited from that support throughout the 1950s by receiving training in Britain within theatres and training institutes, and are still contributing to the industry today; for example Elrick Hooper, Sunny Amey, Raymond Hawthorne, Kristian Frederickson, and Karol London.

Social messages were evident in the theatre being produced in New Zealand at that time. For example, the amateur theatre group Unity Theatre, that formed in Wellington in 1944, forged itself as a protest from students and working people who were dissatisfied with the existing opportunities that were being made available to them at that time. They wanted a theatre where social, moral - and especially political - issues were paramount. Initially, the theme was rather revolutionary, but later there evolved a more realistic awareness of theatre and the expectations of the public. For sixteen years Unity Theatre produced a play a year, using the popular authors from America and England such as Brecht, Wilde, and Miller. They also included various New Zealand authors, for example; Bruce Mason and J. K. Baxter

(Harcourt, 1978). The writer J. K. Baxter, in an appraisal of the times, explains this development in the next generation of writers as a shifting focus from regional to social emphasis (Jones, 1989). The avant-garde approach of Unity Theatre set them apart from other companies and Bruce Mason emphasizes this in an article he published in the journal *Landfall* with reference to the costumes:

> *"The social columns of Wellington papers often carry chatty paragraphs about the costumes. For what could they say of the characters in, say, Miller's 'Death of a Salesman' but 'She wore a seedy black skirt with a grubby white blouse. A dirty knitted shawl completed her costume"* (Mason, 1999).

This signposts the move into a naturalistic aesthetic in theatre design and less use of the extreme theatricality, whether the public was ready for it or not.

2.1.3 Post-1950: The Emergence of the Costume Designer

There was enormous creative energy in the 1950s and the need to provide some financial support for theatre was recognised in New Zealand at the same time as it was in Great Britain. Some financial support came from City Councils, and this was intended to stimulate interest in the arts in the small communities. Theatre in New Zealand has also benefited then and now from the British training institutes, with the trained practitioners from England who have taken residence in New Zealand, for example Raymond Boyce, Leslie Burkes Harding, and Gillie Coxill.

In the 1950s amateur theatre was a powerful cult and the New Zealand public were expressing the need for professional companies. Many in the industry considered forming a National Theatre, but this movement ended soon after the defeat of the Labour government. With the shift in political power there were several attempts at establishing professional companies. Of these companies, the ones that were remembered most were those that toured. Such theatre companies recognised the need to attract a wider audience and toured throughout New Zealand. In Auckland the Community Arts Service lasted for fifteen years beyond the 1950s, touring from 1947 three times a year. The New Zealand Players lasted only eight years, even though they produced equally as many plays. One other predominant production

company originating in the South Island in 1957 was called the Southern Comedy Players.

The downfall of many of these companies was partly due to, amongst other things, a lack of experience in administration resulting in mismanagement. The accumulation of problems included having to provide a base, employ a larger staff to run the company, and the increasing expenses required to do this. Financial difficulties were compounded by the demographics of New Zealand, with which touring companies of the 1880s also had to contend with. Transportation over the Cook Strait and adapting to the many different theatre spaces were amongst the many difficulties encountered (Downes, 1979; Harcourt, 1978). Today, companies confront these same hurdles. Nevertheless, with the constant flow of theatrical performance passing through the various centres of New Zealand - along with the improvement of infrastructure and travel facilities - it would seem that the present companies have learnt from the difficulties faced by their predecessors.

One key event for the development of the history of costume design within New Zealand was the arrival of the English costume and set designer, Raymond Boyce, in the 1960s. Raymond Boyce was one of the first professional costume designers working within this country and secured work within all areas of the performing arts. There were a small number of other costume designers practising in New Zealand, however many could not survive professionally. Boyce contributed immensely to the performing arts in New Zealand, and as part of the team which establish Downstage Theatre was behind the design of the building, aside from this there is still little mention of his costuming career within the literature.

Richard Campion and his wife, Edith, had invited Raymond Boyce to New Zealand (Harcourt, 1978). A good example of early theatre of these times was the Unity Theatre production *The Wide Open Cage* directed by Richard Campion and written by James K. Baxter. Many works performed by Unity expose the audiences to psychological and political drama. (refer Figure 2.2, p. 15). These plays initially originated from the experiences of a generation that had attained maturity after the Second World War (Wickham, 1992). The costumes in the production of *The Wide Open Cage* portray the essence of Unity Theatre and of the period by the ordinary depiction of the characters. Although the budget restraints of Unity Theatre

contribute to these, the costumes more often than not have just come out of the actors' own wardrobes.

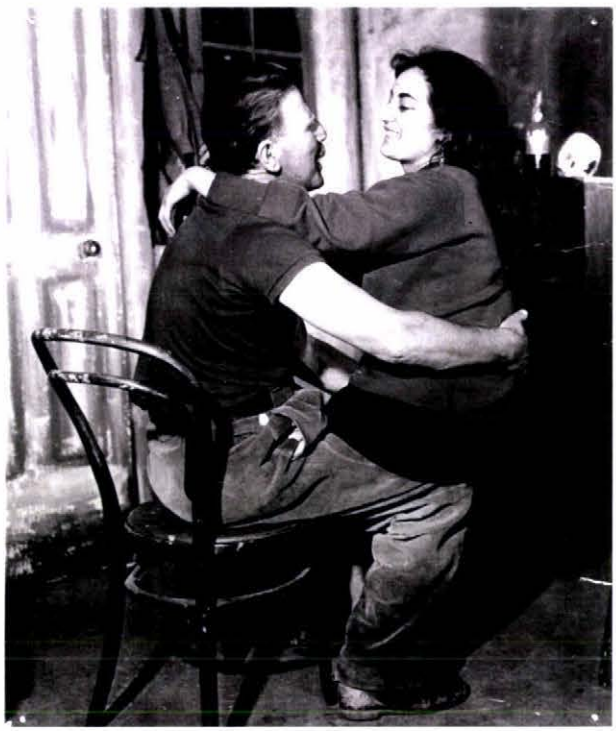

Figure 2.2 *Wide Open Cage,* 1956. Directed: Richard Campion. Actors: Bob Renner, Mary Nimmo. Costumes: Raymond Boyce. Downstage Collection, Turnbull Library.

Bruce Mason, considered the first real postwar playwright, was conscious of the void left in local theatre by the loss of the international professional companies. The New Zealand public were beginning to appreciate New Zealand work and, in an effort to provide this, Mason put on his own solo pieces (Downes, 1979). One of his most popular shows *End of the Golden Weather* is still proving successful. Mason created many characters from his boyhood which were included in this play, and although he was criticised for giving a fictitious picture of New Zealand family life, (Mitchell, 1959) infers this to be more his naturalistic approach to the content. Having seen this work, I consider that there is an introspective aspect in the characters that makes you reflect on yourself and your surroundings.

Figure 2.3 (pg. 16) shows an adaptation produced by Downstage Theatre using a larger cast, with different playing alternated roles. In the attempt to create and produce the costumes to resemble the period in which the play was set, the silhouette and construction have been followed down to within the smallest detail.

This involved everything from the correct draping of fabrics to the appropriate underwear.

Figure 2.3 ***End of the Golden Weather,*** **1990. Playwright: Bruce Mason. Actor: Cliff Curtiss. Costumes: Kri Leitner. Downstage Collection. Turnbull Library.**

2.1.4 1960s: Establishing Professional Theatres in New Zealand

Economically the 1960s lacked the affluence of the 1950s and inflation was affecting the nation. Entertainment was usually constrained by the household budget, and a visit to the theatre was not a regular pastime. Priorities were changing and television had arrived (Sinclair & Harrex, 1978). Young, educated New Zealand adults of the 1960s were exposed to global issues and this - together with the security of full employment - gave them added confidence to supposedly create a world to suit their own ideals (Wickham, 1992). The cultural historian, Lawrence Jones, encapsulates this idealistic viewpoint:

> *"The post-provincial period then has seen a new sense of cultural identity as a people who have succeeded in a commercial version of the pastoral dream, have built on its foundations as capitalist, welfare state version of the just city"* (Jones, 1989).

The 1960s thus reveal a New Zealand identity developing. Playwrights of that time have produced work providing an intimate relationship to where and how one

exists within a country. A sense of location within the work is a key factor in contributing to a sense of cultural identity (Jones, 1989). Innovative work of the 1960s, for example, Mason's *End of the Golden Weather*, shows an attempt to portray the average New Zealanders as they really are.

Financial hardships were beginning to affect the arts, and all of the disciplines needed to curtail their current activities. After the collapse of the touring companies, travel was discouraged. The Opera and the Ballet continued to produce outside of their base, but only through generous subsidies. The Opera, Symphony Orchestra and the newly formed professional theatre companies had to restructure and avoided large-scale productions. Theatre companies based themselves firmly in one place (Roberts, 1984). The principal obstacles for performance in the early 1950s were:

- The non-existence of professional companies
- The shortage of performance venues.

However, by the end of the decade professional theatres were established in the four main centres of New Zealand. The appeal to tour had practically ceased, so permanent premises were needed. The universities and public radio were providing some resources such as the use of material and technical equipment but their premises were of limited use (Greenwood, 2002).

Downstage Theatre in Wellington made the first move towards acquiring permanent facilities and establishing itself as a professional theatre. Although the founders had no real theatrical management experience, they were resolved to improve on the previous decades. Sponsors were invited to become members of a society and a trust was formed in 1964. To enlist additional finance, the public were invited to subscribe and provide an active audience. This company provided a framework from which other companies in New Zealand used as a model to follow in their management. The Mercury, Theatre Corporate, Court and Fortune theatres adapted this form of operation. Downstage Theatre eventually built a theatre in 1965, with the support of the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council and sponsor's funding (Edmond, 2000; Harcourt, 1978).

Once established facilities were obtained, permanent staff and trainees could be absorbed into these theatres, from which to develop their skills. Well known people

such as Elrick Hooper, Raymond Hawthorne, Sunny Amey, Pamela Maling, and Kristian Frederickson who experienced the political post-Osborne era in England returned to New Zealand to work in these theatres (Harcourt, 1978; Wickham, 1992). Raymond Boyce developed a long-term relationship with Downstage and his role consisted of what is now part of the job description for an artistic director. Plays were unmistakably English in their portrayal of that particular society, but these plays did question the status quo of all traditional values.

One other strong designing force at that time - and inspiration of this thesis - Harry Baker, who was awarded a bursary in the 1950s, studied theatre in London. Originally trained as a dancer, he designed many ballets and worked for the company *Opera Technique*. He shows a popular artistic technique (Figure 1.1, p. 1) described by Boyce as a *"painterly style"* (Roberts, 1984). This brushstroke technique could be used to describe the formidable talents of Kristian Fredrickson. Fredrickson was one of the New Zealand costume designers who started training under Baker's guidance (National Dance Archives). He has recently passed away (2005) but his skills and styling have been nurtured in his subsequent training with the next generation in protégé Nicole Cosgrove. Figure 2.4 represents an Opera costume designed and constructed in the 1960s, which embodies the amateur theatre in the very way it is presented. The costume styling distinguished its period by its colours, fabrics and ornamentation.

Figure 2.4 *Tales of Hoffman,* 1965. Opera Technique Company. Costumes: Harry Baker. Reproduced by permission of Betty Adams.

This decade also signposted the acceptance of the postmodernist artistic styling into New Zealand society. The introduction of Modern Art into the primary school syllabus was encouraged through the alternative artists of New Zealand who were starting to be recognised by the public. Artists like Colin McCahon and Gordon Waters adopted the more hard-edged and text styles of the 1960s (Sinclair, 1996). This styling chosen by Boyce exemplifies the modern approach the 1950s brought to theatre design. Costumes in *The School for Wives* (Figure 2.5, p.19) appear to be inspired by abstract art and use dynamism and disproportion for visual impact.

Figure 2.5 *The School for Wives,* (1967). Designer: Raymond Boyce. Costumes: Nancy Seaton. Downstage Collection, Turnbull Library.

The Maori performing arts made significant developments in the 1960s, through the formation of the Maori Trust to support Maori performers and their work. Up to this time Maori work in the mainstream arts still had to go through an absorption of the European culture to gain acceptance in local theatres. Artists kept their cultural identity, but in doing that they adopted the European approach to their profession. The Maori Trust performed various works in the 1960s but although they introduced traditional Maori performance forms, Maori wrote few

scripts. These performances are remembered for the high production standards with regard to the lighting, sound and staging (Greenwood, 2002; Harcourt, 1978; Sinclair, 1996). Figure 2.6 shows a performance of *The Golden Lover* with a slightly stylised, Western approach to traditional Maori clothing.

Figure 2.6 *The Golden Lover*, 1970. Maori Trust production. Downstage collection. Turnbull Library.

The efforts of the Maori Theatre ran parallel to the attention the Black and Third World Theatres were receiving in America and Europe. In the 1930s a trend began in America where operas were written and intended to be performed by an entirely Black cast. One of these was the Gershwin opera *Porgy and Bess* in which Inia Te Wiata performed in 1965 for the New Zealand Opera Company. In the climate of the 1960s the political content had changed somewhat in America and Europe. The question of apartheid and the introduction of their original cultures were being brought to the stage (Wickham, 1992), which at that point was not happening in the Maori theatre. As mentioned, the scripts were still written by the mainstream Pakeha.

2.1.5 1970s: Creativity within the Hardship

For New Zealand, the attempt to become more independent from England and severing colonial ties had left repercussions. The ongoing refusal of entry to the European Economic Community trading markets on top of overseas borrowing led to increased inflation and large debts. The government tried to work creatively and developed the 'Think Big' growth strategy. However, the continued detrimental effects to the economy and the welfare state led to enforcement of a debilitating national price and wage cut (Sinclair, 1996). In the 1970s the New Zealand population experienced social disharmony in minority groups, and many groups (e.g. Maori, women) did not gain any ground regarding equal rights. This disempowerment of the people created deep divisions between the radical left wing and the right wing liberals. Although there were more women in power, the conditions in the work place were not improving with this advancement. (Sinclair, 1996). The powerlessness people felt is visible in the lack of ability to earn more and also to attain rights through the support system of the Unions.

This decade did see an environment in which a more prolific Maori theatre emerged, such as *Maranga Mai* (Sturm, 1998). These plays reflected what was happening in Maori culture and the drama of that time. What distinguished Maori theatre in the 1970s was that it was not only acted, but also written by Maori (Greenwood, 2002). The material was full of ideas that were written by people eager to challenge assumptions and raise consciousness and yet, the audience consisted of spectators from all walks of life. Maori theatre can be remembered for its content and questioning of European culture with its patterns of behaviour, values and beliefs. This form of theatre was succeeding in drawing attention to the differences - and also acquainting the public with the indigenous culture - within New Zealand (Novitz, 1989).

Finally, the universities were introducing drama into their programmes. Philip Mann started the drama programme at Victoria University in Wellington, and Mervyn Thompson initiated drama first at Ilam University in Christchurch, and then in Auckland. Mann and Thompson contributed to raising the standard of literature in performance and in making theatre education available to all. These directors have made a large contribution in the form of education that is exhibited

through the graduate students in the work of current New Zealand theatre (Wickham, 1992).

Another significant milestone in this decade of theatre education was the founding of the New Zealand Drama School in 1970. The New Zealand Drama School was established by the Arts Council and initially run by Nola Millar. Millar managed a full-time training scheme for aspiring actors. However, training in the skills of technical production did not start until at least twenty years after this, in the early 1990s (Harcourt, 1978). Other professional educational groups in the main New Zealand cities later established training facilities, for example; Palmerston North, Wanganui and Tauranga. Many of these trained actors and technicians were, and still are, the backbone of professional theatres for example - the Mercury in Auckland, Downstage in Wellington and the Court in Christchurch.

High inflation prompted the economic cut-backs beginning in 1968, and the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council was forced to change its concept from providing grants and personal aid for the practitioners of arts and focus on supporting producers of local art in the community. The Council had taken heed of the previous failures in theatre companies and recognised the importance of good administration. The Arts Council thus assisted with the newly formed New Zealand Theatre Federation. The Federation supported the strong amateur theatre movement and at that time stood behind the philosophy that efficient organisation was vital to the artistic life of the community (Harcourt, 1978). The professional theatres responded also and combined forces to add their own support. They formed the Association of Community Theatres (ACT), which provided a forum in which to unite this group. They existed till the late 1980s (Harcourt, 1978).

In the later part of the 1970s, funding to the arts further declined, resulting in the closing down of a number of professional theatres in New Zealand - which fell from nine to five. Auckland's Theatre Corporate, which was part of the ACT group, was one of those to suffer the consequences. Interestingly enough, the Fortune Theatre in Dunedin, founded within this same climate, survived. It was established in the same method as the Downstage Trust and managed similarly. Quite a few of the current costume designers, who were based in Auckland, started their careers under the tuition and training of the Auckland Theatre Company.

International influences were entering into New Zealand theatre in the form of alternative performance. A group of French actors called Theatre Action, who had trained in mime using 'Lecoq' training arrived in New Zealand. They explained that their preference for residing in New Zealand, as opposed to their native country, lay in their perceived view of the absence of the cultural traditions. One must take into account what the Lecoq actors were leaving behind; a European theatre, which was going through an extreme 'Grotowski' style (Grotowski, 1991). The Grotowski style was one of the first forms of expressionist theatre, with a virtual dismissal of writers from the performance process. However, doing so necessitates a deviation from the traditional emphasis on the moral, political and social aspects of theatre to focus on aesthetic standards. Without these cultural restrictions imposed upon them they could explore and concentrate on their own art. Harcourt (1978) considered there was difficulty in defining the New Zealand identity within the theatre, but this could be an advantage in performance theatre, not an impediment. The theatre practitioners within New Zealand were thus not suffering from the necessity to construct a national identity that originates from globalisation and a need to belong - although this has not been systematically investigated or proven.

The 1970s were identified by a very casual approach to clothing. The oversized overalls worn by the mime artist belonging to the Theatre Action group (Figure 2.7) were popular as a fashion item. The bow tie and the clown nose combine with oversized clothes to give a larger than life character. Their sense of humour encourages the contact needed for street theatre.

Figure 2.7 *Snaz*, 1971. Te Aro Park (was known as Pigeon Park). Theatre Action Group. Turnbull Library.

Theatre was attracting a younger public, who were converging on the rock music performed in cellar bars. The musical performances also consisted of the elimination of literary narrative and a more visual debate with mime, dance and psychedelic lighting effects. The ever-popular Rock-Musical was born in conjunction with this sort of performance (Wickham, 1992).

The 1970s was an incredibly diverse decade, but there were highlights in theatre that the public will remember. For example, in 1976 the comedy *Glide Time* (Figure 2.8) was one of the first comedies to depict the average New Zealander, who epitomised the pitfalls and was still able to laugh at him or herself. Michael Haigh is captured here in action. Standard office attire for the 1970s was dishevelled in its formality. Although the large collar and a large tie identify the time period, it is the glasses that are the distinguishing feature placing the character.

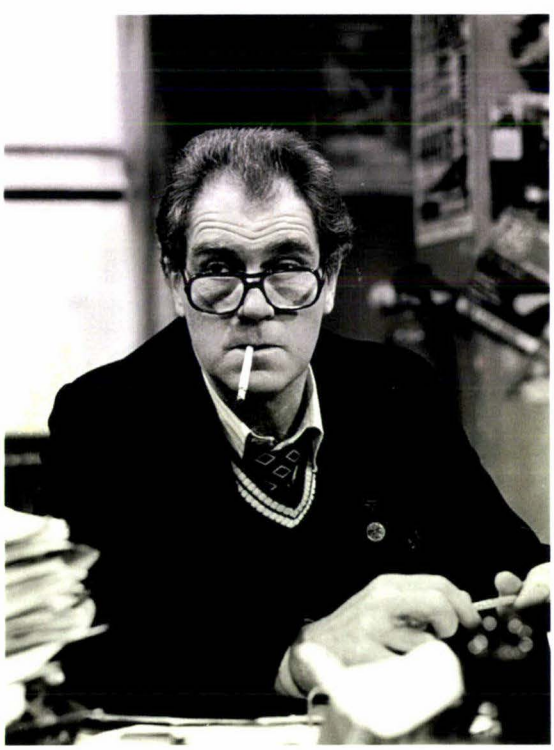

Figure 2.8. *Glide Time,* 1976. Playwright: Roger Hall. Actor: Michael Haigh. Designer: Grant Tilly. Circa Collection.

Circa was the first professional theatre that followed the philosophy of the Cooperative structure. Participants took a joint share in the profits and the box office takings, but also in the failures (Sturm, 1998). Initially, this form of production was seen as alternative and Harcourt (1978) describes the co-op arrangement as a *"loose artistic collective"*. Initially, Circa performed in a demolition

building space, but since then has commissioned and built a new theatre and restaurant on the prime location beside Te Papa Museum on the Wellington waterfront. The collective has survived by developing into an extremely astute group who deal with matters of business proficiently.

Along with the folding of the New Zealand Players in the 1960s, the resources built up by the director and driving force of the group, Richard Campion, were dispersed. Resources included costumes and materials needed for a production. An attempt to work in co-operation with the opera and ballet performers, who were also trying to establish a company and premises, met with little success. With the voluntary work force stretched to the limit, it became impossible to retain the wardrobe in its entirety (Harcourt, 1978). An attempt in the early 1970s by the National Opera in Wellington was made to establish workroom facilities in Vivian Street. From 1973 till 1976, Nancy Seaton managed the wardrobe and was assisted by Jane Woodhall. Similarly to The New Zealand Players, the opera could not financially support the operation and maintenance of a wardrobe and the wardrobe ceased operating. The New Zealand Royal Ballet rescued the stock by providing the necessary wardrobe space and facilities for the maintenance of the stock (Harcourt, 1978).

There is little written information on the theatrical costume designers of the 1970s. Within the examples of the productions provided, there is evidence of a predominantly contemporary, naturalistic styling in this period. Costuming for these shows consisted primarily of sourcing the needed articles from retailers or second - hand shops. The present research will examine how the historical and social context in which New Zealand theatre has developed has shaped the role of the costume designer

2.1.6 1980s: Redefining the Roles in New Zealand Theatre

New Zealand was becoming increasingly globally interactive. Participating in overseas education in the form of tertiary exchange students was popular. Migration and a decline in fertility caused a drop in the population of New Zealand, which fell below 3.3 million. This was becoming an additional worry for industry. While many individuals appreciated the tranquillity of a smaller population, with regard to the economy, industry needed workers (Sinclair, 1996). Travel overseas

was increasing, so access to international events became more possible, and influences through the audio and visual media more available. These factors had an effect on intellectual and artistic life which was showing itself in the literature wherein a more sophisticated style of artwork was depicted (Sinclair, 1996). New Zealand had best-selling authors with overseas recognition, including Janet Frame, Keri Hulme, Patricia Grace, and Maurice Gee (Sinclair, 1996). Literature of this period reflects a change from the previously dominant Pakeha male to a greater acceptance in literary circles of women and Maori (Jones, 1989).

In 1986, the biannual New Zealand Festival of the Arts was founded in the wake of the success stories of similar international festivals in England and in Adelaide, Australia. New Zealand formed its own festival very soon after the Adelaide Festival had established itself, leading to continuing contact among artists presenting work in both locations. The New Zealand festival was also the springboard for the annual Fringe Festival, which runs at the same time - but every year - in Wellington. The Bats co-operative theatre was founded in 1989 and has since become a focal meeting point and performance venue for the Fringe Festival (Rubin, 1998).

Similarly to developments in England and Europe, New Zealand theatre was experiencing a decline in traditional dramatic theatre and this impacted heavily on the already low attendance of the paying public. The eighties was the decade of the alternative work like the Living Theatre Group (Wickham, 1992), who chose to explore the basic techniques of theatre through improvisation and experimentation. The emphasis was on the process, not the content. In following these methods, despite the increased stimulation of cast and crew, the essence of theatre as a public forum tended to be forgotten. Some of the public were opting for fine acting over the alternative content. The audiences were also becoming more discerning about what was being presented and were not accepting a generation of outspoken young directors and writers (Wickham, 1992).

Conscious of the shortcomings in the production of literary work, especially within the New Zealand theatre, the Playmarket organisation was intent on nurturing practising writers. Writers who attempted to show changes of consciousness of society through theatre were Mervyn Thompson, Vincent O'Sullivan, and David

Geary (Greenwood, 2002). Although there were clear depictions of provincial New Zealand, various works attempted to portray a developing local identity. Playmarket had their first conference in 1980, and this workshop saw the development of Greg McGee's *Foreskin's Lament* (Sturm, 1998). McGee examined the development of the nation's maturity from colony to self-government (Sturm, 1998), through a rugby team's social life as a self-critical metaphor for the country's loss of virtue. Although well received in the North Island, amongst McGee's plays that travelled to Christchurch this was the only one that had a response – good and bad - and that was probably suggested because of its somewhat risqué content (Harcourt, 1979; Harley, 1984).

Playwrights such as McGee and Geary questioned the norms and flaws within the ideals of prosperity in New Zealand through comedy. *Foreskin's Lament* reflects on how the characters resolve their past and cope with the present. The coach's parochial naiveté confronts this, with the lead character's inability to remain in the past and the desire to forge another path. *Foreskin's Lament* (Figure 2.9) was a naturalistic play which indicates a need for contemporary clothing and would seem uncomplicated. However, the play was set in the actual time period in which the playwright placed it, some ten years preceding the production, so investigation was necessary to provide accurate costumes. As depicted in the image, the costuming still consists of rugby shorts and jock straps appropriate to the 1980s.

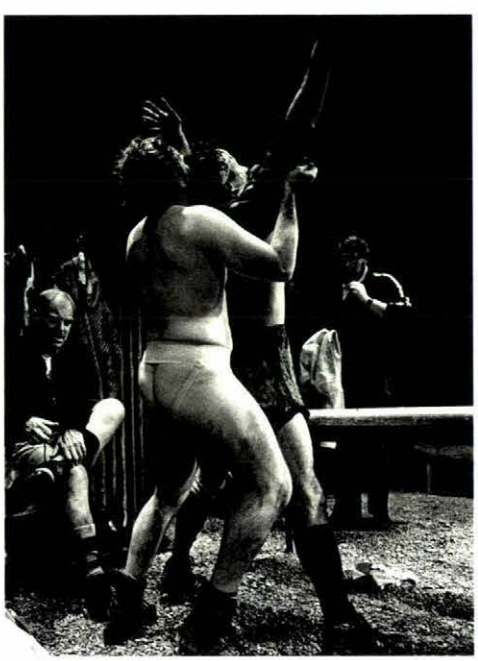

Figure 2.9 *Foreskin's Lament*. 1991. Playwright: Greg McGee, Actors: Jim Moriaty, Mark Hadlow. Costumes: Gillie Coxill. Downstage collection. Turnbill Library.

In the 1970s, professional theatre companies had been established and were operating in the main centres of New Zealand. Performance space was more accessible in the 1980s, but it became harder to maintain these spaces financially (Sturm, 1998). The Depot theatre, which was set up by Downstage artistic director, Colin McColl, as an alternative theatre Cooperative, could not provide for the upkeep of their premises. The Depot were forced to reconstitute themselves as a production company, and renamed themselves Taki Rua. They focused on developing Maori works with the opportunity to workshop these and took a major role in exploring the meaning of biculturalism as being caught between two worlds (Greenwood, 2002). Taki Rua dealt with the urban dislocation of contemporary Maoris in the transition from the rural Marae to the urban and the tensions between traditional Maori customs and modern youth culture (Rubin, 1998).

The government assisted Taki Rua by providing work schemes in theatre performance produced by Maori. Young Maori were trained to perform and eventually produce their own shows. Emerging from these schemes and the New Zealand Drama School are a constant number of Pacific Island and Maori coming into the performing arts and creating an indigenous form of theatre (Rubin, 1998). The present research will attempt to investigate the effects of indigenous influences such as these on costume design in New Zealand.

Physical theatre from Europe and North America became increasingly popular worldwide, and was especially popular in New Zealand. Companies were usually project - based as these works were rarely produced more than twice. Physical Theatre incorporated drama, dance, and music, plus stand-up comedy and clowning. Performed in this way they challenge the audience's perception of traditional spoken drama. Because of the strong oral nature and the way Maori culture incorporates performance as part of everyday life, it is well suited to this form of theatre (Rubin, 1998).

At the other end of the spectrum, Broadway musicals captured public interest. The Andrew Lloyd Weber repertoire, consisting of large productions such as *Jesus Christ Superstar, Evita* and *Cats* was becoming increasingly popular (Wickham, 1992). Although these shows have well thought out scripts the emphasis is not on audience participation but on the visuals and the feel good factor.

The 1980s saw an increase in the production of New Zealand film, particularly in period pieces for television, which were to depict a part of New Zealand's history. The productions based on the colonial period were well provided for regarding the costumes. Costume designer, Gwen Kaiser, not only reproduced costumes in detail, but also had a vast collection of garments of which some were the genuine articles (Lamb, 1983). An example shown in Figure 2.10 is from the film *Pictures*. The detailing with regard to accessories, ornamentation and the pursuit of period accuracy by Gwen Kaiser are impeccable. Costumes are well tailored and are right for the character. This production has an authentic period costume from Kaiser's own collection.

Figure 2.10 *Pictures*. 1985. Playwright: Robert Lord. Actor: Helen Moulder. Television series. Costumes Gwen Kaiser. Reproduced by permission from Lesley Kaiser Collection.

2.1.7 1990s: The Arts and Accountability

The 1990s saw two changes in government and there were cuts in governmental expenditure. One of the first areas of marginalisation was the Arts. In 1987 the stock market had crashed and the economy was showing no signs of recovery (Sinclair, 1996). A programmed privatisation of the public services, which began under Labour, was continued and fully implemented by National. However, it represented a further move away from the New Zealand welfare state to the neoliberalism that National had intended. Benefits for the arts proposed by Labour

were promised subject to the meeting of specific criteria, proof of which was required in order to obtain the entitlement (Rudd & Roper, 1997).

Since the 1930s New Zealand had, compared with the rest of the world, an extremely controlled economy and was feeling the full force of new right privatisation and deregulation. The changes to the arts began by the renaming of the Arts Council to Creative New Zealand and refurbishing the job description (Rubin, 1998). One of these roles consisted of assessing which of the existing and proposed art disciplines received financial support from the government, and how much. All arts-based companies who applied for funding were required not only to present an application but also to account for the expenditure. With regard to performance, a recurrent low box office taking was no longer permissible and a well-administered system was expected (Rubin, 1998).

The adoption of these policies was not only in New Zealand but worldwide, and it required the companies to revise their content in order to retain their audiences (Wickham, 1992). This had an immediate impact in the industry, leading to both a downsizing of Wellington's Downstage Theatre and the folding of the Auckland Mercury Theatre. Downstage retained only a skeleton staff for its management and sold its workshop premises. These consisted of workshops (Figure 2.11) and a rehearsal space (Rubin, 1998).

Figure 2.11 *Mercury Wardrobe*. Costume workshop. Late 1980s. Auckland Library.

Changes in the performing arts industry affected the structure of the organisations involved and ultimately the people working within the industry. The directors of prospective ventures needed to define their work and their expectations of this. This research investigates these practicing definitions by the director and how this affects the costume designer. The structure of the subsidised theatre companies changed from the 1980s onwards and many were operated according to the following examples:

- Producer theatre with their own buildings; (e.g. Downstage);
- Producer company with no venue;
- Mixed producer/presenter venues (e.g. companies with their own building, who mounted plays themselves as well as making their theatre available to outside shows (Rubin, 1998, p. 336).

The Centrepoint and the Court Theatres survive and continue to employ permanent staff and operate workshop premises. Circa present their own shows and also provide a venue for other shows. Both Circa and Bats are co-op based. An other form of production company consists of non-venue companies, for example the Auckland Theatre Company and Taki Rua in Wellington. The alternative consists of companies that produce project-based performances and apply for funding annually from the Arts Council (Rubin, 1998). Project-based companies are often more adventurous and produce developmental work which can be either of local origin or reconstructed versions of the classics.

Performing arts institutes have produced a multicultural array of performances since the 1990s. It is possible to see not only indigenous Maori productions but also Indian, Chinese and Pacific Island writers and actors producing works. Samoan writer, Oscar Knightly, and actor, David Fane, have been predominant figures in portraying Pacific Island experiences. Their plays confront the gender and immigrant issues that are often ignored by the public (Rubin, 1998). A notable success, by Maori writer John Broughton, was the one-man show, *Micheal James Mania* (Figure 2.12, p. 32), the title character played by Jim Moriaty. It probed into the conflicting issues of war fatigue and depicts part of the Maori and Pakeha culture. This play was directed by Colin McColl and was invited to the Edinburgh Arts Festival (Rubin, 1998). The costuming (Figure 2.12) comes under the auspices of naturalistic theatre. Although there was only one costume change, the

requirements of these items were specific. The set was layered with dirt and it was an intensely physical performance, thus the costumes needed to be easily laundered and extremely hardwearing.

Figure 2.12 *Michael James Mania.* 1990. Playwright: John Broughton. Director: Colin McColl. Actor: Jim Moriaty. Costumes: Gillie Coxill. Downstage collection. Turnbull Library.

In the 1990s the shows of Roger Hall and Robert Lord brought the public back into the theatre and created some stability in the theatre profession. These works portrayed ordinary events about ordinary people, and they encouraged the audience to meet them half way. Mikalsen (1988) saw the play *Middle-Age Spread* as an opportunity to push the audiences out of their comfort zone, and felt it made an attempt to do this, but that the writing was not strong enough to succeed:

> *"The script offers the possibility of challenging come of the audience's values, at the same time they [sic...the script] are so weak they seem to win by default"* (Mikalsen, 1988)

This particular kind of theatre, nevertheless, came up against opposition from the alternative forms of theatre questioning the mainstream content of the work. Often, the characters were taken from traditional roles in society, for example sexuality and gender (Mikalsen, 1988). The critical opposition felt that theatre should present confrontational reality and tackle the audience with relevant issues of the time (McNaughton, 1998; Rubin, 1998). Ultimately, these works are governed by the realities of the playwright involved in creating them. There still exist two kinds of theatre-goers; those who believe that theatre should activate and

involve the actor and audience or, at the other end of the spectrum, those who believe that it should cater for the public who want solely to be entertained without participation.

Visually this kitchen-sink drama, echoing the 1950 English work, had familiarity to which the audience could easily relate. The underlying aim was to provide visuals that do not jump out to meet you, and often the costumes leave no impression at all. In saying this though, the characters in *Market Forces* (Figure 2.13, p. 33) are so strongly stereotyped that the appropriateness is pointed. However, the costuming of the play often relates to the particular genre and approach of the production. Within the Co-op process costumes may have been borrowed (even from the cast's own wardrobes) or sponsors may have been approached for a contribution and then these were coordinated and/or adjusted by the wardrobe supervisor. In the programme it is stated: *"costumes are attributed to Jan Tait"*. This implies that the costumes have not been designed but have been primarily sourced, and within the procedures of a Co-op, the cast would have played a part in the costuming decisions. The example (Figure 2.13) shows a cast that has moved from *Glide Time* in the 1980s to the *Market Forces* in the 1990s and is still costumed in suits. However this time the women also wear suits. The silhouette of the clothing in *Market Forces* exudes the power dressing of the 1990s and has more flashy, brightly patterned ties as opposed to the knitted vests in the previous decade.

Figure 2.13 *Market Forces*. 1998. Playwright: Roger Hall. Actors: Ross Jolly, Joanne Mildenhall, Costumes: Jan Tait. Circa collection.

The changes in the industry impacted markedly on the work security for technical production staff and design teams. Within the structure of these professional theatres, costume designers had a chance to acquire yearly contracts that gave them some permanence and continuity in the work situation. From the 1980s on, more individual casual contracts were drawn, that concluded after each individual performance (Hamon, 1995; Rubin, 1998).

Sinclair (1996) challenges us to consider that with the scope for initiative and enterprise also come a greater insecurity, hardship and tension. This quotation from Sinclair has great bearing on the current flexible situation prevailing throughout the competitive theatrical costuming industry in New Zealand:

> *"There is a greater freedom but with this comes a greater inequity"* (Sinclair, 1996, p. 389).

Many citizens throughout New Zealand felt the significance of the change not only in the arts but also in working conditions from the 1990s. Deregulation of the Labour market called on the worker to negotiate and resolve an individual contract and a basic rate of earning was no longer a forgone conclusion. Professional theatres operated with a core administration staff and in-house technicians, but the production crew were all employed for individual productions (Rubin, 1998). This creates an even more volatile theatrical environment and may isolate the practitioners in the industry even more through the competitive nature of acquiring employment. How the changing role of the director has affected the working relationship with the costume designer has not yet been investigated in the New Zealand context.

2.2 Costume Design Investigation

2.2.1 Expectations Concerning Costume Design

Russell (1973) considers costume as one of the strongest visual elements on stage as the activity is usually focused on the actors, and costumes are the scenery that can be relocated within a performance. The audience's attention is directed towards the activity and therefore it is the role of the costume to express the strength of the play's activity. The design elements will invariably be a major influence in

portraying the desired messages. Notwithstanding the importance of design, the lighting has also a marked position in controlling and manipulating these elements to create and unify the composition. As Russell (1973, p.7) explained:

"It is the lighting that can most fully intensify the dramatic values in the total stage scene"

The function of the costume is defined from the perspective of seeing the design in an all-encompassing environment. The costume should exude the essence and energy of the work it is trying to project. There are a number of demands placed upon the theatrical costume, some of which can be conflicting - however, this role of costume is identified as essentially performing the following functions:

- Visually defining and enhancing the character the actor is attempting to portray (Cunningham, 1989);
- Supporting the overall theme and establishing the mood of the production (Cunningham, 1989);
- Supporting the vision of the director (Ingham, 1992);
- Supporting the dramatic action (Ingham, 1992);
- Locating or placing the play;
- Expressing its spirit or the mood;
- Providing interest (Russell, 1973).

The recreation of the text of the play and defining the character through the costume are thought to be of primary importance (Cunningham, 1989), followed closely by the costume's role in making the character credible (Anderson & Anderson, 1999). The costume, with the use of metaphor that theatre so aptly exercises, encourages the audience to use their imagination upon the text's suggestions. A quick change of a hat or shawl and the audience are willing to accept the transformation of the character. This change may be only subtle - but it is irrevocably effective.

In addressing the aim of correct interpretation, misinterpretation not only results in extra work's being placed on the actors' characterisation, but also makes it difficult for the audience to believe in the character. One effect that is often identified as a successful result in costume design is when there is little response from the public. Reviewers consider that the lack of reaction is good result. For example, in a play

styled in the realism genre where the costumes are intended to portray the everyday life of a chosen period, the effective result is when the audience has not reflected on what the characters on wearing. The costume that enters the subconscious knowledge is considered as appropriate for that character. It is only when a costume is wrong or out of character that it is noticed for its separate entity. (Cunningham, 1989).

An example used in the last section regarding the description of the costuming refers to the very rightness of the play, *Market Forces*. In the context of the actual period it was appropriate but relating to the contemporary eye it was particularly jarring. The rightness was impossible to make invisible and blend in, although it retained its plausibility (Queree, 2004). The audience inevitably reacts with familiarity, but sometimes with less focus on the content. It invariably demonstrates the proactive role demanded of an audience, which distinguishes live theatre from television or film. Not only does the designer have a part in the creative process but also the audience is expected to participate.

Eyre and Wright (2000) challenge the notion that theatre and television have two opposing ideals. In modern theatre, the inspiration is often derived from the desire to show life as it is, whereas television gravitates towards a world of how one would like it to be. In saying this, the enactment of real life in theatre today is often portrayed by the use of a naturalistic theatre form and the costumes will often be stylised. However, with television and film a tremendous amount of effort is spent on the detailing to create a supposed reality. The acting within theatre is expected to be true to the real-life experience, but it is acceptable for the visuals to require the use of imagination. Whereas in film the content and performance values can be altered from actuality, the visuals are required to be increasingly detailed and very real. Thus the expectations from the public with regard to theatre and film are quite different.

2.2.2 The Costume Designer's Aptitudes

The writers of most current literature, agreed that the costume designer must have the ability to translate the visual concepts of the creative crew into the costume designs for the stage (Cunningham, 1989; Russell, 1973). The abilities required of a costume designer must incorporate a tremendous amount of knowledge about a

great many subjects. The designer must understand the physical space in which the piece will be performed, the people for whom they are designing and the characters they will play. The knowledge of a wide range of subjects related to history, art and social sciences is of benefit. As suggested by Ingham (1998), an introduction to dramatic text and critical writings will assist in interpreting the intentions and to clarify the context in which the playwright is placing the piece. Although the skills and technical knowledge are placed foremost by these authors the later publications emphasise theoretical aspects and research into, as Ingham (1998) notes, *'dramatic text'*.

Although there are few New Zealand publications covering the expectations of costume designers, their priorities have been expressed in various journal and magazine interviews (Calder, 1993; Manson, 2001a; Roberts, 1984; Shepheard, 2002). In the earlier articles only the technical skills needed by a costume designer are covered, however the more recent interviews start to point out the importance of theory and the knowledge of dramatic text (Shepheard, 2002).

The developmental approaches to costuming covered by Cunningham (1989) consist of familiar themes. She considers that a designer will approach one production in a way, which is completely different from that in which he/she will approach the next. Concepts may form after the initial reading of the script or they may develop out of the characterisation of the actor. The approaches in contemporary theatre today are more often than not based on a concept or theme and ideas are formed stemming from this (Cunningham, 1989; Russell, 1973). As in the United States and in New Zealand the essence of the piece will invariably originate from diverse sources. It is an ongoing achievement for the designer to find the catalyst to motivate the concept. It may arrive in the process of the research or as a developing process happening within the rehearsal period. (Ingham, 1998) notes that there will always be a path preferred by the designer, but as the director and design crew are inevitably involved, compromise is a prerequisite. A few comments regarding theatre design has been found in a handful of the New Zealand journals and newspaper publications (Harley, 1984; Hewitson, 2001; Shepheard, 2002), however the extent to which this knowledge and skills of the costume designer are incorporated into his/her collaboration with the design crew has had little study in a New Zealand context.

Examples have been identified in a thesis by a New Zealand authority (Hamon, 1995) on costume covering the knowledge of the job requirements of a costume designer in the form of a job description. She outlines the responsibilities and the expectations of the contracting company, and how these should be achieved. This does enable the costume designer to identify the requirements of the role to be defined. An overview is given below:

- *Responsible for supplying designs as required, with colour and detailed information, to the wardrobe department;*
- *Responsible for designing a production that will fit the budget and meet the needs of the script;*
- *Responsible to supervise every costume that is cut and to attend all fittings;*
- *Responsible for supplying all information on the breaking down of costumes, and any extra information required such as details on trims and accessories;*
- *Available for meetings with the director, the set designer, and other specialists on the production;*
- *The post-production duties with regard to maintenance and alterations* (Hamon, 1995, p. 55).

When considering the roles within theatre, the costume designer is usually responsible to the director or the person who has the driving vision. This is more often than not the director, as the producer will usually advise regarding the financial issues but rarely influences the design issues. This does seem to be the case in New Zealand, as verified in the article by Dowling (1980) where the majority of directors state that they have a significant role in the driving force behind the inspiration. However, as, Russell (Russell, 1973) identifies there have been situations where a costume designer, for example Gordon Craig in the early 20th century, has had the driving role with regard to the vision of the play. The designer then possesses the knowledge and skills to ensure confidence from the crew and takes the whole production process into his/her own hands.

The other production structure comes under the auspices of the Co-operative, where the roles are distributed equally and the financial profits likewise. This form of production approach is covered in the literature from England and New Zealand indicating a more frequent adaptation. (Rubin, 1998) and Harcourt (1978) describe

the co-op as consisting of a loose artistic collective in which all take responsibility for the show and also share risks. However, in practice the reality of this established concept has not always extended itself to the whole production crew, in particular the costume designer. When the financial structures are put in place and, in the event of funds becoming limited, it is usually in the wardrobe where the cuts are made. The costume designer then requires the strength of personality and experience to remedy the situation.

One aspect that has become increasingly important within the arts is making the connections between art and business. This is an emphasis placed mainly in the American publications (Anderson & Anderson, 1999; Cunningham, 1989; Ingham, 1998). It has, however, also been highlighted by the New Zealand journalist, (Shepheard, 2002) in the *North and South* magazine. Astute financial management skills are needed globally, from acquiring the contract and the budgeting of the show to the coordination of personal revenue. As the majority of costume designers operate as freelancers, accepting a contract to design for a production is accompanied by a multitude of restrictions on the designing process. Apart from the deadlines inevitably placed on the entire crew to present the piece within a given time, the costume designer also has to remain within the given budget for the production costs. The design fee in the early stages often imposes the constraints in the eventual design process with regard to a minimal budget or not enough construction time. Thus, adopting a business-minded approach to each step in the production process is imperative.

This emphasises once more the fact that the design process calls not only for acquired knowledge but also skills to apply this to the task. Talent is helpful, but of more value is the ability to approach tasks rationally and evaluate which of the specialised skills are relevant (Anderson & Anderson, 1999). It is crucial, therefore, for designers to understand how to apply their knowledge and to have the ability to communicate this to their work colleagues. This thesis will attempt to investigate the approaches New Zealand designers have been using so far and develop a model from which to achieve these goals. The unique history reviewed contributes to the development of this relationship.

A prudent comment from researcher Hamon (1995) is that no other members of the design crew, although the costumes are considered expendable items, can accumulate the particular skills of the costumier. The research, design and production continuity can be performed by most in the production, but the specialised knowledge and technical skills regarding costuming cannot.

2.2.3 The Development of the New Zealand Director

There was little specific directorial training provided before 2000 in New Zealand. The majority of practising directors in New Zealand are self-taught and have acquired their early theatrical experience in either acting on stage and/or performance training within an arts institute (Rubin, 1998). Many have, during their career, complemented their profession by the study of literary and theatrical subjects. These range from English studies and teaching training to Art History subjects. As New Zealanders are more often than not well-travelled people, theatrical directors have often pursued additional experience and qualifications, when possible, through overseas placements.

Many New Zealand directors have started their careers as actors in semi-professional shows. Through this invaluable experience, they have learnt to work within the limitations of a small budget and to cope with directing in small venues. Although New Zealand has not had the number of directors to add to the competitive structure, the standard achieved by the existing practitioners is, quoted by Rubin (1998), *"as having real conceptual and visual flair"*. The work mentioned by this author consisted of examples by Raymond Hawthorne, with predominant international influences, and the bicultural productions with Maori playwrights by Colin McColl (Rubin, 1998). The invitation for McColls *Michael James Mania* to be performed at the festival in Edinburgh received positive response and attendance (Figure 2.12, p. 32).

A director also needs to be able to embrace knowledge on a wide range of arts and crafts to give life and vision to theatre (Rubin, 1998). The directorial role encompasses both the actors' and designers' ideas. If the director has a strong concept, then this has to be followed through in all areas of design. Unless an artistic director is contracted into the team, it is the director who usually views the

play as a whole picture and the designer who has the visual ideas. Then it is the costume designer who refines and embodies these ideas in the finished costumes. Because of the small size of the theatrical community in New Zealand, the director has had to assimilate wide-ranging skills. This has resulted in a high level of versatility within the community.

When the director does choose to take on a strong role in the design of the production, the knowledge of art and design is a distinct advantage. The most successful productions are usually the work of a director who has the ability to release the ideas and work with a collaborative crew to translate these ideas into concrete form (Russell, 1973). On the other hand, when the design is handed over to the director to work with, it is important for the entire cast to comprehend the design and allow it to be utilised to its full extent. When an effort to fully understand the design is not pursued by the director, Goodwin explains:

> *"Designers are too frequently blamed for what is a lack of imagination in lazy directors who have no idea how to inhabit a dynamic design"* (Goodwin, 1989, p. 27).

Theatre is not a static performance, and for effective translation the director must understand not only the limitations but also the potential concerning the costumes. As the issue questioning the expectations of the New Zealand director with regard to the costume designer does not emerge frequently in literature, for example emphasis by Tracy Collins on the need for effective collaboration in the realisation of the piece (Calder, 1993), thus the call for a stronger voice of the costume designer.

2.2.4 Collaboration within the Design Process

The valuable feedback came in the form of response to a journal article in which New Zealand theatrical directors were asked their views on the hierarchical structure within the productions on which they worked (Dowling, 1980). Three out of five assumed an autocratic role without doubt, and although one saw himself more as a guide, another director emphasised that the role of authority was needed to drive the concepts and encourage them to develop. As explained in the following quotation from one director:

"The director must provide the vision for the theatre. And these visions should be given the chance to live" (Dowling, 1980. p. 70).

Although the director concerned credited this approach to ultimately providing results, two following directors considered alternatives and were more flexible in their relationship with the production crew. They were more welcoming to the input from the rest of the team. One of these considers himself to follow democratic philosophies, but admitted that at times it was to the detriment of the production as there was constant tension (Dowling, 1980).

An alternative approach, preferred by some costume designers, involves the collaborative process and the 'workshopping' of a piece. This process consists of the playwright's presenting an initial unfinished draft of the script to the crew and as part of the rehearsal. Often the director, designers and actors, develop the piece through to the finishing stages with contributions from all. For the company, a stronger emphasis is then on the developmental period and the emerging innovations, and not on the end results. The only variable to consider is the agreement and closure in design decisions. With work in progress, there comes a point at which the director or cast ceases to encourage the changes and the characters have emerged (Cunningham, 1989). There needs to be resolution as to when the costume designer can apply the finishing details to the costumes. There are productions in which the developmental stages are still occurring after opening night and throughout the season. The attraction for many in this collaborative method is a less defined hierarchical system and a more egalitarian approach to the design process. Although there is very little written on the incorporation of the costumier in developmental work, there is a strong movement towards this form of theatre in New Zealand and what feedback into this style of work is received with enthusiasm (Shannon, 2003). The extent to which this applies in a New Zealand context has not yet been examined and is one objective of this thesis.

Within investigations pursued into the collaboration process, some key points were identified in the publication by the author Osborne (1953), who has published extensive work on creative thinking involving design in general. Although this work is dated fifty years ago, it has provided pertinent explanations regarding this thesis. According to Osborne, with good leadership the group can be relatively large, and

success in collaboration lies in the choice of the right team. When working with more than two people it is important that meetings are well organised. Good leadership may explain the success of the long-standing production companies in New Zealand who have an artistic director who places collaboration high on the agenda but still reigns with a very authoritarian hand. The companies that come to mind are the Fourtune, Court and Downstage. Although this has not been examined in a New Zealand context, and in relationship to dramatic productions, their ingoing existence is significant.

With the combination of the right team, creativity is increased and once this is achieved the power of association flows easily. Osborne (1953) refers to:

> *"The brainstorming phenomenon, is a lot of ideas forming a chain reaction, just like a string of crackers"* (Osborne, 1953).

Within the context of these meetings it is more beneficial to put fewer rather than more items on the agenda and to promote, idea generation. Forsaking quantity for quality places fewer demands on concentration and leaves more time for developing creative ideas (Osborne, 1953). To put this in context in the production process, these 'brainstorming' occurrences would happen in the initial production meeting or among the design team. They are inaugurated to encourage the development of inspiration and concepts.

2.2.5 Costume Design and Theatrical Styling

Attempting to pinpoint a description or style of 20th century theatre and to define the environment for theatrical costume is difficult and the term 'eclectic' has been used more than once by theorists. Very broadly translated it implies that the elements are drawn from various sources (Eyre & Wright, 2000; Ingham, 1998). Styling in the latter half of the 20th century is frequently defined within the realm of Postmodernist theories, and is associated with the fragmentation and reinterpretation of characteristics from previous time periods (Sarup, 1996). However, it is an area that becomes harder to define, as there are many subjective opinions, especially considering the many disciplines in art literature. To make it

even harder there is the tendency to place a more general context upon the explanation within postmodernist ideas. (Reinelt & Roach, 1992).

The production of *Viva Verdi* (2001) is an example of the use of this 'eclectic' method. The costume designs have been borrowed from various time periods, predominantly the 1960s and 1980s. With these visual adaptations of a performance, the environment can be as fragmented and inconsistent as the script and still be part of the multi-levelled reality within today's context (Manson, 2001b).

Figure 2.14 *Viva Verdi,* 2001. Singer: Julia Melinek. Costumes and Set: Tracey Collins, *Evening Post, Oct 4.*

The 20th century has been characterised as being governed by design aspects that gravitate towards the minimalist approach (Russell, 1973). Within theatre this approach goes hand-in-hand with the need not only to simplify but also to exaggerate when designing costumes. He clarifies this by explaining that although a less cluttered design composition is adopted today, accentuation is still needed within theatre. This is in response to situations wherein the audience is positioned some distance away from the activity and detailing needs more emphasis. Russell

(1973) feels this also contributes to the 'theatricality' of the costume, a theory which is questionable in the naturalistic approach of contemporary theatre. However, an example given is the use of boldness, colour and proportions applied to the design. The elements as in line, shape and decoration are simplified and stripped to the essentials. The consequence of these effects is redefining and accentuating, but also with the aim of making the aesthetics more accessible to the audience (Russell, 1973).

To reinforce this theory from Russell the New Zealand opera *Viva Verdi* can be used again with regard to the principles in the costume and set design. The costume supports the actor physically as well as becoming part of the set and thus does present a larger than life characterisation. The designer has used an array of contemporary media and materials to tell the story in an abstract but much stylised way (Figure 2.14, p. 44). As quoted in the review:

> *"Big hair takes on a whole new meaning, as her hairdo gets blown in from the wings, creating a backdrop for the entire stage"* (Manson, 2001).

However, if the visuals are too stimulating, this can work to the detriment of the play in that it encourages the actor to apply less effort in conveying the character to the audience. This was mentioned partly as a critique received regarding the aesthetics of *Viva Verdi* and the relationship to the content. It was felt the aesthetics hid a quality of work which was below the standard which the seasoned audience had been led to expect. As Russell emphasises:

> *'The costume should serve the play's dramatic action and not provide it'* (Russell, 1973, p. 4).

Aside from this, it was highlighted that the visuals attracted a new audience who were not regular opera goers, thus it achieved its goal in making this particular art more accessible (Manson, 2001b).

To interpret drama, literary theorists have endeavoured to name and thus describe the particular forms of theatre. It is to the costume designer's advantage to pursue research into these various forms, and of course he/she will inevitably be

influenced by these definitions. A knowledge of art history is critical, as the theatre style has often acquired the name through the definitions of the art style. Within the performing arts, theatre styles have been classified into two categories: 'representational' and 'presentational' depending on the amount of realism applied to the work. An examination of literature pertaining to styling is necessary in order to identify the influences it may have on the New Zealand designers.

A representational style attempts to recreate work as close to reality as possible, whereas it is normally accepted for presentational style to be an abstraction from reality (Rubin, 1998). To distinguish from the many styles, the 'isms' and modern styling are usually associated with presentational pieces, and the classics with the representational. When selective realism evolves it moves away from a depiction of reality, especially with regard to the costume. The start of the conscious adaptation of styling from other periods into a more simple design with abstract influence was with these early 20th century movements. An example of one of the early costume designer's incorporating these elements of selective realism was Leon Bakst (Figure 2.15), who designed for the Russian Ballet at the turn of the 20th century. Examples of presentational styles include Modernist, Postmodern, Impressionist, and Expressionist, while representational styles include Realism, Selective realism, Classical, Romantic and Naturalist (Russell, 1973).

Figure 2.15 *Le Dieu Bleu,* 1812. Dancer: Tamara Karsauha. Costume: Leon Bakst. Barbican Museum.

The costume styling that is adopted most frequently in contemporary theatre can be closely associated to 'Stylistic Realism' (Roberts, 1984). There is very little chance in today's theatre to create an authentic period production, thus the adaptation into a styling that serves the story within the budgetary limitations is all that is possible.

2.2.6 The Impact of Personal Style

The nature of design involves problem solving and working within limitations, especially within the realms of theatre design. Design requires digesting all the involved information of a production and translating it for the public. As in most artistic media, in the search to extend the creative boundaries there will always be significant considerations. Some artists follow styles, some create them and some go against them. Costume design is primarily a personal interpretation of a period's reality. Russell (Russell, 1973) describes the inevitability of the designer's personal styling showing through in the following comment:

> *"Art filters life, and the artist or designer places his technique of presentation between the actuality and the public"* (Russell, 1973, p. 212).

For a costume designer, even with an abundant budget, the recreation of a previous period in history to minute detail is impossible. The designer will always have the effects of training, personality and culture incorporated in his/her work. The skill will often lie in the adaptation of modern fabrics and interpreting these to look like a particular period. Many designers today adopt a form of minimalist stylisation from the original and edge away from a reproduction of the particular period of the play. The audience's imagination can provide a far better picture than material representation, and most audiences will accept this without difficulty (Russell, 1973).

The definition of a personal style's emanating from a costume designer raises complications when applied to theatre. What is often emphasized in a production is the attempt to portray a look that is unified and thus provide harmony (Russell, 1973). Within this concept and the collaborative nature of theatre, the elements of personal style would seemingly be difficult to discern. The result will ultimately depend on how strongly the costume designer places the strength of conviction in

his or her own concept. But ultimately the costume designer will, more often than not, interpret someone else's work - and in theatre that consists initially of the playwright's work. The designer will always be only one part of the process.

The collective vision, however, can be lost when the costume designer insists on a need to express and overrides the concept of the performance. For example, a worst-case scenario can be the irrepressible desire of the costumier to expose the beautiful characteristics of fabrics to the extent where their own personal fancies generate interests and can take a domineering role. There is, for a costume designer, ultimately a task in subtly - but beautifully – exposing the distinctive artistic skills which make his/her work individual, alongside maintaining the other creative collaborations. Russell reinforces this in his belief, which he expresses as follows:

> *"The concept of a designer having their own style is untenable, if not dishonest"* (Russell, 1973, p. 210).

The costume designer should feed off innovations and discoveries of the time, and appropriate these to his/her designs. These qualities can often be associated with personal style; nonetheless this should be done without destroying the original concept of that play. Conversely, the opposite can occur when a costume designer is intent on extending his/her practical experience by working with many different directors; work can become bland. It is essential to retain one's integrity by concentrating on developing a particular style and thus giving the work an added extra depth and artistry (Russell, 1973).

It is questionable whether these influences considered by Russell apply to New Zealand as they would to the United Kingdom. There is the advantage of New Zealand's isolation to consider, even with the ever-present colonial values within traditional theatre. Identified by Walsh (2005) are how the attempts to use indigenous characteristics struggle under the restrictions of 'political correctness'. These ideals are valid and merit consideration but, realistically, are more likely to be implemented when the work is plentiful and a choice is possible; for example, in cities accommodating high entertainment and providing ample employment within the performance industry.

2.2.7 Communication used in Costume Design

Fortier (1997) would like to see more recognition given to the specific contributing art forms in theatre, with emphasis on the visual and material media identified as non-verbal. Along with Russell (1973) and Holt (1993), Fortier felt there should be more significance placed on the non-verbal elements of the performance with regard to the physicality of space, actors, props and costume. In the investigations into the relationships between the visual aspects and the written text of a performance a question has evolved as to whether the spoken word achieves more than the visuals when interpreting a performance. This question has recognised complications, which have been identified by Maynard (2004). This hurdle is also recognised by the researcher in this investigation is in defining the language expressed in the clothing of the body. It is a far greater area and more problematic than is assumed. Society encourages one to emit certain messages: for example culture, fashion or dominant colours, which may not be of a person's character. Within theatre the actor is required to emanate a language attempting to portray the character in body and clothing. Maynard questions the validity of this semiotics:

> *"Clothing is under-coded in comparison to the written language, and its meanings are imprecise, ambiguous and often unreliable"* (Maynard, 2004).

Maynard explains further how clothing may be interpreted within an historical, social and cultural framework, and that the contemporary interpretations are multi-layered and complex. This complexity is cause to explore aspects concerning the semiotics and visual analysis of costume design. This is an interesting area of exploration and definitely an area deserving of further investigation.

2.3. Connecting Themes

2.3.1 Adornment, Fashion, Dress and Costume

In defining the terms in the heading and relating them to costuming design, it is apparent that they all participate in the characterisation of a performance. However unless specified, they consist of an accompanying role along with the primary role of serving the piece. Entwistle (2000) has aided in the clarification by defining these terms and places the explanations within the disciplinary practices.

- *Adornment is an aspect of altering the body*
- *Clothing conveys cultural information*
- *Costume is used in a historical context*
- *Dress is used to indicate status, power, and social hierarchies*
- *Fashion is within cultural society, and found in Western modernity* (Entwistle, 2000, p. 41).

These terms are often used as the major focus in historical research, and as New Zealand researcher, Jane Malthus (1996), explains clothing conveys complex cultural, social and psychological messages. However the influence of fashion within theatre has an omnipresent role as quoted:

> *"Fashion is everywhere. Society is permeated with fashion"* (Rogers & Gamans, 1983).

The incorporation of historic costume into fashion is explored regularly by fashion designers. Alexander McQueen (Figure 2.16) applies theatricality to his fashion creations by drawing on the various influences from the past and present, and then sculpturally emphasizing the body.

Figure 2.16 *Alexander McQueen,* Vogue, 2003, March.

The distinction between theatre and fashion has been noted by Fortier (1997). He considers fashion can sometimes be isolated from the body by its discursive nature and is very reliant on dialogue. He feels fashion exists only through discourse, and it is a system that is not so much focused on the clothing but on what is said about it. Fashion has a recognisd role within theatre; however, as mentioned previously, it should not overtake the play. Unless a fashion theme is part of the concept of the play, the clothes should not make a statement so as to become a dramatic discourse (Russell, 1973).

However, fashion has often been successfully introduced in drama when a play has fashion as a story line, an example being the Court Theatre production of *Diana* based on the life of American fashion editor, Diana Vreedland (Figure 2.17). The costumes were designed by Christchurch fashion designer; Barbara Lee and with her wealth of experience of fashion she was able to encapsulate the essence of the female protagonist successfully into the clothing of the character.

Figure 2.17 *Diana,* (1990). Director: Elrick Hooper. Designer: Barbara Lee. Permission from Barbara Lee collection

There are corresponding aspects between fashion design and theatre design; nevertheless the distinctions appear when the requirements of the costume are confronted. To design a costume, not only is the analysis of the script needed but also the historical, sociological and cultural background is taken into account. The costume has to reflect and embody these influences.

Anderson (1999) reasons that within fashion design, the person who wears the garment is of no great concern - whereas a costume is placed on a character within the concept of the play's text. There are technical skills that apply only to theatrical costuming, for example shaping the body to suit the characterisation, and aging and breaking down of the costume. Also, the process of costume design involves a regular communication to be established between the crew and cast - whereas fashion design is not usually a collaborative process (Anderson & Anderson, 1999).

To reiterate a point from page 39 there are specialized skills required in both fashion and costume design and these can be applied to either, but it is noted that one area may only assist the other (Hamon, 1995). However this does not stop the occasional appearance of a fashion designer's assisting in productions and applying the specific skills that separate the two disciplines. Tanya Carlson and Marilyn Sainty both have been able to discard the objectives of the fashion designer and approach the work with an understanding of differing emphases that are needed (Bain, 2002; Cock, 2002). Sainty explains for the *World's Wife* the differing approach in having to otherwise construe the brief and generate a feeling (Bain, 2002). In this case there were similarities between the designer's normal designs and the costumes. The requirements of the production fell in line with the process applied by both designers.

2.3.2 Culture

It is clear that the subject of culture covers a wide array of aspects and ideas and diverse academics have done a great deal of research into most of them. Therefore, I would not consider presuming to having anywhere near sufficient knowledge in this area as to provide a detailed explanation of the interpretation of culture in New Zealand. In the following documentation I can only attempt to delve into the significance of culture in order to examine how it has influenced costume design with regard to the New Zealander with the context of the present research.

Pole and Burgess (2000) define culture by including the material and symbolic artifacts of behaviour; such as belief systems and social arrangements. Wilmott (1989) also encompasses a wide area by explaining that within the learned social behaviour of a given group, the framework of culture provides a system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating and acting. However, in an attempt to find definitions that have a closer connection to the subject matter, the researcher found that the publication by Wilmott (1989) not only explained culture from a New Zealand perspective but also focused, in part, on the area under discussion:

> *"Culture is not simply art, music and literature; it is the total collection of behaviour patterns, values and beliefs that characterize a particular group of people"* (Wilmott, 1998, p. 5).

The act of 'colligating'; a term to describe the gathering of the beliefs and actions associated with culture with the aim of recognising and explaining human behaviour, was used to collect information. As Novitz (1989) points out though, more explanation is needed and the colligatory account as it is adequate in understanding a culture but not in identifying how these patterns are assembled. Without the knowledge to accompany the nature of the collections they remain just a colligatory account. These data are collected by many diverse people and with the large scope of culture these results may overlap and/or contradict. Also, the researcher has experienced the tendency for people to 'demarcate' the explanations to assist in more decisive definition, and these explanations can be altered to suit, as indicated by Novitz (1989) in the following comment:

> *"People often try to demarcate their own culture in a way which places it in a very favorable light"* (Novitz, 1989, p. 283)

It is important to understand how we demarcate our culture, as culture is a powerful political and ideological instrument. This places importance on assembling the evidence and having an argument to support it (Novitz, 1989). The problems presented here refer to developing the investigations of this research. There is difficulty in not only the identification of the cultural characteristics, but also in formulating the conclusions emerging within this thesis.

2.3.3 National Identity in New Zealand

It is understandable that in today's society a questioning into the existence of a New Zealand identity is inevitable, considering most childhood education before 1980 contained very little history relating to our country. British history was taught and, if you were Maori, you may have received an early Te Reo education. This not only ensured the detachment from the Maori youth but also created an estranged Pakeha. The recent desire to pursue knowledge from our past has drawn people into knowledge of a national identity (Wilmott, 1989). But importantly, noted from Anne Walsh (2005) is the fact that initially, we must learn to read the visual language to be able to identify the traits.

The reason for a need to find an identity is suggested to be motivated by either personal aspirations or even a sense of deprivation (Novitz, 1989). The cry for an identity is the desire for a shared view of a culture. Pointed out by Sarup (1996) is the fact that to establish an identity there needs to be a place and time period and identity cannot be conceived as an abstract. In affirming the existence of the identity there must be recognition of these traits with a group. It must be concrete and real, rather than derived from possible theoretical causes. On a lesser note Barker (2000) indicates that these explanations are but moments in time, which provide just a foreground to historical conjecture. The obvious drawback is New Zealand - as such a young country - has only a small choice of past experiences from which to construct a discourse on which to build a culture.

The first signs of the change in our own identity were exhibited in the art works of indigenous artists. A reason for this may be the drive to create something of themselves rather than something inspired from somewhere other than their own world. In the performing arts, this tension created continuing conflict between accepting what was produced in the country and imported products (Wilmott, 1989). The movement to initiate this drive came after the Second World War from the artists who were considered the forerunners of Modernism. Rodney Kennedy was a participant in this group and went on to play a key role in the development of costume design at that time in New Zealand (Hocken, 1990).

Until recently a national state did not exist in its present form, and the need to form one was not a natural occurrence. It has its origins in an 18th century political tool

to claim home rule over a specific dominion. Sarup (1996) concludes that the fundamental basis behind the creation of a national identity is a construct, an invention with which the political powers retain control in defining characteristics. The view of identity is seen in different ways:

- *Having to belong to a nation and a choice therein;*
- *Having to belong to a nation but without the choice and you are its national wherever you go* (Barker, 2000).

The question of reinforcing a national identity is often not even considered in an established, settled country and is usually assumed. The motivation by Barker for establishment of a national identity can lie in an impending threat to this identity; currently insecurity originates through growing globalisation. The freer access to communications has allowed easier contact between the various cultures and the means to constructing an identity. Nationalism exhibits itself not only politically but also in its cultural representation. The national identity covers more than just the nation itself, and includes the individual and the views of the individual (Sarup, 1996). The borders of a nationality today are not retained within the mapped boundaries separating one country from another but are global; few nations today consist of homogeneous inhabitants of a single ethnicity. The term 'hybridity' has been used by Barker (2000) to explain how the mixing of cultures is forming new identities. He has formed two distinguishing groups:

- *Structural: social and institutional sites; border zones or cities. Concerned with the systems of relation not a particular person as source - for example, an organization.*
- *Cultural: cultural responses; ranging from assimilation through to forms of separation, also that destabilise and blur cultural boundaries, focus on the lived experience - for example, the Chinatowns within a city* (Barker, 2000).

These classifications are often decided by the circumstances of the particular social groups. The first refers to a physical location where the hybridisation occurs, and the following relates to the reactions that are created from the hybridisation. The structural concept keeps the cultural activity within proximity and thus allows more possibilities to expand the organisational opportunities, whereas the cultural hybridisation is not always planted in one place and can merge into another culture.

Although Sarup (1996) suggests that the enticement of nationalism stems from the need to belong, and highlights when this nationalism is in full impetus, people are expected to take the patriotism on board or, alternatively, refuse (Sarup, 1996).

The idea that one's identity is a natural acquisition is contested, and it is suggested that the identity of a people evolves (Sarup, 1996). Identity does not originate from the specific person but through communication with the surroundings. Sarup identifies two methods with which identity has developed:

- *The traditional; class, gender, race and*
- *Fabricated; constructed, in process* (Sarup, 1996, p. 14).

Attributed to these identities are the many influences relating to events, consequences and how we interpret these. Along with the external determining forces the individual has, to some extent, a choice in defining his/her own identity. Sarup questions whether or not the choice of particular aspects within an identity are preferred and adopted purely for personal convenience. This demonstrates the subjectivity that can be adopted in the interpretation of one's culture. However, Sarup believes this to be a misconception and that personal identity is more introspective and filled with preconceived ideals and untruths.

Sarup (1996) goes beyond the idea of limiting an identity to that of the nation-state and suggests the alternative of assuming the citizenship of whichever place you are at the present. The term with a closer association is 'cosmopolitanism' or world citizenship identified to mean:

> *"He, who is nowhere a foreigner"* (Sarup, 1996, p. 143).

This term is becoming increasingly popular within the 21st century. As New Zealand was originally an occupied country and the population is increasingly transitional it would seem an appropriate label for New Zealanders.

An important distinction between belonging to a nation and someone who is a nationalist was identified as whether or not a person applies the characteristics of a nation to himself/herself - thus a person may be nationalist or one who chooses to

live in a nation without participating in the customs (Sarup, 1996). New Zealand has a naturally strong colonial dominance, and derived from this is the very Englishness as part of the identity. When defining these characteristics of the Englishness, interestingly the values identified often are placed under the umbrella of the Protestant religious values as explained in the following points:

- *Thrift, self-discipline and living a decent life;*
- *Work, not the guarantee of respectability, but a powerful image;*
- *Social discipline; closely linked with notions of hierarchy and authority;*
- *Emphasis on the practical and the concrete, the empirical, value common sense* (Sarup, 1996, p. 132).

Is there an identity to be defined within the investigation of the New Zealand post-colonial situation? Have New Zealanders created their own identity or have we followed national discourses and our identity become just stylised characteristics? The geographical isolation of New Zealand means that we have not had the constraints of a society with the established, traditional theatre that other countries outside New Zealand have had; for example, the traditional Shakespearean theatre of England. The isolation of New Zealand can have the aforementioned advantages and disadvantages, for example the inconvenience caused by our isolation from the United Kingdom and the Continental countries in the acquisition of materials needed to produce garments for a production. However, this could give impetus to improvise and produce from scratch, which in turn develops essential skills of obvious value in the performance industry. This is reinforced by Ingham (1998) who encourages improvisation and self-training and applies a New Zealand trait in questioning why a task should not at least be attempted, even if the formal training has not been acquired.

2.3.4 Visible Identity

The publication *Kiwiana,* by Wolfe and Barnett (2001), deals with the elusive characteristics of the New Zealand culture and identity. Novitz and Wilmott (1989) claimed that these definitions were virtually impossible to connect to interpretation of design or visuals such as those investigated in the current research; however they have defined a handful of characteristics in the form of attitudes and stereotypical objects. Anne Walsh makes an analogy in the No. 8 wire turn of phrase as it speaks

of the Pakeha history, with regards the ecology, attitudes, skills, and economics. It is associated to finding solutions for problems but as the wire, situations are not always easy to revolve (Walsh, 2005).

Interpretation of the New Zealand national identity is often drawn from nostalgia (Wolfe, 2001). A period used consistently and reflected on fondly as being the golden years of New Zealand is within the 1950s and the 1960s. These good old days were admittedly also a time of full employment and the items recognised today as Kiwiana often consist of artifacts from these times. These examples have since become national icons. They were then considered simple and honest and are still popular today in this world of change, as they represent anchors and reminders of who we are. Some examples include gumboots, buzzy bee, paua shell, and the brown beer bottle.

Wolfe and Barnett (2001) have found definitions of Kiwiana in the iconic representations originating primarily in the commercial art world. Many of the objects are not original and have been borrowed from sources elsewhere. An example shown in Figure 2.18 is the New Zealand 'Buzzy Bee' on the right and, on the left, the similar version seen in America at about the same time (Wolfe & Barnett, 2001).

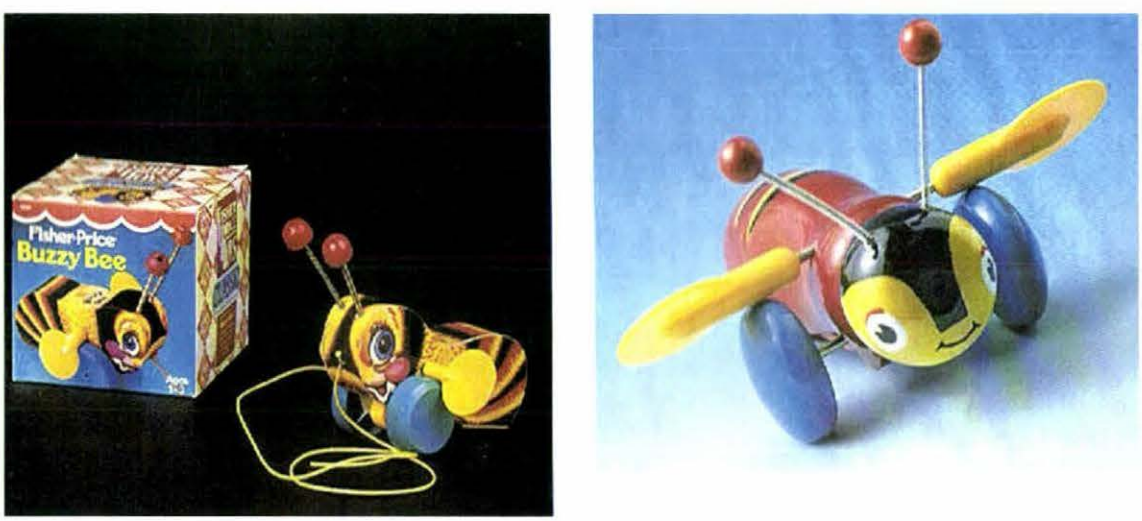

Figure 2.18 *Buzzy Bee*, 2001. An example of Kiwiana? (Wolfe & Barnett, 2001).

Predominant features used to portray New Zealand in the past have been the botanical landscape and the clear light (Moore, 2002). An early example of the signs of a contemporary New Zealand identity would undeniably be found in the play that was performed at the 1970 Japan Expo. The intention was for both countries (Japan and New Zealand) to provide a production that showed their origins in an aesthetic identifiable in the performing arts of each country and also to be comprehensible to each. The New Zealand performance was called *Green are the Islands* and it was reported that New Zealand's courage in introducing innovations in the performance was greatly appreciated (New Zealand Evening Post, 1970).

The choreographer, Leigh Brewer, explained that the work was particularly challenging, as although Maori elements were introduced, the dance used almost entirely Western stage movements (Brownlie, 1970). The concept was to show New Zealand origins in mythology and its progress in history by various means. The artist and sculptor, Para Matchitt, designed the costumes (Post, 1970). From the image shown, the performance appears to transcend time with regard to costume design and production. Figure 2.19 shows the high technical skills in costume design presented at that time.

Figure 2.19 *Green are the Islands,* 1970. Japan Expo. Soloist: Gerard Sibrett. Costumes: Para Matchitt. Reproduced by permission from Leigh Brewer

The most recent New Zealand pavilion at World Expo in Japan 2005 has suffered the same lack of publicity as the 1970s production. The insert in the newspaper explains the visuals to be a theme of Nature's Wisdom (Simpson, 2005). The best of New Zealand's assets are considered to be a 1.8 tonne greenstone boulder and the technical capabilities of New Zealanders, as opposed to the artistic representations of performance and design in the 1970s. The design team consisted of a company formed of with lighting, audio and technical specialists (Eichblatt, 2005).

The New Zealander is also considered to possess the entrepreneurial skills of making innovations from what is available (Wolfe, 2001). These attributes have extended into New Zealand clothing to this very day. The New Zealand approach to design was originally identified as practical and sensible clothes, as quoted by Wolfe in the following:

> *"From the British forebears any flair was overwhelmed by conformity"* (Wolfe, 2001, p. 118).

Today, the designers who keep pace with foreign fashions are extending into innovation and developing a style specific to New Zealand. A characteristic identified by Wolfe (2001) is the straightforward approach, or alternatively the term 'casual extreme', used to describe the attire worn from home to work often created by the addition and subtraction of layers.

Identified is the incorporation of patterns from the Northern Hemisphere, the Pacific Islands and North American indigenous cultures. The Maori culture is the primary form of inspiration for many New Zealand fashion designers, including concepts derived from symbols and the incorporation of indigenous materials (e.g. the koru and flax). Since the 1940s there has been an increasing trend towards diversity found in the aesthetics of New Zealand design. It has been commented on by Australians that there is a distinct styling associated with New Zealand designers. Fashion designer, Marilyn Sainty, feels that this is an interpretation of a heightened appreciation of style (Wolfe, 2001). The present research questions how these aesthetic influences manifest themselves in theatre costume design.

2.4 Elements and Principles of Costume Design

For theatre designers and costume designers, the comprehension of being a part of the bigger picture emphasises the importance of understanding and organizing design. One of the predominant design principles for theatre is creating visual unity. The principles arrange the elements to produce this. Four major principles are identified as: 'Unity, Variety, Balance and Harmony'.
Russell (1973) defines these as:

- *Unity:* *The elements (e.g. line, color and texture) need to have consistency to provide unity - linking of the separate parts to create a greater whole.*
- *Variety:* *The eye should be stimulated and interested by using the elements to add variety to the design.*
- *Balance:* *The weight and mass of each design component control the balance. Distribution of the elements is spread evenly over the figure.*
- *Harmony:* *This is suggested to be achieved by combining the different elements to make an attractive whole.*

In today's climate of disunities, design work is often portrayed as confused and distorted. Nevertheless, there must be some unity, even if this means being consistently inconsistent! Otherwise, the experience perpetuates to a situation whereby the audience cannot connect with anything, and instead of enlightenment the result is confusion (Cunningham, 1989). Costume designers are constantly challenged to not only extend their visual skills but also to apply an emotional content to their work. This is encapsulated by Russell (1973) in the following comment:

> *"A study of the elements and principles will develop the eye of the designer, so that they [designer] see it with their mind as well as their feeling"* (Russell, 1973, p. 70).

The general public has developed an increased art appreciation in the 21st century which has taught us to see more abstractly. The increased ability consists of

understanding and seeing emotion in lines, colours, and shapes without the need to attach it to the context of scene or narrative. These visual attributes are what have been defined in this chapter as the 'elements'. Elements form the aesthetic details applied to the costume design. A knowledge of design elements and how to apply them is a necessity for a costume designer, as it can assist not only within the design process but also to express the ideas with (Cunningham, 1989)

The elements are described as having physical and psychological effects on the observer and the principles are used to organise the ideas to form the design. The ideas are controlled by the principles in such a way as to bring interest, unity and meaning to the design (Cunningham, 1989; Russell, 1973). The elements consist of the components that the designer can work with in the actual creation of the design. They are the aesthetic techniques that produce a design and are distinguished by how they are applied. The designer will make a certain choice for a given situation and apply the elements by way of various media or illustration skills as part of the costume assembly. Examples of various elements are: for example space, line, shape, mass, colour, balance, light, texture, pattern, silhouette, stage picture, structure, and decorative shape. In this composition (Figure 2.20) each character can stand on its own within the environment but the appeal is in how the colour and detailing all fits in beautifully to create 'unity' in a complete and balanced aesthetic.

Figure 2.20 *Lets do it*, 1992. Devised byRaymond Hawthorne. Costume: Tracy Grant. Peter Dinnan Collection

2.4.1 The Development of Creativity within the Design Process

The reason why I have used the information provided by Beach (1998) and Blom (1982) as part of the design research is their exploration into breaking down the costume design process. Although both studies are situated in the United States of America the connections are the framework they have developed which has integrated creativity into the design process. Both studied the design processes of the costume designer; Blom used costume designer Tanya Moiseiwitsch and Beach compared two case studies between a weaver and a costume designer. Although the results in terms of the steps used were similar, Beach has used interviews and observations from the selected participants, whereas Blom has used only interview data and did not observe the participant at work. The correlation with this thesis is the analysis of the interview results and personal experience of production work. The researcher has had opportunity to experience the production styles of many interviewees.

Both Beach (1998) and Blom (1982) have developed models that break down the design process into steps. Blom has used Osborn's (1953) seven-step model to analyse the creative process of Moiseiwitsch. Using one performance as an example, these steps were explained and related to the approaches of the costume designer. Beach concluded that:

> *"It was found that the design process acted as a framework and creativity that allowed for the generation of new ideas and outcomes in the designer's work"* (Beach, 1998, p. i).

Because of the qualitative method and the more comprehensive outline I have had received more benefit from the documented information provided from Beach. Identified are the following steps used by Beach whereby the activities are explained in coordinating the design process. The use of the design principles covered in the last section are incorporated into the following steps. In the structure of this design process the design elements have the opportunity to be explored freely. The steps start with the initial stages of acquiring the project to the closure of the performance.

- **Acceptance:** The model for the motivation was found to require three essentials; the creative artist, the creative activities and the receiver. Motivation was related to how the designers saw themselves and also how they would like others to view them; this value determined how they approached the work. The costume designer valued the support from the production team. Different goal structures distinguished between 1. the low creatives and 2. the high creatives. Low creatives were primarily interested in the making of a product and high creatives emphasised a personal meaning and process.
- **Analysis:** Gathering information and using this as a guide or focus. The input of ideas from the production team was drawn upon and the domain relevant skills identified. The information received stemmed primarily from acquired knowledge.
- **Ideation:** The method of idea generation was distinguished into two procedures; experimentation, and processing the information. Making constant changes and improvisation were key parts in idea generation. Participating within the rehearsal process was suggested as an activity in which this could happen. The early stages of the design process are incorporated within this step. Fabric and its relationship to the body form a major inspiration. Design elements are explored and the principles applied to these. The measure of the success in idea generation was dependent on how the costume designer applied the discoveries to the work. The interaction of the designer within the social structure provided a framework for self-expression.
- **Incubation:** The digestion of material. This time was for contemplation of the work.
- **Ideas selection:** The assessment of these ideas before actual execution. Design principles are revised and evaluated for the desired aesthetic. The combination of the visual ideas was presented to the design team to be changed and adjusted.
- **Implementation:** The constructing of the project.
- **Evaluation:** Evaluation could be engaged in at any time during the production process.

Evident within the study was the lack of outside feedback or even internal feedback from work colleagues and the industry.

Blom (1982) created a similar set of steps for the design process with the main differences being the substitution of the phrases: 'acceptance' for 'orientation' and 'analysis' by 'evaluation'.

Both identified the incubation stage and Blom (1982) explained this as when the ideas were often changed or adjusted and decisions about the finished rendering of the designs produced. The designer, Moiseiwitsch, was reluctant to show anyone - except the director - the finished renderings. It is surmised that this related to her belief explained in the following quotation that:

> *"A costume was complete only within the context of the theatrical production"* (Blom 1982).

Both authors identified an 'evaluation' stage of the work, although Blom (1982) describes it as 'verification'. This was used for the judging the resulting ideas. It is debatable how or when this happened in the process used by Moiseiwitsch, because of her reluctance to reveal her work till the last minute. Beach (1998), on the other hand, found that evaluation occurred throughout the entire process.

To place these investigations into perspective, the models of creativity formulated by Beach (1998) and Blom (1982) encompass the costume design process from the conception of ideas to presentation of the performance. It would seem that the elements, and the principles controlling these, form part of the design process that has been broken down into identified steps. Both models involve not only the design process but also the conceptual requirements and physical limitations within the process; for example, dealing with budget and time constraints. The design processes are placed in a framework that enables the costume designer to identify and deal with them specifically and also to check them off when achieved.

Beach (1998) states that by placing the steps in an organised structure; the designers are free to focus and extend themselves towards the skills needed for innovation in creation. The creative framework provides the ability to stand back and see how

each part of the process supports the other. The elements are used to pursue the act of making the plan and fabrication. Collingwood (1964) interprets plan making as the conceptual period open to experimentation, which Beach interprets as the ideation. Ideation thus is distinguished from fabrication where the ideas are taken that stage further to resolve into the physical state; and, as Beach indicates, the design is implemented (Beach, 1998; Collingwood, 1964).

The value of the model thus lies in its ability to allow the costume designer to focus on designing rather than becoming distracted by the process itself. In the present research an endeavour is made to place the design process in a New Zealand context.

2.5 Most Valuable Literature

At the commencement of this research in 2002, the only extensive reporting on New Zealand theatre was done by (Downes, 1975) and Harcourt (1978). Harcourt had provided by far the more contemporary views, and an insight into the personalities over his lifetime. Since then, (Strange, 1994) has been able to update contemporary New Zealand theatre more conclusively. Whilst Harcourt had solid background on theatre in Wellington, Strange provided an insight into Christchurch theatre. Interestingly, and more recent accounts from the encyclopedic publication from Rubin (1998) have given good reference to many theatrical artists and philosophies of performances within New Zealand.

Although Wickham (1992) gives a very concise account of the history of theatre in England, he has mentioned other countries, including New Zealand. As noted previously, these publications have but a sketch of commentary on New Zealand costume design and it has been in the journals and newspaper articles that information could be found. A lot of the writings have reinforced my sentiments about the industry; consequently, they were no great surprise. The archival information has helped in accessing pre-1950s theatrical information, however this was mainly performance dates and visuals of a quantitative nature more suited to a purely historical document as opposed to this thesis. Essentially, there is no substantial, published literature on the history of New Zealand theatrical costuming itself. Although there is an abundance of historic literature on fashion, the development of costume in theatre has not progressed alongside this.

It is very easy, with the intent of acquiring as much knowledge as possible, to delve into aspects that are not relevant to the aims of the thesis. When narrowing the field down to the key texts ultimately supporting the objectives, the most useful with regard to costume design practice and principles - without a doubt - are not considered current literature. Cunningham (1989) and Russell (1973) provided explanations for the practicalities and processes of costume design, whereas Fortier (1997) ventured further into the concept processes. Although Osborn (1953) has conducted research into the reasoning of creativity in great depth, the thesis by Beach (1998) - who used this as a resource - compiled the most useful design model process.

Anderson (1999) put interpretations on how fashion is considered in society and Pole and Burgess (2000) followed on to clarify theories pertaining to culture. Even though Sarup (1996) and Barker (2000) had strong views on what and how identities are formed, it was Novitz and Wilmott (1989) who provided an insight into the perceptions of a New Zealand identity - not to mention Wolf and Barnett (2001), who were intent on finding a New Zealand aesthetic. Although this was difficult to relate to a New Zealand aesthetic in costume design these authors provided enlightening observations on various cultural perceptions inside and beyond New Zealand. The overseas literature in turn has provided the supporting information behind the reasoning on the influences in the methods emerging from the interviewees.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.0 Introduction

A combination of two techniques was used to gather the information as a basis for this study: firstly, research into historical data using published work and archival records found in libraries and the main professional theatres in New Zealand; secondly, key informant, semi-structured interviews designed by the researcher. On the collection of these data comparisons were made to find patterns in the researched data and the interviews, including consistencies, differences and linkages.

Historical studies were undertaken to provide insights from the past to help the researcher to understand and interpret the construct of the present. A reconstruction and evaluation of past events has assisted in drawing conclusions pertaining to contemporary situations in the performing arts. Historical research enables understanding and reevaluation of data in relation to selected hypotheses, theories and generalisations. The analysis of archival documents and also the interviewee activities, attitudes and practices have formed a part of the data collection to make up the historical events. The personal interviews consist of basic raw material classed as 'primary sources' and accounts from literature research and publications are 'secondary sources' (Montgomery, 1999).

3.1 Case Studies / Oral Histories

In-depth interviews have been used as primary resource material to compile an oral history in supporting the studies of this thesis. Although oral history is often confined to recollection and information within recent experiences of people, this method is also suited to tapping in on memories further back. It is a

complementary technique along with research of literature in the gathering of historic information and builds an information base for the study. Interviews provide information about the past recorded in the participant's own words (Pannebecker, 1990). The use of taped recordings enables the researcher to create verifiable material that can be used by other researchers. Interviews may be used to critically examine information and also to fill in areas lacking in historical documentation. Although the participants have established a profile within the performing arts, oral history enables the voices of otherwise ordinary people to be heard (Robertson, 1995).

The narrative provided by the interviews allows the researcher to investigate and find linkages to the social reality and semantic relationships. Thus, narrative assumes that meanings are not inherent in a single area but come from various sources and relationships (Hughes, 2002; Pannebecker, 1990).

The reasoning for the use of case studies to provide the data for this research is in alignment with the justification provided by (Yin, 2003) who considers the method as being appropriate for analysing and evaluation of processes. As earlier mentioned, the case studies are conducted in combination with the research method, as both methods have their own strengths and weaknesses. The interviews are presented as case studies and are explored as units in this particular study. The study units consist of collaborating teams of a costume designer with a theatre director. However, in the investigation of the participants, the phenomenon is not isolated from the context (Beuselinck, 2000). The interest that this particular relationship produces puts the case study not as a method but more as a research strategy. This interpretation befits the process of this research and also the further statement wherein Hartley believes that qualitative as well as quantitative methods can be used. He emphasises that:

> *"Theoretical orientation on understanding the process rides alongside their context"* (Beuselinck, 2000).

The inclusion of context in case studies has been noted by (Yin, 2003) to produce challenges that will include a considerable number of inconsistencies, and recognizes the significant necessity to use more than one source of evidence. In

way in which we experience and conceptualise the various phenomena, qualitative understandings and relationship can be established and constitute the main results of a phenomenological study.

(Pannebecker, 1990) indicates that textile and clothing historians often use the quantitative method to acquire data. Quantitative methods enable the researcher to distinguish the measure of change within the items and test the findings statistically. The resourced data are often reliant on visual images. As the focus in this research is on investigating design theory processes rather than that of visual images, they will be used as support material. The analysis and interpretation of images have their complexities, and researchers often do not take these to a conclusion. To discuss art in the form of visual images, the explanation must go through a new reality, that of the personal interpretation. This entails the decoding of visual components into a literary communication (Collier & Collier, 1992). As stated previously, the images in this thesis will be used as supporting images, and an in-depth qualitative analysis of the detailing related to specific costume designers will not be pursued. This could be pursued in future projects with indications as to the sources.

The principle qualitative research method will be applied using techniques similar to those in phenomenological research. Each method is related to - and supportive of - another, and allows the completion of rich and responsible conclusions. (Westers & Peters, 2000) recognise the difficulty in describing and comparing the phenomenon of the pursued research and finding a conceptual framework in which to place it. They, however, conclude that qualitative analysis is the right approach in formulating key concepts. They state:

> *"Qualitative research is the systematic development of theory by thorough inspection of social reality"* (Westers & Peters, 2000, p. 140).

The researcher observes analyses and is constantly applying the concepts into the framework and thus searching for a formula to construct. Within the process observation, analysis and reflection alternate and do not follow each in a given order. They can be explained further by saying that these phases are also not separate from each other. This analysis takes place in the early stages within the

data collection. The questions have arisen from the material that has been analysed and the questions have emerged from the reflection phase and have been driven by the observations.

As Yin (2003) suggests, quantitative analysis can be used within the investigation of the case study. The researcher has used this accumulative theory to identify and categorise the data derived from demographical information received from the interviewees. The information has been arranged in table form to indicate and compare the results. This enables the concepts to be dealt with logically and the comparisons and changes to be noted (Westers & Peters, 2000). Bowden (2000) concludes that consistency of focus is a key factor to phenomenological methodology and at this stage it was very hard to maintain, hence the need for constant revising of these charts. The analogy goes through the process of discarding the unessential information. Ultimately, this is done to improve the understanding and sort the findings into strategies and intentions.

3.2 Format for Questionnaire

The design for the research study has evolved by starting off as an exploratory case study. The initial interview process provided a way to accumulate a large amount of expansive and contextual data in a very short time (Greenfield, 2002; Hughes, 2002). The subsequent questions resulted in defining the hypotheses for the study. The aims and objectives of the research were defined to present a more complete descriptive study of the phenomenon of the costume designers and to expand upon the relationship between the discourse and practice (Yin, 2003).

A semi-structured questionnaire was developed and tested prior to the interviews taking place. The questions examined background/demographics, experience/personal history, and opinion/value factors influencing the design process used in identifying a relationship between the costume designer and director (Greenfield, 2002). The interviews were semi-structured insofar as they were used to elaborate on their approaches and intentions behind those. The questionnaire has been divided into four categories; demographics, design process, the New Zealand aesthetic and the designer/director relationship. The category

covering the design process was divided into three sub-categories to elaborate on these issues. They question perceptions, influences and actual processes used.
Although the questions were focused on specific topics there was an inclination for the interviewees to recount issues that were of interest to themselves. An attempt was made by the researcher to consciously pursue the questions, but the interviewees elected not to respond to some questions. As the participants for this research cover a fifty-year time period in their vocation, memories can also be impaired. Thus, people are inclined to remember more accurately the experiences that are of interest and significant to them. Robertson suggests:

> *"One should look for underlying truths contained in values, attitudes and beliefs to retain as much accuracy to the historical facts"* (Robertson, 1995, p. 5).

The background literature research can help to lessen the ambiguities. The results from data are an aid in understanding the phenomenon of the costume designer, just as are the subjective accounts from published literature.

3.3 Criteria for Selection of Participants

Background research into the context in which the interviewee exists or operated was very important. The research from interviews, journals and other published literature was used to provide information on the previous work of the participants. It is important to acknowledge the terminology that is used by the interviewee. Researching into the background of theatre and costume design provided the researcher with contextual knowledge and confidence to expand on unprepared questions (Robertson, 1995).

The participants approached came from a selection of practitioners (costume designers and directors) who have been involved with the performing arts and live theatre within New Zealand from the 1950s to 2004. They consisted of professional costume designers and directors who were currently working either part or full-time within the performance industry, in New Zealand. The initial selection of interviewees included practitioners who had worked not only in the performing arts but also within the fashion industry and from a multicultural background. Participants were purposely selected to include a wide range of

practitioners, who have worked in various different forms of the performing arts; for example drama, dance and opera. They were also selected on the basis of having been consistently employed in New Zealand, by theatres situated throughout the country. Although one of the participants considers himself/herself to be at retirement age he/she still produces work for the performance arts. For the second interview, revisiting the aims and objectives the focus was narrowed and also the selection of participants to address this. The reasons are explained in the next paragraph, however this did limit the selection to a less multicultural ethnicity and included more Europeans as shown in Chapter four (Figure 4.1.2).

The importance of the collaboration between the costume designer and director is a pivotal part of the investigation process, hence the incorporation of additional directors into the investigation. Directors were invited who had previously worked with one or more of the designers interviewed. A conscious attempt was made to provide a range of interviewees who were involved in theatre in New Zealand from the start of professional theatre in the 1950s to the newcomers within the last decade of the 20th century. Thus, the age range of participants consisted from their thirties to seventies. Another consideration was the valuable contribution and the recognition that their work has received from the performing arts.

From the, already ample, initial list of thirty interviewees, seven were invited for a second interview, and to complete the pairings three additional participants (one costume designer and two directors) were added for the second interviewing. The initial questions in are Appendix 1, and follow-up questions in Appendix 2. When applicable to this research, the results of various collaboration and visual examples are used to support the study of the design processes.

3.4 Ethical statement

Ethical considerations were adhered to in this research. Informed written consents to participation were obtained before proceeding with the interviews. Anonymity is provided through non-use of specific names. Prior to carrying out this research, a research proposal was submitted to the Committee of Massey University Human Ethics for approval. Interviewees were telephoned first for approval and then sent a written invitation to participate. Enclosed were a covering letter, the interview

consent form and the questionnaire. The covering letter explained the purpose of the interview and how the data would be used. The consent form contained an agreement for the interviewee to sign. Participants thus had the chance to read the questionnaire before the actual interview.

3.5 Method of Conducting Oral History Interviews

An outline of the proposed questions was sent by mail prior to interviewing the participants. The topics and issues to be covered were specified in advance and outlined. The initial interview, resulting in the choice of three designers and four directors, was an informal conversational, semi-structured interview. The interviewee was given a choice of sequence and where an interviewee declined to answer any particular question, this was not pursued. Open-ended questions were asked to invite the participants to provide a wide scope of information and from this themes and categories emerged that formed the outline for the second interview (Robertson, 1995). Three additional participants were asked with the focus on their previous collaborations with the initial interviewees. An interview guide approach was used for the second interview and the interviewer decided the sequence and the wording in the course of the interview (Greenfield, 2002). As the researcher has worked in the same discipline as the interviewees, the interviews were performed with the intention of representing the integrity and perspective of these conditions (Burgess, 2000). An attempt was made to achieve empathy and engagement and to understand the lived experiences, and also the necessity for the researcher to set aside assumptions in order to register interview responses.

The interview schedule was divided into the following sections:

- Demographic details
- Personal history
- The work process and connecting themes and influences
- Main principles of design in theatre
- Connecting influences within the indigenous culture of New Zealand
- The working process and relationship between the director and the costume designer.

Creating a structure to the interviews provides a start to the interview and an introduction leading to the more specific questions.

- *Orientation questions were used to identify the interviewees and to break the ice. They consisted of demographics and easy questions related to the topic. These common questions were more open to a qualitative comparison between interviewees.*
- *Specific questions were included to gain information about personal experiences. These were unique to the particular participant and will often be quite different from the others* (Robertson, 1995, p. 23).

Questions were based on semi-structured key informant interviews. A major advantage of using a semi-structured interview schedule is that it provides the researcher with an opportunity to respond to - and to follow-up on - issues raised by the interviewee, including questions that may not have been anticipated. An interview schedule also reduces the possibility of interviewer effects, as the same questions are asked of each respondent, in a systematic way (Patton, 1990). The aim of the semi-structured interview schedule was to provide a framework within which participants were able to express their own understanding in their terms, which is a fundamental principle of qualitative interviewing (Patton, 1990). A list of questions asked is provided in the Appendix.

The responses from the first interviews were transcribed and the results categorised under the emergent themes. The transcripts were then returned to the interviewees for revision and feedback to assist with the additional questions. Opportunity was given to correct and amend any misinterpretation of data. For the second interview these questions were revised with a more defined focus and more emphasis on the objectives.

All interviews were tape recorded on a machine and from these five participants were interviewed over the telephone and five in person. The required time was specified, thus giving the interviewees an opportunity to decide on their commitment and resulted in no refusals. For the interviewees as well as the researcher, the major problems are the continuous pressures of a heavy workload and trying to incorporate research methodology into practice. The interviews were

proposed at an hour and were transcribed verbatim by Full–Stop, a professional firm in Wellington.

3.6 Data Analysis

Tapes from the key informant interviews were transcribed and rechecked by the researcher, to increase familiarity with the data and to ensure accuracy. The transcribed interviews were then ordered in a form presentable for analysis. Coding was applied to the transcribed data and categories were formed. The responses to demographic questions were graphed and remaining data were recorded in table form to find common emerging categories. These responses guide a cognitive development in the reflection and observation of the data (Westers & Peters, 2000). A summary table was compiled to reduce the material and to organise responses around the central concepts. The table thus provided an overview in a matrix in which a perspective can be found and the information viewed at one time. This précis was constructed to summarise the information.

A content analysis approach was used to organise and simplify complex sets of data into meaningful and manageable themes or categories (Patton, 1990). The aim in using this method of analysis was to produce a comprehensive picture of how the theatrical costume designers and directors perceived their position within the Performing Arts industry and to provide insights into strengths, weaknesses and the future direction of the industry. Within this procedure, Westers and Peters (2000) claim:

> *"That the true quality of the translation elicits not the answers from the respondents but what the researcher formulates"*(Westers & Peters, 2000, p. 41).

However, the perspective of the researcher is not only in unfolding the phenomenon under study but also, in most cases, offers a framework within which to relate concepts and variables to each other.

From the data received from the participants' responses the researcher generated the themes into categories in an inductive and iterative manner, the process of which was carried out as follows:

Step One: Each participant was assigned an alphabetical code for anonymity. Participant responses to the interview schedule were transcribed and typed out in full under each question, and presented in readable form. In the process of the actual interviewing the researcher attempted to follow an order of questions into the formulated categories, however when this was not successful the order of the questions were adjusted at this stage.

Step Two A preliminary ordering of material was applied. Under each question, similar responses belonging to the aims and objectives across the participants were sorted and clustered together, until categories emerged. Variations that emerged were also documented. The segments were distinguished and developed.

Step Three The responses were then placed into a table form where the costume designers and the directors were presented on the same page. This form of précis enabled the researcher to view the responses similarly and identify the key points directly. Different coloured marker pens were used to highlight and visually identify the emerging themes. The categories generated under each question were then ranked from that of the highest to the lowest number of responses. The categories with the highest number of responses represented the main themes generated from each question. The focus was on the connections, disparities and collaborations identified.

Step Four The incorporated findings were put into a conceptual framework to distinguish the research questions. Within the themes evolving, the discussions were constantly related to the aims and objectives pertaining to the questions asked in the thesis.

These discussions were then related to the research found in the literature and were compared and associated again to the aims and objectives to find connections. Once the themes were formed and cases compared, the analysis was reflected on again. The task was to take the initial findings and classify them into similarities and differences. Carried out in an iterative manner this gave a chance to relate ideas to the researcher's previous knowledge and experiences. The comparisons and discussions were then put through further consideration to extract

There are a number of tasks I would now – with the wisdom of hindsight - change in how they were performed, however, the personal development and experience evolving from this type of research is inevitably an ongoing process.

Chapter 4

Findings

4.0 Overview

In this chapter; how the costume designers approach the design process within the theatre industry will be identified. Specifically, the factors that influence costume design for theatre in New Zealand will be examined, including the working relationship between the director and the costume designer.

The responses from the interviewees have been organised and placed into categories. Transcripts were abbreviated for each question and inserted into tables (Appendix 1). The data were then investigated and analysed to establish consensus of opinions, divergent opinions and to identify the key aspects of the relationship between the costume designers and directors interviewed. For purposes of anonymity costume designers were coded A B C D E and directors F G H I J. Results of the interviews are presented in this chapter and then compared with the published literature investigations in Chapter five. These interpretations will provide the basis of conclusions in Chapter six to establish a model for the costume design process and to identify the aesthetic; political and cultural influences commonly encountered by New Zealand costume designers.

4.1 Demographics

Three of the five designers (just over half) interviewed were born in New Zealand and the remaining two were born in England. The same percentage applies for the directors also: three born in New Zealand and two born in England (Figure 4.1).

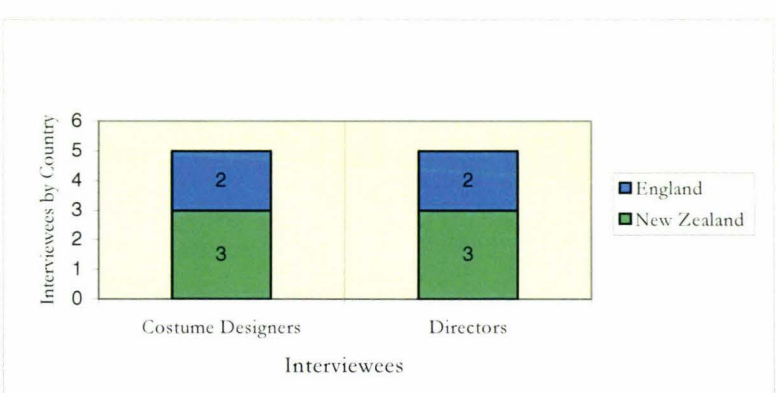

Figure 4.1.1 Country of Birth of Costume Designers and Directors

Of the interviewees a costume designer and a director have retained their English citizenship whilst living as permanent residents of New Zealand. The remaining participants all have New Zealand nationality (Figure 4.1.2).

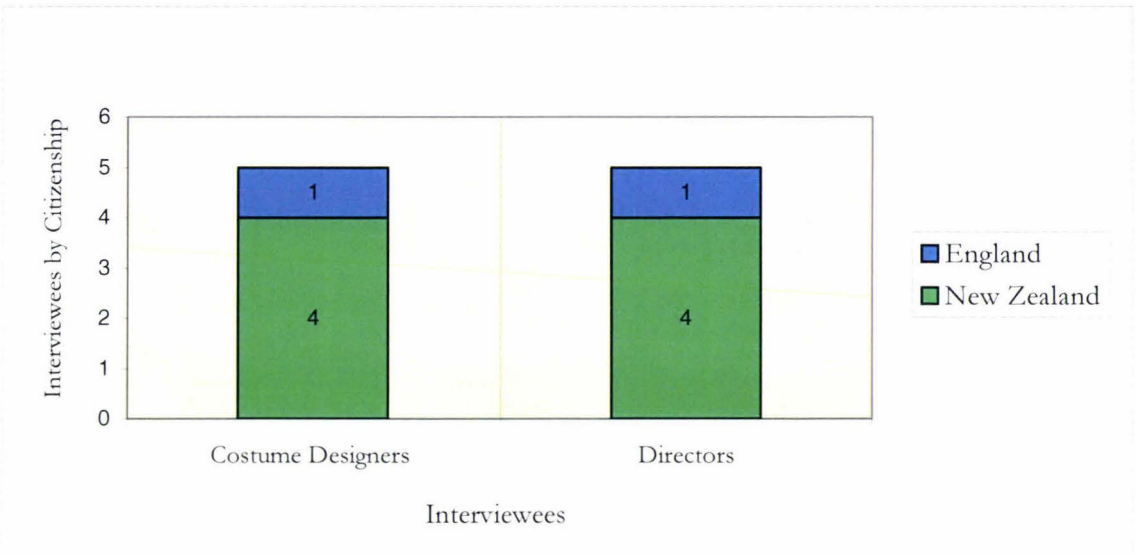

Figure 4.1.2: Citizenship

Out of the five costume designers and five directors an equal number (three from both) reside in Auckland. A further three participants; two directors and one costume designer are based in Wellington. This leaves the last interviewee, who lives in Christchurch (Figure 4.1.3).

Figure 4.1.3: Residency

The working years of the interviewees span from the 1950s to the present time (Figure 4.1.4). One costume designer (D) and a director (F) have been producing work now for fifty years starting in the fifties. Two of the directors (I, J) begun their careers in the sixties. It is worth noting that the seventies have produced half of the participants, one director (H) and four costume designers (A, B, C, E) for this survey. One other director (G) began his/her performance career in the eighties.

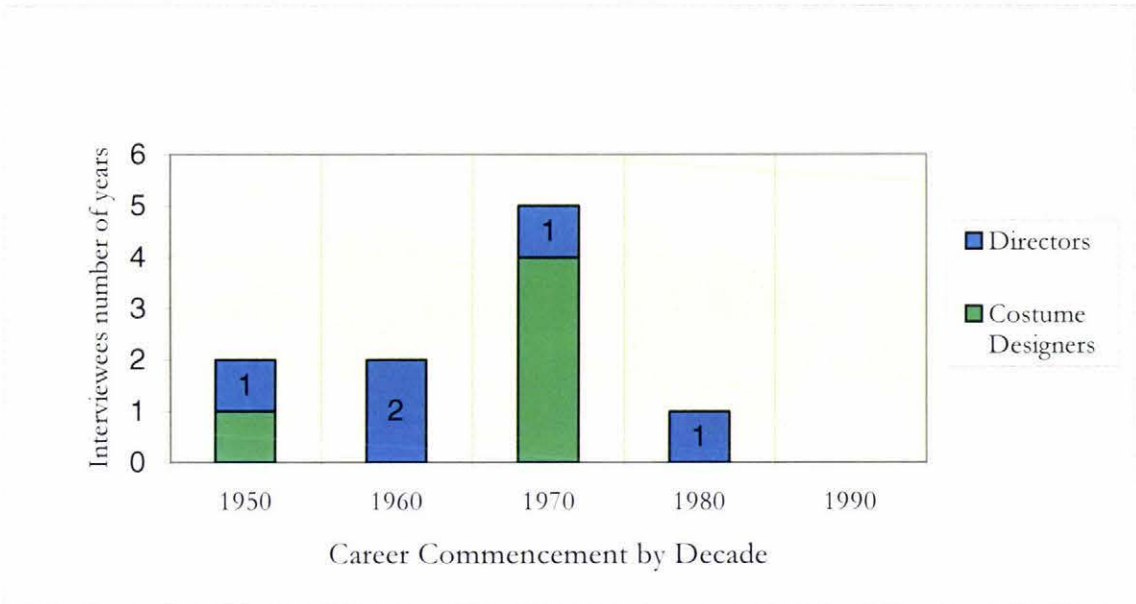

Figure 4.1.4: Practising Years in Theatre

Three costume designers (A, B, D) and two directors (G, I) have degrees. On the other hand, one costume designer (D) and four directors (G, I, D, J) have received diplomas. This leaves one costume designer (C) in possession of a Masters degree (Figure 4.1.5).

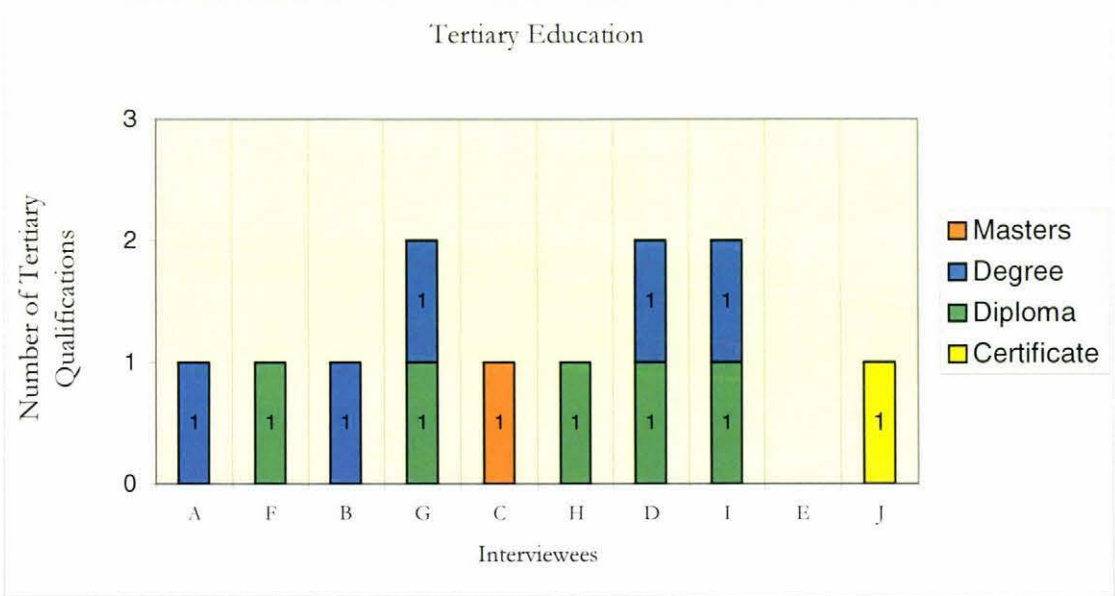

Figure 4.1.5: Tertiary Education

Figure 4.1.6 shows the multidisciplinary nature of the performing arts industry. Apart from the interviewees indicated in their category of classification, they all have teaching positions. All of the costume designers pursue other forms of artistic careers and all of the directors have leading managerial roles in a production company. The exception is one of the costume designers (E) who does not design sets (Figure 4.1.6).

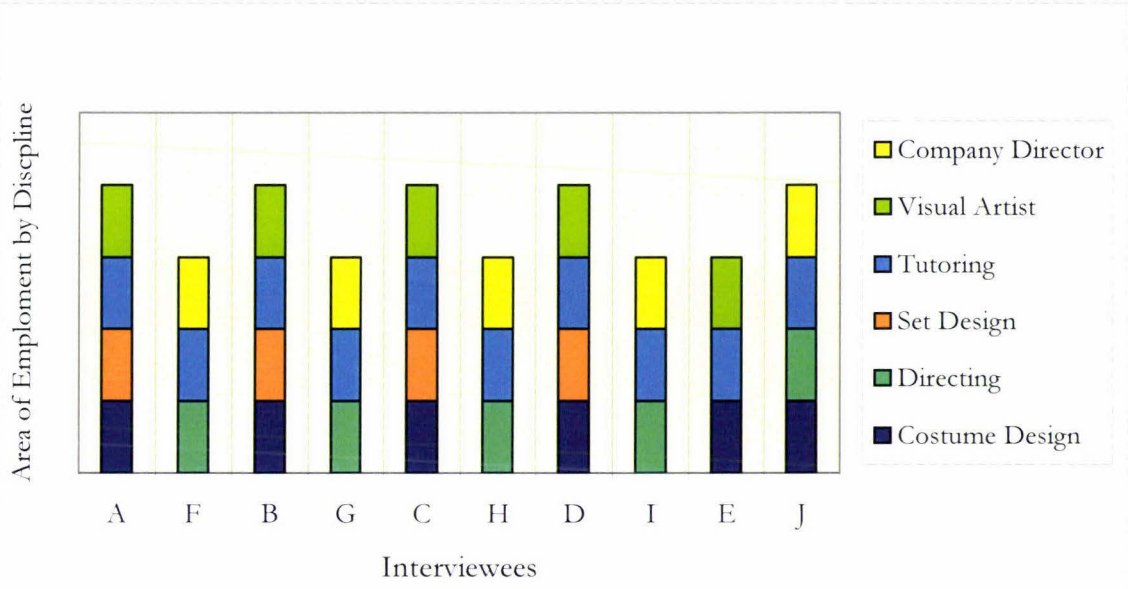

Figure 4.1.6: Disciplines

Of the participants interviewed, Figure 4.1.7 (p. 82) shows that the majority of costume designers and directors (9/10), have produced work in Wellington and Auckland. Although over half of the participants reside in Auckland, most work evolves around these two centres. The next most frequent destinations for employment were Christchurch and Dunedin, however this involves only half of the interviewees (5/10). Three costume designers (B, D, E) and two directors (G, I) have worked on productions in Dunedin and two costume designers (D, E) and three directors (F, G, I) in Christchurch. The same number of interviewees (4/10) have ventured further to Australia (A, C, J, I) and England (F, G, D, I). Finally, two directors (G, I) have travelled to America and one (J) to the Netherlands.

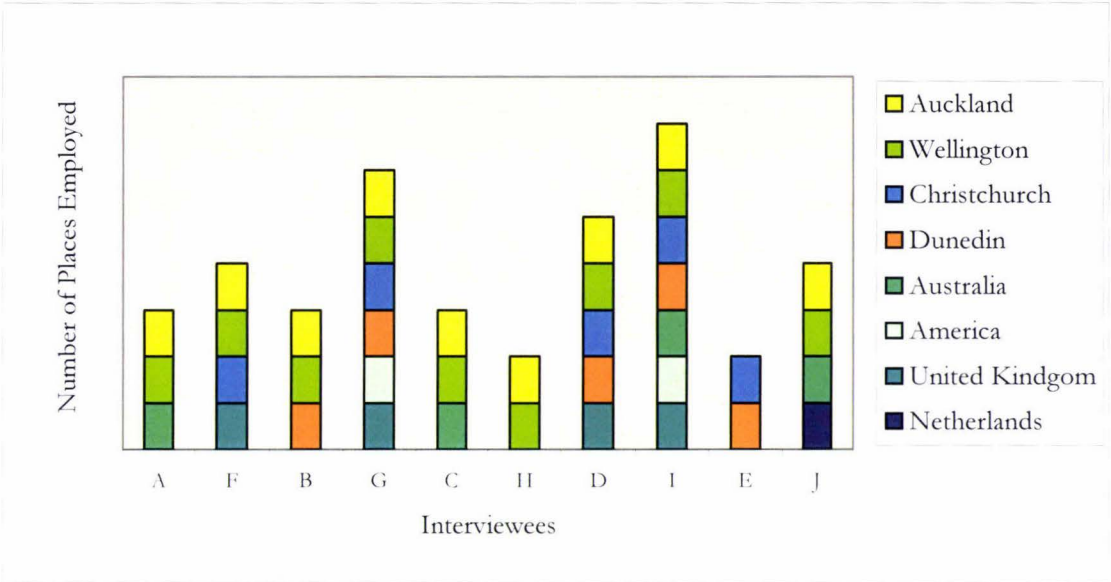

Figure 4.1.7: Places of Employment

The relevance of the demographic data to the interview responses will be discussed in section four

4.2 Perceptions of the Role of the Costume Designer

Along with the supervision of the costuming, three costume designers (A, B, E) believe that the nature of this role lies in driving the production team and providing as many creative opportunities as possible. The drive will often steer towards creating an atmosphere that encourages motivation during the production. Costume designer C encourages this by providing as much reference material as possible to inform and assist in the realisation of the production. The skills highlighted by two costume designers (B, E) are the ability to generate workable ideas and to include dimension to the story. Costume designer A, who places the conceptual interpretations in the design process equivalent to this supervision, also reinforces this. Two directors (I, J) commented on the specialised skills needed by costume designers, namely their importance in the very visual world of today and refer to costume as part of this. This increased value of the visual aspect of a production would seem to relate to contemporary work and be a valuable observation by these directors - although there has been no evidence found in literature or response from other participants supporting this.

When asked how the participants perceived their current role of a costume designer, in their initial reactions all but one of the costume designers (A, B, C, and

D) placed the interpretation of the script foremost, and facilitating the costuming second. The costume designer must firstly distinguish the sort of production she/he is dealing with and what is the playwright's intention with regard to the context in which the theatrical genre is used. When the costume designs are produced with an understanding of the script, this contributes to character conviction and correct audience perception - as explained by costume designers B, C and director I:

> *B, C, I: "Their role in assisting the actors, director and also the audience to tell the story".*

One costume designer (B), perceives the hierarchical position of the costume designer, which is still considered a woman's job, as always having been - and still being – the last member of the team to be consulted. The designer feels reasonably fortunate in having the ability to design costume and set and to be contracted thus. The consequence in the current economic situation - as commented on by Directors G and H – is that the costume designer is required to design costumes, supervise the wardrobe and, more often than not, design the set. When the costume and set designers are two separate people, director H notes discontent as the costume designer is brought into the design meetings at a far later stage. The set designer will often have a greater driving role behind the original vision as opposed to the costume designer, who will have a lesser role.

All the directors acknowledged this role of the costume designers within the creative team. They all agreed on the importance of collaboration. Director F highlights the need to share the vision and affecting ideas along with the design team, and director F relies heavily on this ability to connect in ideas. Clear vision in resolving conflicts at the early stages is thought helpful. Director F appreciates the costume designer's having strong opinions and appreciates critique from the costume designer, but Director I notes also that the ability to back down from a conflicting situation is essential in the costume designer. Designer D explains, (who often collaborates with director I) that it is only with an understanding of the constraints of the playwright can you can question the choices made within the design team. Director J concludes with appreciation when rapport is achieved with the design team.

4.3 The Major Considerations and Influences on Theatre work

4.3 1 Cultural Influences in New Zealand Theatre Styling

The responses received regarding the cultural influences ranged from an overall perspective of New Zealand theatre related to indigenous styling, to personal views of how each respondent has interpreted cultural and indigenous styling into his/her own work.

Four of the participants (A, C, F, H) refer to a more subjective influence regarding the New Zealand aesthetic. They are conscious that theatre in New Zealand should have, and often has, a content that has a wider global context. Director F explains an aspect of this reasoning in the following comment:

> *F: "We live in a very broadening range of cultures now, you know, so I guess we can't just embrace Maori,... which of course we must do and have done, but we've got to widen ourselves [sic..to the] multi-cultural nation that we're becoming".*

Costume designers B and C and directors G, F, and I identified wide-ranging influences from sources of a more global origin. Highlighted, from director G and costume designer C was the fact that New Zealanders are well travelled, thus are more likely to take in influences from outside New Zealand. However, costume designer A refers to the reasoning of this pertaining to the short historical life of New Zealand, and as a pervading dependence on the experiences of countries outside New Zealand in the following quotation:

> *A: "Specifically, in costume design I think we are still heavily reliant upon European and American influences for both contemporary and historical references, as our own are limited to relatively recent times".*

These influences which have been connected to the New Zealand characteristics, as identified by directors H, I, and J are often related to our past colonial history. Many New Zealanders are descendants from immigrants that originated from various areas in England. The Celtic origins, and in addition the growing

acknowledgement of New Zealanders from the South Pacific islands are incorporated into the national culture. Director H felt that the combination of these things contribute to giving the New Zealand work an added energy. Directors H and J describe fellow New Zealanders as continually *"exploring the dark poetry in themselves"*. Director J makes a comparison with Australian entertainment and suggests they stick to lighter entertainment and do this well, but shy away from the more intense theatre which we see more of in New Zealand.

> *J: "It's a dark kind of quite Celtic style. There is intensity to our work here, I notice it as soon as I see performances in Australia, they're wonderful at doing musicals and things like that, but keep them away from Ibsen".*

Other areas of influence in design styling observed by costume designers A, D, F, and H are provided by the increase in the range of cultures in our society. Costume designers A and D highlight the use of Pacifica characteristics, Maori colours and motifs in logos and public advertising. There is progressively more use of these popular images and, naturally, this medium is a major influence, which becomes incorporated into contemporary theatre work.

Another community contributing to developing the flavour of New Zealand theatre is the graduating students emerging from the drama training institutes. Director H notes the increasingly strong multicultural inclusion of the Pacific and indigenous cultures within the methodology of these institutes. The conscious effort to encourage access to multi-cultures is evident in the current theatre today.

4.3.2 Identifying Traces of Indigenous Characteristics in New Zealand Theatre

On response, director I believes simply that the excellent production of work with an emphasis on the realities of New Zealand life itself is a reflection of a true New Zealand aesthetic.

> *I: "Whether it be a French play, or a New Zealand play, the very fact of doing them as well as you can beyond making them part of what it is to be a New Zealander, and what it is to live in this country".*

When visible reference to a New Zealand aesthetic is sought, the landscape and flora and fauna of New Zealand have been associated as an influence by five participants A, B, G, I, J. The art from indigenous artists and musicians is also drawn on as a form of inspiration. However, the incorporation of this indigenous art form in design work, costume designer A notes, is predominantly within the less text-based performance design and dance pieces. The reasons for this more visible indigenous imagery within contemporary dance were attributed to its abstract interpretation and thus greater number of opportunities for individual creativity. The work is not governed by a playwright and is often developmental. Costume designer B suggests that the attempts are made to present indigenous materials in a clever, innovative way, however, this is often done in a very formal European style, which is not unique to New Zealand.

Costume designer A acknowledges the occasional groundbreaking innovation, but agrees with designer B that the work is more often than not a replication of past works. One reason for these lapses in creativity, costume designer A feels, is the lack of guidance available for designers to explore - and thus extend - their potential. As commented on previously, there are very few specific training courses in New Zealand that cover costume design, let alone dance costumes.

Costume designer B and director G have used items in recent work associated with New Zealand and Pacific icons, for example jandals and the singlet, but feel that this is attributable more to a New Zealand flavour than it is indicative of costume design. These replies represent the closest the participants have come to the pinpoint aspects in indigenous styling. Meanwhile, the following comments on the identifying criteria move towards New Zealand characteristics with regard to attitudes and approaches. Costume designer C highlights the ability to create something out of nothing as a Kiwi trait. Costume designer A also stated that New Zealanders have a unique problem-solving ability that is regularly applied to their own work. However, it is felt this New Zealand ability to economise does not constitute a style but is more a necessity as explained in the following quotation:

> *I. "The shoestring budget is not a style, that's a consequence of the economic realities of the country".*

Again, this puts pressure on the amount of styling which can be done and, depending on the budget for the production, the economics will govern aesthetics.

The phrase used by director H, *"getting in boots and all"*, is used to describe the relaxed willingness to attempt most tasks without reservation shown by New Zealanders. An example given by this director is an approach often used within productions but rarely out of New Zealand. In New Zealand an actor, rather than the stage-manager can be used to reset the stage or props, and the director will incorporate this thematically within the script, whereas outside of New Zealand the unions would be questioning this act. Overseas, the job roles are more rigorously defined and the unions are more active, as made clear by this director:

> *H: "There's no problem about actors moving furniture on stage as part of the concept of the production, whereas that is something you would have to negotiate with Equity if you were doing it on Broadway".*

This multi-tasking and blending of roles performed within the production are done without question, but they are also primarily necessities within the economics of the company. As mentioned in the budgeting section, currently fewer people are employed to do more work.

4.3.3 Personal Cultural Influences

It is apparent that the majority of the participants (A, B, D, E, G, J, and I) acknowledge the New Zealand cultural heritage as influencing and contributing to their approach to their work. The participants in this investigation were all of European descent and this reveals itself within the replies. Most of the costume designers (A, B, D, and E) refer to their ancestry as an influence, which is predominantly English and European.

Costume designer B who was born in the United Kingdom, but has been raised in New Zealand, feels a stronger affinity to the New Zealand culture. What this costume designer does acknowledge, from the English culture, is the calibre in the work produced from England. This esteem, however, does not extend to the actual English theatre and content and he/she expressed a preference the New Zealand story telling. To support this comment, costume designer E and director I also

praise the high standard of the English education for their cultural influence. The high expectations of the English tradition and an accompanying passion for literature have encouraged these participants in the pursuit of a theatrical career. Two of the directors (I, J) attribute cultural influences as originating from a wide range of experiences. What is seen, done and experienced becomes part of the culture. This incorporates everything from early education to the further study in later life that is more vocation directed, and director J feels this is introduced into the work produced.

Participants A and D cite religion as part of their personal heritage. Costume designer A associates a Protestant upbringing with part of his/her approach and D to his/her strict Catholic influences. These religious influences were associated with the attitude to work and a high level of expectation in innovation within the performance by costume designer A:

> *A: "My Protestant work ethic and strong preference for an ordered and structured approach to the creative process, of which I demand the highest quality of originality and design, is a direct result of my cultural influences".*

Within the strong collaboration of costume designer A and director F, they express a conscious self-knowledge where their cultures lie. They had no difficulty in acknowledging their cultural influence and its incorporation into their work. A relates to a strong religious ethic and F an educational one. Director F states that knowledge of personal culture and where it is placed within the context of the country will resonate in the realisation of the projects pursued.

> *F: Knowing who you're playing it for, knowing where your cultural life sits inside that specific country. If you automatically move around with that in your head and in your feelings, it's bound to manifest in the end product.*

Director I argues that culture is difficult to pin down and is going through transformations constantly. Sometimes culture can be clearly defined and at other times it is very unclear. This director relates to personal experiences in teaching, where you can follow a visible change in the students and how their cultural background has formed them. He recognises the inherent distrust by the students,

about what is happening in the world and, as quoted, the familiar searching for the positive aspects to explain and interpret life:

> *I: "Sometimes, there was a period of terrific sort of cynicism and I was trying to work out what the hell was going on. I was always looking for something, which would redeem something, or bring out the brightness or the cheerfulness".*

Director G, who has often worked with designer B, explains that in their collaborative process recognition of culture is intrinsic to the philosophy within the company in which they work. This fundamental doctrine is incorporated in the content of the work and is predominantly due to the company is consisting of many differing races. Director H has brought exposure to Taha Maori into the work process, however, costume designer E has little personal influences from the indigenous cultures of New Zealand, as where he/she resides and works provides little opportunity for this contact. It was suggested that in the South Island of New Zealand there are a smaller number of multi-cultures, with European culture more predominant.

The culture particular to New Zealand has been ultimately difficult for the participants to define. This can be partially because we are living in the midst of it. A definition of style has for the most part yet to be created as it is constantly evolving. Changes are acknowledged, but a description has not been formulated. The indigenous work is indicated as being a definite part of our identity – however, it seems in retrospect that the financial situation has had a stronger influence in forming a theatre aesthetic in New Zealand, leaving creativity and design subordinate to this influence. The cultural aspects have surfaced more as underlying influences. Not so much indigenous aesthetics, but in the European attitudes and approaches.

4.3.4 Values and Styling in the Work Produced

The costume designers faced this question initially from the perspective of the values they placed on their work and individual approach to work, and then identified styling which they felt applied to them.

Costume designers D and E set themselves personal challenges in producing work that extends their abilities both for themselves and for the people around them. Neither believes in resigning to the considered acceptable standards but, as explained below, both strive for as high a level as possible.

> *E: "I mean I do have famously high standards, and I will get them. I've always believed that the bar should be raised. I don't believe in pandering to the lowest common denominator".*

Ongoing challenges are a preference for work accepted for costume designers C and E and directors G and I. Both C and E gravitate towards the new territories in their projects to keep them extended and invigorated. Costume designers C and D associate this personal calibre alongside with what the audience expect and deserves. However, in saying this, costume designer D would not sacrifice the playwright's intentions for the anticipated whims of the audience.

The participants move onto explaining visual characteristics in their styling. Director I identifies physicality in the presentation of his/her own work that is unconfused and defined in movement, and in the same vein, costume designer C strives to produce a subtlety of atmosphere by presenting images with as little clutter as possible. A strong affinity to the New Zealand landscape and the unique clearness of light experienced only in New Zealand is expressed in the work of costume designer A. He/she is taken aback how, as this designer explains, the vast perspective within the flat, far landscape can create a very different perspective.

> *A: "The intensity of colour in the landscape and ...you see it through a very, very clear light. Because of the clarity of light... it's extraordinary how far we can see. So our kind of foreground, middle ground, and background becomes really vast".*

Director G's interests have arisen from theatre that generates a perspective as sitting in a movie theatre to a more naturalistic theatre. Although it requires more imagination from the audience it relates closer to reality. Director J uses methods based on themes and relates this to a personal preference in style.

Both costume designer B and director G, who often team up together express their willingness to use innovation through the design process journey. They feel their work should always be moving towards changing themes. Costume designer B has zeal to share ideas through new tactile shapes, and uses material as part of his/her inspirations. He/she is passionate about exploring the preconceived ideas on costume and set design. The costume designer identifies the design process as ideas, which normally are confined to either the stage environment or the actor, and questions the obligation to confine the ideas and shapes to specific environments. The designer expresses the designs for the set and costume environment through the different materials, and challenges whether a dress is primarily a dress and cannot be part of the props or scenery.

> *B. "I'm really interested in breaking down all those boundaries. I don't see costume as that different from... sets, costumes, props, they're all the same thing to me, and they're expressed through different materials...costumes are sets".*

Of the directors F, H, and I allude to a passion that emanates from what they experience in their work that not only evolves in the process, but also what originates from it. Director F highlights how, in moments of extreme situations, a deep-seated love often appears to happen and it resolves to become a positive experience. Director I simply *"loves"* being involved with this artistic medium and being part of the process in the creation of theatre, the director explains this the following comment:

> *I: "I love performing and I love directing farce, deep comedy. So I suppose really ...I love the improbable, I love painting a big bold picture with lots of actors".*

Director H takes time to acknowledge what previous practitioners have contributed to the profession and feels fortunate to be part of their legacy.

4.3.5 Is there such a thing as a distinctly New Zealand Aesthetic?

The participants replied, regarding the question as to whether or not there 'was' a specific indigenous aesthetic within theatre in New Zealand by referring to the importance of using specifically New Zealand characteristics only when the script

or context required them. The primary focus was ultimately the interpretation of the work and whether or not an indigenous style was appropriate. Director I is cautious with the conscious incorporation of culture within his/her work, and feels it has a tendency to turn the work into a statement, resulting in a *"propaganda stick"*. The focus can thus be drawn away from the content intended by the playwright.

Costume designer C also questions the appropriation of culture within New Zealand work, and personally does not identify with any particular style. This designer construes that just because a play is set in New Zealand does not mean it must show distinct local authenticity. A prime example as the Roger Hall productions, which are intended as a reflection on the New Zealand everyday life, whereas designer C felt they made a stronger statement towards the English society.

Six of the participants (A, B, C, D, G, and H) see eye to eye where the approach to the work process in a performance remained basically the same whether it had New Zealand content or not. Many plays remain fundamentally comparable in most countries, and that relates to the theatre style. An example given by costume designer D is when a classic or modern styling is used by a different culture (for example, Maori or Pacific Island); it may look different on stage, but the theatre style stays the same. It takes on the aesthetic of the culture but does not consist of any new performing aesthetic. In a comparison provided by director H he/she alluded to the alternative interpretations of Shakespeare where the sword fights were replaced by Taiha skills.

> *H: "There is more and more fusion… from background, from understanding, from skill base and all of those things. If we are doing a Shakespeare we are more likely to see work using Tiaha skills than fencing".*

And one designer (E) acknowledged very little contact with indigenous work. This was attributed to two reasons; one, the township where designer E works has a smaller population of the diverse cultures, and secondly the lack of funding available to assist this type of work. Indigenous or multicultural productions do not automatically have larger financial budgets; thus designers tend to be employed who are prepared to work for a smaller fee than the accepted rate. The designer acknowledges selectivity and chooses not to accept these lower parities.

Costume designer A also questions the current reluctant response the indigenous work is receiving from the public. As explained further, it is felt a more informed approach should be sought and applied by the public when viewing a new form of presentation within a piece of work.

> *A: "As a designer I am very aware of the influence of the indigenous NZ culture on the audiences, and am very conscious of the change in education and demands of the audiences, because of this".*

Seeing the realities of how the current cultures are expressed in society on the stage is confronting the constantly changing accepted traditions, and openness is needed by the audience.

4.3.6 Support for New Zealand Theatre from the Public and Private Sectors

Currently, costume designers C and D feel that New Zealand performance is alive and well and is receiving good support considering the small population. Of the directors, three (F, H, and J) perceived Creative New Zealand as playing a positive role in the performing arts. Director H has attributed this to the support from the government and a Prime Minister (Helen Clark) as the Arts Minister. The support is providing access to funding however, even with resourcefulness, costume designers A, B, and E comment that this usually falls short of the requirements and is stunting a developing industry.

The industry, costume designer A is feels, is as healthy as it could be, but he/she places the activities of performance in this country central to what is happening within the production side of the industry. Costume designer A believes that the controlling arts committees lack understanding of how the actual performance process runs, with the result that uninformed actions are applied. Examples have not been given by this designer, although he/she stressed the need for better informed councils to ensure that they will be more effective in assisting appropriately in the advancement of the performance industry.

The suggested areas of growing need are, for example, positions in the production team, to follow up target issues like resourcing the extra funding needed to

supplement the shortcomings in the budget. Costume designer A is also concerned about the lack in development and growth in production standards over the last ten years. Designer A attributes this to the ever-decreasing funding, and to the increasing number of productions. There are small sustainable companies, but these do not provide enough continuous work to develop skills and thus create possibilities for an expanding performance industry. Costume designer A and director F acknowledge that there is sufficient access to established training institutes provided within New Zealand. However, criticism is directed towards the inadequate resources available to furnish a sufficiently high level of instruction in these, and thus they cannot provide a sufficient standard to accommodate the performance profession. Two directors (G and J) identified:

> *G & J: "That reasons for the shortfalls in funding lie not in the depletion of the 'pool' of money, but an increase in the number of qualifying applicants".*

The eroding of resources results in cut backs affecting the production and infrastructures from within companies. Four directors and three costume designers have attributed these shortcomings to the increase in expenditure, wages and materials. This can be looked at either in a positive light or to be seen as working to the detriment of the industry. First hand there is less money for more but there is evidently an increase in the standard of practitioners evolving.

Costume designer D questions how the effects of privatisation have influenced theatre in New Zealand. One, the pressure and two, the accountability required for public funding accompany privatisation and hampers the ability to provide the training ground and time needed for a higher quality level of production. At the same time this costume designer notes the invariable success within theatre in England, where it has always been privatised. Or does it just appear more successful with a larger selection of people to contribute money?

Although costume designer E feels that costume designers are paid quite well, designer A questions the reality of this. Although there is a high level of professional and amateur work produced, wages are not reflected in the box-office takings, and the financial recoupment does not reach the wider band of practitioners, costume designers whose work forms an integral part of the

production. Costume designer A agonises over the public and industry's lack of recognition of quality, and feels that this should be pitched with the ticket prices as a reference. He/she refers to the larger imported productions as opposed to often high quality local productions in professional theatres.

4.3.7 The Effects of Production Budget and Resources

Access to financing and resources is a major concern and it is recognised that the budget is a major influence in defining the aesthetics of the company. For costume designers A and B and directors F, G, H and J, the budget is considered to be a major influence relating to the decisions on what will be designed. It is agreed that quality of performance is unequivocally distinguished by the capacity of the budget. With the resources a company has available, directors F, G and I are concerned with maintaining the identity of the company and also not selling out with regard to the expectations of their projected audience.

All of these factors indicate that there is a strong prevalence of the economy's governing the aesthetics of performance. The economic situation of the country invariably influences the productions, and director F notes that a better financial climate reflects on the arts. The amount of money spent in the arts is decreasing and companies are responding by employing fewer people to perform the same duties. Commented on also by director H is the approach to economising of companies throughout New Zealand in joining together and presenting each other's productions. This is naturally providing more longevity for work, but also cutting down the production costs. However, this is not always a recipe for success as director H comments that, when putting together a playbill, there is no explanation for an audiences' attendance and this can be unaccountably fickle.

When embarking on a production, costume designer A implements a good production plan. This anticipates fewer problems and smooth running in access to material and financial resources. This designer claims that the ability to build an information network as early as possible will increase the number of options available. Experience has taught costume designer B that skills of negotiation will achieve a smoother running process with regard to issues concerning the allocation of this budget with regard to the contractors and suppliers. These issues are

emphasised as priorities in alleviating the stress factor for the costumier in the production process.

It remains unequivocally a reason for great respect from over half of the participants (D, E, F, G, H, and I) when the practitioner is able to surpass expectations over and above the budget and resources provided. However, these participants will not let lack of financing be the reason for bad design. The poor economic situation does not deter the costume designers within this survey. All have created adapting strategies to overcome the shortcomings that occur. Costume designers B, C, D, and E admit to being very frugal, and more often than not remain within the confines of the budget. They approach the brief with creativity; for example, making lower priced materials look more expensive or alternatively, adopting a more innovative approach to the fabrics and design. Costume designer C attributes the use of a minimalist style to keeping the costs down. On the downside, director H acknowledges that even with the ability to provide inventive solutions to financial constraints, compromises must be made, and designer C accepts occasional work with a smaller budget when the concept is appealing.

> *C: "I admit to being a sucker for a good idea".*

Director F and costume designer A appreciate that although a limited budget does not necessarily contribute to substandard work, they will refuse contracts when insufficient budgets will not produce what they feel the vision requires. A misconception, identified by costume designer C who has worked on larger shows, is the assumption that in the commercial productions, copious amounts of money are put aside for production costs, as this is rarely the case. In response to which costume designers D and E point out that the temptation, when financing seems plentiful, can be to over-design. The visuals can overtake the performance with little sense.

4.3.8 Suggestions for Development within the Performance Industry

Because of the relatively small size of New Zealand, there are fewer production companies and even fewer openings to ensure ongoing training opportunities and heightened skills in performance. Costume designer A believes continued

development in production standards is achievable through the generation of consistent employment within the performance industry. The alternative and possible solution suggested by this participant (A) is the establishment of larger permanent companies where consistency would encourage a higher level of entertainment. The example used was the Royal New Zealand Ballet, with an administrative structure that depends on the involvement of their staff and also the public to support their system. Another alternative suggested by costume designer D is the philosophy of the Repertory Theatre. The actors and production team have contracts running for more than one show and this enables the company to establish rapport and trust with their colleagues. This makes it possible for them to concentrate on their vocation and not be hampered by the insecurity of temporary employment.

The advantages of a more secure company would provide the ability to forward plan and pursue development strategies like performing outside New Zealand and thus attracting a wider audience. Another consequence relating to our small population costume designer A and directors H and J consider is that the income generated is insufficient to sustain the quantity of theatre performances currently existing within the country. This, of course refers to the income of the practitioners and the intimated need for subsidies.

Director I acknowledged that to retain public attendance, subsidies are needed to keep prices affordable. However, the same director also believes that, ideally, the existence of financial commitments should be less of an issue and should not override creativity. He/she views the lack of funding as an opportunity to explore what is available:

> *I: "We have always found ways of making virtues of necessities. I've always described the art of theatre, the art of design, the riches of necessities".*

Director G, with regard to the necessary administration tasks within a production company, notes the importance of support within the infrastructure. As acknowledged by this director, the chances of securing the level of funding required is improving and achievable but is it usually a far greater endeavour to acquire the staff needed to maintain the functioning of the company. The skills are recognised

as being far wider ranging currently and the skeleton crew do not always have these. For costume designer B the area in need of support is establishing premises and administrative staff. For a freelance costume designer who cannot financially sustain a workroom, the establishment of premises must be repeated for every new production. Costume designers B and C suggest that part of the funding received should be set aside for establishing permanent space for production companies with similar needs to share. This would build up a costume collection for ongoing storage and future use. From a practitioner's perspective this would seem a sensible proposition, however the feedback received from the actual workroom supervisors indicates that it is not as straightforward as it might appear. Most contract fees are so low that all the funds are accounted for leaving no margins for surplus funds to build on.

The idea of an *"artistic shelter"* was suggested by costume designer E and was supported by director F. In such a workshop facility, an experienced costume designer could mentor trainees, providing continuing feedback and inspiration from within the environment. Director J also suggests that after the tertiary training guidance could be provided in the form of a mentor for further induction into the industry. The only concern is the prerequisite to find good costume designers to adequately provide this mentoring. Costume designer D suggests incorporating a wider range of skills into training where the trainee must also experience the stage. This view is supported by the often paired director I, who emphasises the necessity of complete knowledge, including having the experience of inhabiting a theatrical costume:

> *D: "It is essential that the technical course should [sic...teach] about acting, how they support the core of this onstage with sympathy. A designer must know the actors and what it is like to wear a costume".*

A suggestion by two directors (F and H) was that not all the responsibility should rest on the government and more local support should be contributed. There was a recognised need for access to resources and facilities and appropriate areas in which performances of the arts can take place. Also corporate sponsorship is still a major contribution to funding in today's climate and the recipients are expected to acknowledge the support from these by offering forms of hospitality such as special

opening nights for sponsors with refreshments provided thus – there is the need to provide the facility to do this.

A priority which director H identifies is the return to stronger protection for people in the performance industry. Although there is still no controlling document covering the minimum that the employer can pay production staff, the wages received usually depend on how the budget of the production is managed. The Employment Contracts Act has destroyed the unions and any organised protection. However, as this director believes, currently the unions are cautiously rebuilding confidence with the workers.

4.4 The Micro-considerations Influential on Theatre Work

4.4.1 Prior Tertiary Education

A statistical documentation of the qualifications of the participants is provided in the demographic charts at the start of this chapter. In this section the effects of the qualifications and relationship of these to their work has been investigated. Most of the participants (9/10) have received academic qualifications; however, few of these replies link these to the current skill base needed to work in the performance industry. Costume designer A has a degree, but considers the applied skills acquired have been achieved by experience in the industry. Comparably, director F, who has pursued further education, ranks practical experience within theatre and the viewing of performance as an important reinforcement to the schooling. Director J, who has received a drama school certificate, sees little result or significance within this qualification. The emphasis has undoubtedly been placed on the hands-on practical training within the industry.

Costume designer D has studied at institutions specialising in theatrical training and although acknowledging his/her initial fundamental training, goes beyond this to refer to life experiences as the important qualification. D has lived through a war and considers this as being one very important personal experience in life. Director I has a wealth of academic qualifications, but promotes the idea that a healthy approach to life and work was considered a greater asset and explains it in the following phrase:

I: "A disposition of mind is more important (sic) than qualifications".

These two participants are long-standing practitioners in the industry and experience has shown them that the benefits of these philosophies lie in how you incorporate the understandings into your work ethics.

Of the few participants who do acknowledge their academic qualifications, costume designer C credits the actual study methods as important in nurturing research. Costume designer B regards confidence acquired in drawing skills as an important aspect of his/her training. Director F has an art diploma and credits an interest in painting and architecture as giving a passion for visual design and a complementary component to his/her directorial activities. The subsequent advantages of initial tertiary education are highlighted when considering the experiences of costume designer E who had not received any prior academic qualifications or theatrical education and felt bewildered when entering the industry; even with the benefit of an arts background. Director F reinforces this by insisting that prior education is irrefutably intrinsic to how an individual eventually applies himself/herself to his/her work.

4.4.2 The Effects Related to Technical Training

The participants were then asked to recall the technical training related to theatre work that has assisted in their professional experience. From the responses only half of the ten participants (D, E, F, I, J) had actual technical training from institutions that specialised in tutoring in the performing arts, and none of this training was conducted in New Zealand. One of these was costume designer D, who was taught to use the wide range of technical equipment within a theatrical training institute. This consisted of training on the various forms of machinery associated with the wardrobe and also construction techniques. Director I, who often works with this designer, supports this by stating that to understand and work within these disciplines a technical knowledge is imperative. This director had also received training overseas which consisted of the technical aspects of the theatre; unfortunately, the costuming component was not very comprehensive. However, within the training, director I alludes to being encouraged to wear a theatrical costume, and attributes to this his/her having attained a better perspective of

costume requirements. Costume designer E was awarded a grant in a London theatre to pursue costuming tuition; and director J completed a costume design course in Australia. The training received by these participants outside New Zealand, although brief, was considered of an accomplished standard and has remained of value.

Although only one director (H) has done a teaching studentship, it is noted that all the participants tutor at various learning institutes and contribute greatly to the education within the performing arts (Figure 4.1.5). Two participants worked within the community; for example director G progressed from working in youth theatre to tutoring. Costume designer D toured for the community art service and considers this experience as a major influence to an understanding of the principles of design. Along with the tuition within the institutes the participants have taken part in workshops, but more importantly they contribute regularly to running workshops and incorporating the trainees within their productions.

4.4.3 Fashion Influences

Half of the participants - three costume designers (B, D, and E) and two directors (G, I) - did not discern fashion as having any predominance within their work. Costume designer E avoids the incorporation of fashion and justifies this by stating that there is a marked difference between theatre and fashion and that theatre has a far wider context, explaining:

> *E. "Theatre is different from fashion. In the theatre you are part of a much bigger whole. I don't think it should be compared with theatre".*

Costume designers D and C also will not let fashion take precedence over the design and will use fashion only in reference to the characterisation or the context of the story. The fashion styling should only enhance the mannerisms of the actors. Director F echoes these sentiments by explaining that using fashion is mainly for the purpose of supporting what he/she wants the character to portray, and if this is not appropriate, a fashion theme will not be pursued.

> *F: "But fashion in terms of, if you put somebody in a Fortunay dress for example, then it says something about the character".*

Costume designer A considers that, among the many various ways in which fashion is incorporated into costume design, it is initially used as a familiarisation tool. It increases accessibility; for example, to attract a younger audience with a particular fashion styling. Director G, along these lines, uses fashion sources by the inclusion of popular culture within his/her work. Following these trends, according to this director, is not always a personal preference but he/she feels an engagement develops this way. He/she feels it is important to approach the work with openness especially within their company, as there is a predominant youth presence. This participant recognises the importance of encouraging the youth in taking part in performance to ensure the future of the theatre industry.

After consideration, costume designers A, B and D and director H identified significant ways in which fashion is used initially and often indirectly. Costume designer B attributes the use partly to fashion magazines when looking for colour inspiration. Moreover, as highlighted by A, D and H, fashion invariably helps to indicate social and cultural status- as in class and gender and also to indicate a specific time period. Also it assists in locating the play regarding the country in a social and political context.

> *A: "Fashion will always influence design because it is a way of interpreting social, historical, geographical and political ideas".*

A more modern adaptation can be used to stylise a performance that is placed in a particular period. Fashion can be related, in theatre, to the changes in visuals and how they are presented. The early theatre in the 1950s had what the costume designer D calls a *"flatness"*, which has changed over the last thirty years to a more three-dimensional aesthetic. The audience is encouraged to look into, rather than at, the play. This is explained as the development of a more flexible form of theatre where the play and cast are not restricted to remaining positioned behind a proscenium arch stage. The design of alternative stage shapes can even bring the play into the audience. This undoubtedly affects the design and production of costuming from both physical movement and visual vantage points. This perspective, along with the accompanying lighting, may draw more attention to detailing required.

4.4.4 Political and Social Influences

More than three - quarters of the participants (B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I) were conscious of incorporating a political and sociological content into their work; however two participants chose not to respond to this question.

A strong political and sociological conscience also emanates from the combination of costume designer D and director I. They fail to see how, when living in a contemporary society you cannot take in political happenings. This decidedly will influence - and be introduced into - the work produced. Both the participants are passionate about bringing issues to the stage and welcome content regarding the conflicts and challenges of society that encourage debate and discourage apathy. In saying this, director I elucidates the role of theatre as exposing issues and not resolving them.

> *I: "Theatre can provide images which facilitate debate....Because they provide focus for it, they clarify...Theatre will never solve problems; I don't think that's its job".*

Costume designer B and director G, who have often collaborated, consider their work to have a political and social context, but feel it has a more widespread applicability and is not so much specifically local New Zealand. However, there are two traits – vibrancy and an optimistic attitude that this costume designer B considers are indigenous. Director G has a vested interest in the many different ways theatre can tell the experiences and passions of everyday people. In interpreting the narrative, the director G looks at the small personal vignettes. This director prefers to step back and view the bigger picture and the universal experiences. B finds the stories group together and is very similar within particular environments, and although they are linked indirectly to politics, they have a more sociological connotation.

Director H addresses the positive development in theatre regarding public willingness to watch renditions of their own lives on stage. This director reflects on themes produced in plays that have major relevance to the current political situation. The analogy used by directors F and G is that of where it is questioned whether theatre reflects society or society succeeds theatre:

> *F & G: "chicken and egg theory"*

This question also leads three directors (F, H and I) to reflect on where New Zealand performance will go in the future. Although director H hopes that the fundamental aspects of live performance involving actors and audience will remain, there was considerable thought to the question regarding whether the theatre creators actually have control and lead in concepts or whether they just follow the given path. Theatre practitioners are intent on interpreting what occurs in society and in turn do the public then react to these in their actions? Experience has seen passionate reactions from those who attend live performances less frequently when they are introduced to poignant work (e.g. *Nui Sula*).

4.4.5 The Relationship between Work and Location

Often the first consideration for accepting a contract will be where and when the production is to be performed. Costume designer E points out the sobering reality of the current industry, wherein all costume designers work freelance and do not have ongoing contracts with the same company. It is apparent that to acquire continuing employment one must be adaptable and be able to journey to the various regions where the work is produced. Unfortunately, this choice - as costume designer E points out - is not a consideration for designers with family commitments.

Costume designers A and C appreciate that the flexibility that they have is possible only when one can accommodate a work schedule within the demands of lifestyle, and family responsibility. Some production companies have a network that provides access to accommodation. Well-organised production schedules make it feasible to pursue work away from home. Costume designer A does profess advantage in the ability to address the situations more immediately when the performance is located closer to home. However, this designer also notes the bonus of accessing a wider range of materials when travelling to the different regions.

4.4.6 Particular Work with regard to Location

Director J commented on the nature of work produced in a particular city and how the location affected the production. An example used was a situation where two plays by the same playwright and the same director J were produced consecutively

in different cities. Director J found that the production in Auckland, which had been granted more financial backing was more *"frivolous"* in decoration, whereas on a smaller budget in Wellington it appeared to be sourced from what could be found. It had a more earthy essence in Wellington as opposed to the slick Auckland performance. The significance herein echoes the emphasis on finances again and the way in which they are paramount in creating different aesthetics.

Director F makes additional comparisons, for example, in Christchurch audiences are willing to spend money on the Opera although the controlling financial powers have a tighter reign on funding for more alternative arts. This is evident in the lack of a Fringe Festival - whereas in Wellington it has a flourishing community. Christchurch is thought to have a more conservative audience who is happily accommodated by one theatre and some scattered amateur organisations. Director H challenges us to consider that location is not the influence regarding the different productions or the nature of the company, but that the people driving the company and the supporting community provide the major influences. They are, in principle, what forms the work and gives the vibrancy to the company. Director I questions this localised focus, the tendency of becoming too *"parochial"*. He/she encourages the use of a wider international perspective when providing the inspiration for company concepts. However, I feel this would be ongoing - attempt to strike a healthy medium by incorporating both local and international content in the work produced by companies in an endeavour to ensure both artistic and economic success.

4.4.7 Conducive Performance Space

The effect of the space in which a work is performed was also discussed. Costume designers and directors produce work in relation to the environment they work in. Costume designer D and director G stress that this space determines what can be designed and thus achieved. As costume designer D explains, the size and shape determine the capabilities - for example, the alternative to work away from the confines of the proscenium arch theatre.

> *G. "It is taken into consideration from the beginning; you don't just design in a vacuum, you design with that space in mind, and where you're making it. That's very reflective in the work".*

Another aspect costume designer B points out relates to the difference in the size of space within various auditoria. The proximity of the audience to the performer affects the style of work performed. A small environment lends itself to an intimate performance, whereas the larger auditorium is more suited to bigger shows, which do not involve the audience in the same way. This is a major consideration for all travelling shows large or small. Apart from the technical demands, the cast has to adapt to the dynamics of the space.

Directors F and G are concerned about the standard in which newcomers to the industry have to work. They consider many conditions sub-standard, with premises that do not do justice to the work attempted by the on - the - rise designers. Although there is an audience hungry to view and participate in innovative work, when the first impression is of low quality this public enters without high expectations and assumes the emphasis to be on the content, not on the design. It encourages apathy by public and crew, and a reluctance to explore all avenues to combat this by the production staff and producers.

4.4.8 Organizational Preferences

Over half (A, D, E, G, H, I and J) of the participants expressed a preference in consistent work with particular production companies. Costume designer A recommended the operation of a larger company with efficient administration and a more *"open culture"* as opposed to a smaller company that is personality driven. The repertory system was highly praised by costume designer D and directors I and J, who agree with its philosophy of establishing longer ongoing contracts allowing the designer to familiarise himself/herself with the work and crew and thus build on the skills acquired. There was a strong penchant for retaining a consistency in cast and crew, therefore enabling the pursuit of ongoing development within the aesthetics of the company.

Director H and costume designer C preferred project - based companies and the variety of choice in productions provided with freelancing. Director H also reflects on these insecurities and the times in between productions where there is no secure financial income. Both costume designer B and director F clearly avoid working as part of a Co-op arrangement. Relating to past experiences they would prefer to have a guarantee on receiving their commission. The larger productions exhibit the

desire to provide financial security, continuity and artistic flexibility, however as suggested by A and D, there are two few companies to benefit the amount of workers in the current industry. It is an ongoing objective by the major professional theatre companies for example. Court, Downstage, Fourtune, and Auckland Theatre Company - and they survive on a skeleton staff.

4.4.9 Monitoring Measures

Upon reflection on how enlightening published reviews are considered, the conclusion was that over half of the participants (A, B, E, F, I and J) did not place a great value in them. Although reviews by the critics were said to distinguish the good and bad work and aspects related to this, as indicated in the following, directors F and I very rarely agree on these.

> *F: "The reviewer very concisely points out what was good about the piece and...bad about the piece, and certainly it picked on areas. ...But how many times do you read something that you agree with?"*

Participants F, G, and J state that the more valued opinions and feedback originate from their peers and colleagues, especially responses from those who have an accomplished record of theatrical experience.

However, the participants A, B, D, E, G and H do acknowledge the significance the reviews have with regard to public response. Participants A and G state that reviews have a direct relationship to the success of the show and cannot be ignored, however, directors F, H and costume designer D state that high attendance cannot be used as measure of theatrical success. The piece may have had only had a small audience but, within the aims of the cast and crew, have accomplished the artistic imperatives of both the performers and the audience. Theatre is ultimately considered by director H to aspire to meeting the community's needs and even in low numbers the needs of the attending audiences may have been met. However, as for catering for the wider community and fulfilling the financial commitments, this ideal is unlikely to be sustainable.

Director H questions the public's ability to decide on their needs in preference to viewing. H had concluded that the public often does not know what they like until

they have experienced the performance. When making decisions in what to produce the director can only follow his/her *"gut feeling"*. Narrowing down the choice based on what has previously been a success regarding public preference can also be wrong for various reasons. For example, as director H has experienced, a particular theme may have been used too many times, or a production can fail because it may be on a popular night for the rugby.

4.4.10 Views on Performance within New Zealand

Director F considers the development of theatre over the number of their practising years and has not seen any effective changes in the performance industry. This relates to an observation of visual and personal experiences, and with regard to the role of the costume designer. However, changes highlighted by two costume designers (B, C) and three directors (G, H and I) have been in the other forms of theatre development. Identified by the participants are the strong cultural influences introduced into the arts, due to the infusion of the international influences from outside New Zealand by the increased globalisation and importing and exporting of local acts. Another positive area of change pertaining to cultural influences closer to home, was seen in performances by the Maori cultures, Pacific Islands, Asian, Indian and other immigrants. The view was that growth in population within these cultures instils a stronger voice, which is becoming vocal within the performing arts. This is giving New Zealand theatre not just the flavour emanating from the English or Maori culture but those emanating from many other cultures as well.

Also included in the changes is noted the introduction of new theatre styles in the form of improvisational and developmental work. The new developmental work, in the form of physical, performance art, and electronic work, is seen as very much youth driven. Costume designer E notices a drop in theatre attendance due to a lack of comprehension in text-based performances by the younger audience who have a preference for more exhibitionist performances. This does not eliminate the discriminating ability of the youth in quality work. As noted by costume designer C and director I, the box-office takings soon indicate the successes of these works. The discerning public are the ones who judge the success of the performance and that result is often very dependent on the standard or quality achieved in the

production. That involves not only the content and acting, but also the production values such as costume.

In the current environment of minimalist approaches although greatly influenced by economic factors director J feels these plays usually encourage the type of work produced. This director feels that contemporary theatre is portrayed more poetically, lending itself to a more unrealistic but complex symbolism. It requires more thought from not only the designer but also the audience. This is again met with adverse criticism and is questioned by costume designer E who feels this work is producing another breed of designer. The 'stylist' has evolved where the focus is on the modern contemporary styling of creating an image rather than using design concepts and methods. Director I also expresses concerns regarding the modern approach to new performance theatre in its ability to retain the integrity of the public. As part of these innovative performances the audience are often not given the option to choose how they view the work and are placed within a particular environment. The audience is confronted by - and often incorporated in - the performance, and as director I points out the wishes of the audience should not be bypassed:

I: "It is the right of the audience to reject sic...performance if they wish".

Highlighted by one costume designer (C) is the popularity of the big budget, overseas productions. This designer classes these ultimately as *"escapism"* into a world far away from that which the audience inhabits. Relationships are linked between performance today and what is happening socially and economically in this country for the public. When the social environment is not so pleasant in people's lives, there is a desire to be somewhere better. This does explain why the big happy musicals are always a box office success. The public walks away with the feel-good factor. Costume designer C highlights the fact that with the significant contribution of professional marketing, the public are still willing to pay the higher prices in tickets.

In addition to the comments on the future, another director (J) included the ever-present threat of trained people moving over to the more lucrative employment in the film and television industry. It was felt that television provided more security

for employment. The related employment as regards television serials may provide a more consistent income whereas films (although when compared with theatre are slightly better paying) are just as temporary. The experience of the researcher, having pursued both areas, is that films have more a passion driven content whereas television series are more concerned with everyday subjects. These different performance genres attract workers with differing temperaments in and their preference lies in whether, as costume designers, they have a desire to pursue work that provides fulfilment in content or consistency.

4.4.11 Consciousness of a Theatre Community

The consciousness of a recognised theatre community has received little reaction and most costume designers (A, B, and E) were not aware of it. The reason for this may be in the comments from costume designer B, who admits to having little contact with other designers and works mostly in isolation. Another costume designer (E) accepts work only in his/her own city, taking into account New Zealand's geographical nature, contact would be limited. Director J considers that the community occasionally gathers, but in general, the industry has remained isolated for some years and suggests the possibility of symposia as maybe encouraging further contact between the performing arts.

Although director F considers the main centres just happy to have theatre and accept what they receive, costume designer A feels there is a greater "*empowerment*" needed within the theatre industry. This costume designer (A) suggests there is recognition happening, however; currently it resembles the culture of fame where it is the average that are distinguished, and not the highly skilled. The designer feels the emphasis should be focussed on areas of the craft incorporating processes of the design and the collaborations.

> *A: "I think there is a culture in theatre not dissimilar to the culture of fame, which more often than not results in the celebration of the mediocre rather than the truly great. I would be more comfortable if and when more value can be placed on the creative process on collaboration of artists – both designer and practitioner".*

4.5 Design Processes

4.5.1 Stages Identified in the Design Processes

In association with the aims and objectives of this thesis, the interviewees were asked to explain their own design processes. Whilst some designers displayed a process more structured than others, all have broken their processes down into stages. In the initial interviews, the interviewer identified three stages and these have remained consistent in the replies. From the processed data, the received information was appropriated to the three suggested stages and relationships formed.

The categories identified are **Preparation, Production and Evaluation.**

4.5.2 Preparation

This initial step, which all the designers (A, B, C, D, and E) participate in, consists of primary research and adding foundation to the concepts. The preparation stage forms the building blocks for design and supports the concept of the play. Costume designer A considers this phase an accumulation of researched information relevant to the brief and costume designer D takes it further by explaining it as acquainting oneself with the technical details. Highlighted by costume designer C is the need to give credence to the *"gut feeling"* in these early stages of conceptual development and to follow this as the initial idea, as it is often the most successful and resolved.

Planning the design process is usually initiated by the design team and starts with a production meeting to discuss pending issues. Costume designer A places priorities in *"appraising"* the questions arising from the performance, and director F is intent on providing ample information. The questions to be considered involve the relationships between all the variables in the production. For example costume designer A considers the play; who wrote it, what sort of play it is, who will perform it, and how it will be performed. The people considered within the performance are the director, performers, production team and the audience. Consideration given to the significance of who has commissioned I, for what purpose, and then finally for which audience are they aiming for?

Director J also encourages the team within the meetings to explore and respond to *"themes"* that have been pooled. Themes are also introduced by Director H in the development process and the exchange of ideas is welcomed. Although this director initially has a plan that forms a basis of the design process, he/she is then open to alternatives. The approach costume designer C takes is to provide as much of the collected research material as possible along with the costume design, not only for personal reference but also to assist the entire production crew. The collected research material is intended to familiarise the production staff with the concepts of the design. The costume designer endeavours to assist in the interpretation and thus also in the realisation of the design.

Of the participants: A, D, F and I clearly state the importance for a very ordered design process. They ensure that the brief is well researched and that they already have a strong concept of what the performance is about. The directors F and I have firm ideas on the direction in which they want to take the work, and have a vested confidence in what will and will not work, although they do emphasize sharing in a joint vision. This opinion is reinforced by director J, and is encapsulated in this comment

> *J: "I believe in synchronicity, if everyone is thinking on the same project you can be led to things".*

However, designer B and two directors, G and J, have a stronger emphasis on a flexible and more collaborative approach. This is related to whether the piece is script - based or devised. They enter into productions with an open mind and do not adhere to any set sequence. Director G lets the piece develop through group meetings of the production members. This is consistent with the process costume designer B describes, and shows their similar thinking as they often collaborate in productions. Director G describes a process where images are collated along with numerous improvised drawings and presented at these meetings. In the meetings following the collaborations of costume designer B and director G, they incorporate the whole production team and use *"provocations"* to contribute to the content of the work. These initial meetings, as highlighted by Costume designer A, are important problem-solving times in the design process.

The next step agreed on by most of the participants (B, C, D, E, H, I and J) involves creating inspiration for the designs to evolve. Two costume designers (B and E) and two directors (H and J) draw on literature research and visual - images for example, photographs and video - for support. Both directors H and J find their knowledge of art history and of the various periods imperative in making informed decisions. Although costume designer E uses this stage of the research for design development, even prior to the first meeting with the director the designer has already acquainted him/self thoroughly with the script.

Both costume designer C and director H have a process wherein they produce images originating from their imaginations. The initial images prompting the inspiration for costume designer C can originate from the first mention of the title. Costume designer C then starts with a "*blank cell*" and scrupulously adds only what is required from selected material, whereas director H, after considerable research, analyses the script to extract the potential and ascertain what can be used.

Three of the costume designers (B, D, and E) use illustrations as an inspiration source at this stage. Costume designer B places importance on producing a large quantity of illustrations at this stage renders numerous quick improvised sketches. Costume designer E identifies this process as "*mark making*" and applies only loose sketches at this stage. Costume designer D emphasizes that although these are initially small sketches, they are to be developed into larger versions and should portray the essence of the character. Costume designer D explains this design process as such:

> *D: "I don't design costumes I design characters, I can't design a costume unless I can visualise the character".*

The second stage of development for costume designer E also entails securing visual ideas and textiles, which form part of the inspiration. For this costume designer, the combination of searching fabric shops and other shops of interest, and producing many illustrations, allows him/her to build a creative picture.

The next step taken by three of the costume designers (A, D and E) involves putting the ideas down in a notated and illustrated form. Costume designer A has

taken the illustrated concepts to a preliminary design and has referred this to the creative team for discussion and refinement. The director F who is often paired with this costume designer at this stage makes use of a storyboard where all the substantial information is accounted for.

After analysing the script and breaking the play down into action points, costume designer D presents the results as a written "*Précis*". This storyboard form is divided into three sections; a beginning, middle and last segment. The reasoning behind dividing the play into three parts is that it provides clarification of what is actually happening. Also, when the costume designer is studying a script, after two-thirds of the way through, it often becomes harder to pursue the last part of the play but through the Précis it forces you to complete it. This is a very visual process in which it is viewed and otherwise unnoticed elements can be highlighted. A Précis provides a clear picture of the performance and assists the creative process. The process is in keeping with the collaboration designer D has with director I who, during the design discussions, has a need to view and clarify the action points.

4.5.3 Production

The second stage in the design process is the production stage, as it involves producing the physical and material results of the design process. The final designs are resolved and presented in this period. Costume designer A has to have received all the relevant information from the design crew and director to allow for successful interpretation, and is then able to hand the costume designs over to the production team. The relationship between director F and designer A concludes that the production stage entails a lot of back and forth. For example; resolving issues, exploring budgeting possibilities, allowing for these or just eliminating excess. One important aspect the costume designer highlights again is that the communication and the success of the team depend on the interactive dialogue that emerges.

For Costume designer D, only when the structured triptych has been completed and all performance details are presented (e.g. Précis stage), can the creativity unfold. This costume designer then advocates the need to place all the following characters' designs also on the same page, thus leaving any unresolved features to be spotted immediately by the costume designer and director. Director I, who has

collaborated with the costume designer D, also places importance on seeing the whole picture. At this stage the costume designers will be exploring the design principles extensively to arrange the elements in creating a resolved costume. Director I encourages the costume designer to present his/her illustration as a functional pose, in assisting to ascertain the characterisation. When the costume designer produces the work the director feels it shows a developed understanding of the workings of the play.

The production stage is the technical stage in the design process where the costumes are realised. Although the process, in the collaboration of director G and costume designer B, is described as principally organic, the director defines a structure visually as resembling a *"pyramid"*. It begins with many components and is slowly refined. Included within this process is undertaking a large number of drawings. When the design has been resolved it will be ready to be fabricated.

Similarly, director J - who endorses working with the actors and developing the costumes at the same time - prefers an organic process. For this director, the design images sometimes develop visually as a mental image or sometimes just the essence of the characters. This time spent on visualisation is felt to be a rewarding part of the process, particularly if it has been accommodated within the production as explained:

> *J: "It's a wonderful frustrating process that has to gestate over quite a long period before rehearsals begin".*

Although director H has a clear view of the characterisation at this stage, he/she leaves the costume realisation open to the interpretation of the costume designer. Within these collaborations, the director gives the costume designer the freedom to pursue the concepts fully.

The models can now be realized and made ready for presentation, explained by costume designer A as the *"exposure"*. Costume designer D involves the entire crew at this stage in the creative decisions. Although this designer does not construct, he/she has had fundamental training and applies this to the decisions. Director I tentatively introduce the cast to the use of the performance space at this stage in

order to encourage design development and for the actors to be physically at home within this. Emphasised by this director is an important factor in assisting the physicality of the actor by the using correct footwear and an understanding of how to move in costume within the context of the play.

The skills of costume designer B are claimed not to extend to high tailoring. However, the designer does pursue the realisation of the costumes and their final design form is of paramount importance. This costume designer is adamant about employing staff with the appropriate skills with which to construct the particular designs required of them. Although costume designer E is not actively constructing the costumes any more, he/she will prepare the prototypes of particular costume designs. The costume designer challenges this diminishing ability to construct and feels it still to be a necessity within the costume design profession.

Costume designers A and C, are very involved at this stage within the interaction with the production process. Although both admit to having limited construction skills they have an astute eye for detail. Designer C interprets the silhouette at this stage as being important and not the authenticity. The silhouette can be suggestive rather than be the literal interpretation. With consent from the director and design crew, this gives the opportunity to extend the creativity of the production. Costume designer C uses the imagination of the public and credits them with the attributes to fill in the gaps for stylised productions. In this approach the reality and explicit detail are not pursued and a minimalist approach is used. Costume designer E, who also emphasises the importance of the silhouette, explains that his/her aim is to achieve an "*architectural outline*". The silhouette can be approached with innovation, and stylistic shortcuts can be used.

4.4.4 Evaluation

In the responses from the interviews the participants indicated that there was a reflection phase in their last stage that is identified as the **evaluation** stage. All of the costume designers (A, B, C, D, and E) pursue communication in some form, incorporating ongoing feedback with the design and production crew.

Costume designer A does not sum up the production with an evaluation, but creates opportunities throughout the design process to receive feedback. When the

preliminary designs are presented to the creative and production team the intention is to promote open dialogue. Then, in the production stage where the costume designer has a formal presentation of the final design, this is also providing a chance for critique from those to whom the design has been presented.

Costume designer D also follows an identified design process and involves assessment within this. The mock-up produced in the realisation is intended to allow the designer and director to consider adjustments and embellishments. Through the rehearsal and presentation (termed as the *"exposure"* phase by the costume designer A), the design team and also the performers can suggest refinements to the costume. Appreciated and noted by costume designer D and director I, is the value of the accumulated experience of the practitioner in giving - and also accepting - the critique.

Director I, who incorporates evaluation during the production, admits to little reflection on a formal evaluation after the opening night. He/she confesses is already mentally occupied with future projects. Costume designer E, similarly, does not actively set aside a formal assessment time but does partake in ongoing discussion related to the costumes with the production staff.

Within a professional situation, director F experiences few occasions where there is reflection on the production or design process from colleagues. However, when tutoring, the directors F and H adopt a very structured assessment process. That occurs during the classes and comes in the form of:

> *F: "Constant feedback, informed criticism and a final assessment".*

As part of the requirements as a company director, director J is involved in a formal evaluation, which is part of the company procedure, however the costume designer has yet to be involved in this. The director, personally, incorporates evaluation measures as to how and if the designer's abilities have been extended, also how successful the costume designs were in achieving the concepts and goals of the production. Noted from the demographics results, is the fact that these participants are from the earlier generation of participants and it appears the incorporation of feedback to be a more recent introduction.

In comparing the collaboration of director G and costume designer B, more recent entrants to the industry, they drew a parallel and reveal an internal reflection as an integral part of their process. The director expands on this by pointing out that the evaluation also happens on different levels. One aspect covers the box office takings and reflects the number of the public attending the performance. Also the evaluation can be associated with the feedback communicated from the public regarding the content and artistic critique. Costume designer B appreciates the opportunity to discuss the reasons for the successes and failures. As the company is project based, director G uses the evaluation meeting as a "*closure*" and recap for the members of the team who are moving on to other productions.

4.6 The Director and Costume Designer Relationship

4.6.1 Influencing Factors in the Working Relationship

Although the use of design processes has been discussed in section 4.3, a more in-depth investigation is pursued in this section concentrating on the perceptions and effects that occur between the costume designer and director working on a performance together.

All of the participants, initially, considered their roles and how they entered into the piece of work. The previous importance of a well-researched information base was reiterated, especially in the relationship as this provides support for given and received critique in design decisions. Costume designers C and D strengthen this conviction by personally ensuring that an in-depth knowledge of the script is achieved and imply that this can often surpass that of the directors. As D noted:

D: "Knowledge of the script enables one to argue intelligently with the director".

The other prerequisite to which costume designer A refers is a "*harmony of thinking*". In essence, a smoother communication develops with a joint understanding and this interaction extends from the designer to the production crew. The communication between the design team is an established common language often called by the participants A, C and F, as"*shorthand*". In the production meetings

participants A, B, G, and I approach this with an open outlook, thus encouraging discussion and often resulting in debate. Directors C and J acknowledge that there can be a difference in opinion, which director J describes as constructive:

> *J: "We argued and fought, but all respect each other, and we know we will come up with something".*

Director I endorses the view that this form of debate should be pursued, and stated that when this is done with conviction there is no need for animosity as explained in the following comment:

> *I: "Even when you are challenged and you don't agree, you are able to talk, disagree without acrimony".*

When initially contracted to work on a show, the directors F and J relate to occasions when they are asked regarding their preference of costume designer to work with. Agreed on by participants D, F, and J, is the fact that the choice is often governed by whether a costume designer has a particular style the director connects with, and whether this will enhance the work.

When costume designers A and C initially entered into the profession of theatre design there was no question about whether the director or set designer was the head of the design team, and the costume designer was assured the other half. Director I, who acknowledged that the designer was one of the key people in a production reinforced this respect. The directors B and I regard the designer as paramount in defining the setting for the play, and as having an important part in creating the environment. The hierarchical position of the costume designer is easily defined within the perceptions of these participants.

The current situation in theatre has gone through some changes according to costume designer A, as he/she reflects on the attitudes experienced in his/her early theatre career. The directors were *"driven"* and applied this same pressure on everyone within the company. The directors expected the entire crew to perform at their utmost, whereas today this does not happen quite to this extent and there is not that push to achieve these standards. One expectation, as part of the directorial

role which costume designer E emphasises, is the recognition and nurturing of developing talent. However, designer E feels that regarding the teachings of the theatre, the current directors do not exemplify these, in fact very little is learnt from them. Reflected from this designer in the following comments is the current more collaborative approach in theatre in which he/she feels results in superfluous indecisiveness to the detriment of the working process:

> *E: "Directors are acknowledgers of talent and should genuinely foster it. With the directors today you don't learn anything; it is all very communist in decision making. They change things at the last moment. This is, for the actors and designers, a nightmare".*

It was apparent that all of the participants placed value on regular communication. This is not only to clarify interpretations in developing the vision, but in order to acquaint each other so they can build a relationship of trust and confidence. It is worth noting that over half of the participants (A, B, C, F, G and H) indicated their process as being a strong collaborative partnership, and this included the participants who have previously worked with each other.

Costume designer A considers the contribution from director and designer to be equal, but flexible enough to concede when one has the prevailing vision. Director F, who has often teamed up with this costume designer, approaches this situation from the perspective that it can be the director who controls the action or sometimes it is the designer. Costume designer B reflects on the hierarchical system within productions and has not experienced *"dictatorships"* within the working relationships. This corresponds with the views of director G, who often works with this costume designer, and considers that all the production roles merge and are on equal footing.

4.6.2 The Collaborative Emphasis

In this section the important aspects resulting in the actual collaboration process in relation to work that is produced are looked at. Director F, who often works alongside costume designer A, identifies this inclusion as an effective way to increase the comprehension and communication of ideas. This director also distinguishes the two distinct roles of the costume designer and director in that it is

the director who oversees the performance and the costume designer who produces the visuals. Although they are quite different, the director describes them as equal in value when presenting a piece.

Costume designer A reflects on his/her initial experience in theatre design, some twenty years ago, where they were included in the rehearsal process. This designer (and B and G) welcome the opportunity to be included as it provides a wider insight and opportunity to contribute ideas other than those relating exclusively to design. It also gives a perspective into all the skills involved in creating a performance as explained in the following observation:

> *A: "I was made to spend a lot of time at rehearsal ...and was also involved in a lot of decision making beyond design, so I got a really good broad training in all areas of play making".*

The insight of a director will unaccountably vary with each but, in the fortunate experience of costume designer C, the director is usually quite well aware of how the actors are characterised and how this will be translated visually. This costume designer appraises the thought process and the capabilities of these directors well, or is essentially selective in the collaboration. Alternatively, this ideal has been contested further in this section in other interviewee feedback. Directors F, H and I explain their perspective as allowing themselves to be swayed and not to be limited to one initial concept. Director H initially prefers not to discuss his/her her own ideas with the costume designer, even before the designer has read the play, giving him/her unconstrained opportunity for exploration. This director appreciates the costume designer's ability to explore a different territory but will endeavour to retain the original vision.

Well aware of the working process used by many directors, costume designer E nevertheless questions whether the director has the ability to both work within the world of design and use his/her imagination. Some directors can visualise ideas whereas others need to see a more concrete representation of the designs before they can form images in their heads. One approach, identified by costume designer D, was where the director refrains from approaching the visuals of the piece till the designs have evolved, which ultimately imposes a heavy load of responsibility on

the costume designer. Director I, who collaborates with this designer, acknowledges this preference, but when constructing a picture of the play has a need to work with visuals rather than with conceptual images:

> *I: "I hate dealing with abstractions, I think tangible things: barbed wire, rocks and sunshine".*

Difficulty occurs when there is uncertainty from the director who may have limited knowledge in costuming. This problem has arisen for costume designers E and C, who encountered an inexperienced director with little insight who has no ability to extend the creativity of the design crew. Costume designer E describes this situation as dispiriting, and a direct influence over to what extent they can apply themselves. When the level of expectation is placed too low, it can lead to apathy by the designer in his/her work.

This is questioning the current expectations placed on the roles in the industry where previously the director adopted a far more domineering role in the vision and authority now it appears there are new roles where the designer is asking for more responsibility in designs. It appears to be a personal preference, and those who have a vested opinion and wish to assume a larger role appear to be first and foremost set designers who are also able to design costumes. Those who major in costume design are more ready to hand over the main decisions to the director. These developments have not occurred without complications. In the current climate of collaboration where the designer has received a role of more almost equal importance with that of the director, although the response has been positive, this relinquishing of responsibility by the director has sometimes resulted in a lack of confidence and knowledge in the assuming the role on the part of the costume designer.

4.6.3 Design Models Experienced

Two different approaches has been explained by participants B and J regarding the production process they have experienced with various directors:

- The first process involves the costume designer's sitting in on rehearsals in which there are a study and evaluation of the actors with very few drawings

or even interaction in the form of dialogue, but the process consists of producing a few moving poignant pieces around which to build a design.

- The next model is a director, who also has had very strong ideas, but who lets the visuals grow in a developmental, organic process. This is supported with many drawings.

Costume designer B applies the second process when working with director G and they confess to being very different from each other regarding their personalities, however, they have a similar intuitive approach to their methodology. The designer is incorporated into many meetings and there is a collection of many images by both director and designer. These are explained as initially focusing on "*raw basic elements*", drawn from visual and textual responses. The next step is the development of an environment, which – as the costume designer describes - can be very abstract and is usually initiated and inspired by colour. Both the director and costume designer are influenced by the choice of colours. These steps all happen before any thoughts regarding the costume design emerge.

This model for a design process, as the director G has mentioned in the previous chapter, can be described as a pyramid structure. It starts wide, consisting of the collection of information and moves narrow to a point, and the design process becomes refined. Throughout the entire design process the cast is also incorporated and asked to contribute to the ideas, so that the design is involved alongside the characterisation development. As indicated, this is a very intuitive process; although it does follow a path, it is allowed to move without constraints.

Director J also has the opportunity to work with various design process models, which also have similarities described by the previous costume designer. Comparably though, this director explains a recent alternative form of collaboration in which various processes were incorporated within one piece of work. Initially, a structured design process was used in which selected designs were presented at the first rehearsals, and then the designer developed the costumes as the characters evolved along with the progress of the play. Another additional approach was also used where the actors were given a selection of costumes from which they were encouraged to choose their own. This is a process in which the character and costume have a chance to evolve together - and the input comes from the whole

company. The actor has been encouraged to change the costume so that it evolves along with the character and the costumier is encouraged to be open and adaptable. As noted in the following comment by director J, the role of the designer can have a marked influence in shaping the play:

J: "*In developmental work costuming can affect the characterization*".

Director H also relates to the influence which design has on the play. This director sees the costume designer's role as not just limited to clothing the actor, but as extended to shaping what the actor does. Alternatively, the costume designer can be extending his/her vision, and not just assisting the actor but guiding his/her movements. The design models explained previously are from more developmental theatre and have emerged through the simple fact that the process has been given a more detailed explanation by the participants. These two examples are from participants H and J, who have been in the performance industry for some time - whereas B and G have more recently entered into the industry and do not have the same level of experience.

4.7. The Development in New Zealand Theatre

Only a few have attempted to answer these questions and all have approached the subject differently with emphasis on various issues.

Two of the participants (B and H) reflect on their earlier career and the climate within the last twenty years. In the 1990s the theatre industry was very active, and director H states that the emphasis was on a high standard of production reflected in the aesthetics of that time. Director H does, however, suggest that it is easier to enter into the industry now, indicating that the standard may not be as high as in the previous few decades.

Costume designer B distinguishes a pattern in the evolution of the history in the industry and has found it to have changed every three to four years. This designer feels that structures are built and put into place and things become somewhat easier in the industry just to deteriorate at the end of this suggested period. It demands the "*reinventing of the wheel*" each time. An issue worth pursuing is whether this

follows the turnaround in the political process and is also a recommendation for further research.

Director F feels this shaping of the future is always related to the governing influences for the practitioners and how they adapt to the situation they find themselves in. The culture of a theatre company can be expressed in various ways.

- Either; the emphasis is on the actor and the money is spent on the detailing of the costumes, as the financial resources may be unable to provide a decorated set.
- Or the aim of the piece is such that it requires the support of particular surroundings, and little emphasis is placed on the content.

The first example in production presentation is where the focus is on the actor and often results in minimalist sets. The second relates to the large productions often originating from overseas producers. These often have a large budget thrown at them with overwhelming visuals, but a simple story line with a lesser content.

Three directors (F, G, and I) look at the current theatre culture in general and point to a reasonable activity that is extending out to new interpretations, an awareness of which is suggested to be an emergence of an upcoming identity. A national awareness has been noticed by Director I, and is credited to interaction internationally, which is encouraging New Zealand theatre to explore and define itself. Director G, particularly relating to indigenous work, also notes a constant cultural development in New Zealand. The adaptation of English and American plays for the New Zealand theatres is not so common. This director is largely occupied with new developmental plays of indigenous origin, with the design centred on the people in New Zealand.

Director J confronts the issues concerning the low audience participation and encouraging higher returns from the performance industry. An approach suggested is touring outside of the country to encourage New Zealand productions to become more lucrative, the nearest choice being Australia. In addition, the director points out the advantage of producing in New Zealand, as it is still cheaper to produce here than elsewhere. However, director G also recognises the importance

of the international influences with regard to New Zealand's having a young theatre culture, to promote the development of an identity but is conscious of the need to discard the readily offered superfluous information from overseas.

Chapter 5

General Discussions

5.0 Overview

In the previous chapter responses from the interviewees have been presented and discussed. In this chapter relationships will be pursued by the researcher between the published literature in chapter two and the findings from the perspective of the interviewees.

5.1 Perceptions of Theatre Design

Going back to the time period in which this research started (1950s) and examining how and what has been produced, there is a shift in role and results. The costumier has changed from principally coordinating the costumes (wardrobe mistress) to the emphasis on translating the conceptual interpretations of the work. Both the literature (Cunningham, 1989; Russell, 1973), from overseas publications, and interviews published, and from this research, substantiate this. They stated the foremost role in the costuming of performance is to achieve the correct interpretation of character from the text, and ultimately the vision of the director.

To give a visual example, place yourself in the fifties at the Opera *Tales of Hoffman* (Figure 2.4, p.18) and this is what the average public would see in the local theatre. Costuming was expected to be theatrical and not what would be seen on the street. Although the costumes were constructed with passion and a high level of skill, the design would often be governed by the urge to express (p. 49) rather than characterisation in mind. From the 1950s onwards theatre design became more naturalistic and raw. The focus gravitated to essence of the play, not the aesthetics of a pretty dress.

Although, the specialised skills of a costumier were considered an advantage by both the interviewees and in the published literature (Anderson, 1999), the expectations are changing and the ability to approach and communicate these tasks rationally now has higher merit. This is conclusive to interview results as none of

the costume designers have needed construction skills for ongoing employment. The inconsistencies in this is the published information to support this development There are various good publications on the technical skills in theatrical costuming (Holt, 1993; Ingham & Covey, 1992; Motley, 1964) but very little on the theory of costume design, and what is found is reasonably dated (Cunningham, 1989; Russell, 1973). With few resources the current designer can either derive information from drama theory literature (Elam, 1980; Fortier, 1997; Goodwin, 1989) or more apparent, practical experience within the industry.

There is still no evidence of a change in the current financial climate in theatre where employment gravitates towards a designer who can fill the two roles of set and costume design. The advantages indicated in this combination is supported by the directors, as it enables the designer to be incorporated into initial design meetings. In most cases, the set designer and the director usually secure the vision and the costume designer follows this. However, with greater input by the design team and a more collaborative attitude production structure is shifting and the entire structure is being revaluated. Changes are placed on the design team but especially the director. The role is becoming less authoritarian, but the knowledge needed for contributing to the collaborative approach is increasingly substantial. An insight into design and how to apply the basic principles is imperative to be able to contribute to the decisions. Although there is preference for a less authoritarian figure behind the current vision there is still a need for a coordinator. This position is not always assumed by a director; but can be actors, the lighting designer, the production manager or even the costume designer. Examples of this have been the 'Seeyd' production company and the lighting designer Helen Todd.

An increasing necessity for good communication and business skills extends to the realistic expectations between the contractor and the costume designer. Negotiating contracts is an established part of the business procedure. Although conditions are improving and costume designers are becoming more vocal with regard pay parity, this has yet to happen.

5.2 Investigation into a New Zealand Aesthetic

The aim to identify a New Zealand aesthetic remained an issue throughout this research. Most of the interviewees (6/10) remained ambivalent about a particular styling that they could identify with, be it indigenous or personal. Considering the current global climate, the difficulty in finding characteristics within design and art is not so hard to understand. The general term for art among the late 20th century, Post-modernists acts as an umbrella for many polarised approaches and is as definitive as can be described. Developing a style comes increasingly under the social pressure of the drive for innovation, the fickle desire for adapting retro or more likely reminiscing about the good old times. The art movements of the time have always suffered from the inability to be defined and labelled as the theorists and artists are too submerged within their own environment to consider the alternatives. It is easier to work in retrospect to reflect on ideas and to use comparisons to create a clear perspective. Another major reason for the difficulty lay in the transitional global population. It is becoming becoming impossible to hold a culture to a country. The definition of a cosmopolitan population is fast becoming the safest way to identify culture.

However, this was not felt as a deterrent and further pursuit was needed to identify traits in New Zealand costume design. The current literature offered conclusions that created more questions. It is believed by Sarup (1996) that when in search of an identity there can be a tendency to manufacture one to suit oneself and this of course can apply to the researcher's interpretations of 'demarcation' (Novitz, 1989). An example and popular perception is that of the television series *Glide Time,* where the reviews suggested it was a reflection of New Zealand life. This perception is challenged to be rather a statement reflecting the English society and not that of New Zealand. (Rubin, 1998) and (Sturm, 1998) maintained that New Zealand theatre should be more confrontational and more relevance was seen in the play *Foreskin's Lament.* However, having seen both plays I do not have difficulty in identifying parts of New Zealand society within most of these characters. Although both plays are now twenty years old and their relevance to current work is questionable, they have been reproduced recently. The story they tell still draws in the public today, even if the aesthetic chosen has stayed in the eighties.

5.3 Evidence of Culture within Costume Design

Although the concern from Russell (1973) was reinforced by the participants that a particular indigenous styling should not override the concept of the show, one would think that within the collaborative nature of the theatre it would seem difficult for a distinctive style to be expressed. Moreover, there was caution by the interviewees about incorporating culture inappropriately as it may cloud the concept or, as Walsh (2002) suggests, within political correctness there is a hesitancy of pakeha artists to use indigenous motifs. Thus incorporation of New Zealand indigenous aesthetics is not consciously avoided, but is carefully used.

It was easier for the interviewees to distinguish characteristic traits rather than aesthetics. The strong inherited characteristics from our colonial past in the form of religion and education have created a work ethic that is often identified in New Zealanders. Hard working a disciplined attitude to work, increasing the level of skill have all been associated with this. Traits can be also interpreted as driven by the desired independence from colonial attitudes. The distain felt for the class system exhibits itself in the burgeoning collaborative structure. There is not only a desire to tell our own stories and not to be dependent on traditional scripts, but also for our stories to be performed in a way as to connect with a wider community. The abilities to problem solve and create something out of nothing were often identified as common amongst New Zealanders. Even though these skills were considered to be more a consequence of economic constraints than cultural identification, what the New Zealanders do with very little is presented with an incredibly higher level of skill than in that of comparable work from overseas. I am referring to a Christmas Pantomime of *Cinderella* seen at Circa Theatre (2005) which had approximately a third of the cast that would be used in England, but with more innovation. The sumptuous set, script and costumes were brought together with an appealing standard of technical skill.

When attempting to find the connections to culture in the aesthetics of New Zealand work the interviewees (5/10) draw inspiration from the New Zealand environment. These inspirations are used more readily for the set design and surface patterns on garments. The only real visual indigenous characteristics were

resolved as the iconic representations only found in New Zealand and remained merely a flavour of New Zealand and not real design characteristics.

Noteworthy is the use of these Maori and Pacific Island symbols as seen in advertising and dance pieces. A very early attempt of the incorporation of a Maori motif is evident in costumes and dance created for the 1970s Expo in Japan (Figure 2.19, p. 59). Although this example places itself quite firmly in the 1970s its design elements are still visible in today's environment. A significant reasoning for the more ready use of indigenous motifs within these disciplines and not in theatre design is the ability to produce more abstract work, whereas theatre has the parameters of a script. Contemporary costume design in dance has the ability to be groundbreaking, but often was a replica of previous work and not unique to New Zealand. This example created for the 1970s Expo from Para Matchitt was ground-breaking innovation at that time. It is still timeless in appeal, but it is no longer unique.

Although the Pacific Island and Maori influences are recognised in contemporary New Zealand theatre, it was thought by over half of the interviewees A, B, C, F, G, and I that a stronger European and American influence exists. I feel this refers again to the European heritage of the participants. Note though, this was perceived differently by the 1970s French performance group Theatre Action, who consciously chose to base themselves in New Zealand because of the lack of cultural immersion from other countries. One wonders whether their immediate acceptance of the New Zealand culture was not because of its similarities to their own environment.

The combination of Celtic and Pacific Island cultures has been highlight by two of the participants and is close as one can get to identifying characteristics, although not an aesthetic, produced in New Zealand work. The combination of these two influences was suggested an intensity seen predominantly in New Zealand performance. An example shown in the confrontation between Maori culture and European expectations in *Michael James Mania* played with extreme physical energy (Figure 2.12, p. 32). It is noted that the multi-cultural influences are becoming acknowledged as an intrinsic part of theatre production with increased introduction of other cultures into the curricula of training institutes. The research has seen an

increase in the numbers of actors and writers producing works, but not a growth in the number of costume designers.

The participants were very reticent in their self-appraisal and struggled to identify personal or indigenous style. A few of the participants identified preference for minimalist styling which lends itself to a an understated visual often used within contemporary theatre, but more expressed a passion for pursuing innovation. In Figure 2.14 (p. 44) the designer, who approached theatre design as practising art has intended to break the boundaries of set and costume by alternating materials. This production expresses these concepts, but it is an Opera and this genre, like dance, has more licence to explore creativity. An interesting conclusion from Barker (2000) which may, or may not, apply to New Zealand is that the establishment of a nationality is encouraged when there is impending threat to this identity. Maybe there is no great threat to our identity and that is why identifiable characteristics cannot be found.

5.4 Managing the Budget and Resources

Published information on how to manage budgeting and achieve the maximum out of the available resources in overseas literature is scarce, and even less was found in New Zealand. This was - on the other hand a major influence - as noted by interviewees, in determining the aesthetics of a production. Current design features in theatre have been characterised as a minimalist aesthetic, but this is often perceived as being a direct result of too little funding. This sentiment is endorsed by over half of the participants and in published literature, and has resulted in the nurturing of an inner resource by New Zealanders learning to resolve these issues with entrepreneurial skills and creativity (Wolfe & Barnett, 2001).

What has been found regarding financial concerns is in the American literature. Costuming author Ingham (1992) emphasised the real need for a connection between arts and business. The era wherein an artistic temperament forgave the need for business management has passed. The skills of business and negotiation are highly regarded by the costume designers, but have been acquired only from experience. The funding providers (private and public) acknowledge their role in providing the necessary financing for the arts but also need assurance from the community when planning their allocations.

It is an ongoing task for a production company to maintain its existence both financially and administratively. The concerns range currently from lack of adequate spaces for performances by the emerging artists to the lack of staff in which to manage the companies. These are important areas wherein local support should be focused. If the costume designer wants to be a part of the resources and pay parity then effort is required in achieving these aims. The more proactive participants have made a significant mark in the industry and had consistent employment.

Although the public is also more discerning, proven work is welcomed and they are willing to pay the prices. The audiences will perpetually flock to the larger overseas productions, even with ticket prices three times that of local work. The shift is in the increased ability for local productions to attract the same theatregoing audience. On a positive note the gradual increase in ticket prices at the professional theatres has not been met with great opposition; unfortunately, this income has not filtered down to the New Zealand costume designer. There is still an inability to live solely on costume design contracts.

This highlights the importance of the public response for the performing arts. The comments from the interview findings placed little regard on media critiques but paid more attention to first-hand comments from the public and colleagues. Although they preferred not to measure the level of theatrical merit over artistic merit by the box-office takings there was still importance placed on meeting a community's needs. The community can indubitably include the audience or, on the other hand, the production company. The measures challenging a production company can be interestingly fraught between satisfying the public and wavering on the self-indulgence motive to satisfy personal needs for expression. Although the role of the critics is underplayed they are often the first reference in influencing public attendance. Theatre exists on very tight margins and there is constant conflict between the crucial subsidies and the box office takings governed by a diminutive population.

The preference in large production companies was found, apart from the New Zealand Royal Ballet and Opera, to exist for economic reasons outside of New Zealand. The advantage of bigger professional companies and the Repertory system is that they have the ability to adopt long-term contracts. Working with consistency

in cast and crew develops a skill base and rapport between the employees. The continuity in the work and colleagues provides a better opportunity for personal and professional development. There is obviously financial security, and even though the freedom of project-based works is spoken of favourably, the down times in between shows are not sought after. This is not achievable in any of the professional theatres, only the Ballet and Opera in New Zealand, and they can employ contracts for core staff only, concentrating on administration and maybe a technician.

5.5 Location Influences

A primary feature highlighted for ongoing employment within costume design in New Zealand is the ability to relocate and accept work in other cities. This does raise slight contention within those who are not so flexible. It evidently rules out the designers who have family commitments and also those who just do not want to travel. If the individual has the ability to relocate himself/herself easily to other areas, then employment is more likely. Although access within New Zealand's geographical environment has improved (Harcourt, 1978), the price of internal travel will always affect the budget. Also the particular location within New Zealand has a bearing on the financing the particular production. Although based only on responses, as published literature has not been found to support these views, it is nevertheless supporting information pertaining to the climate of the industry. The funding and facilities, inevitably, have an effect on attracting practitioners to work in particular locations.

5.5. Political and Social Interpretations

All of the participants acknowledged the significance of what political and social content can introduce into current theatre. Two participants are realistic in seeing the stage as a way to encourage debate, but not as a means to resolve it. There are many significant political events that have been reinforced by the subject matter presented in theatre (Ingham, 1998) - for example, somewhat provocatively, *Torch Song Trilogy* was performed the time of the Gay Rights Bill was presented to parliament. Was this the catalyst that instigated events, or a reflection of the concerns of society.

Within the concepts of project-based companies who major in developmental work and personal stories sometimes a political, but more often a social, message is interpreted. The pieces often include people from a mixture of cultures and this, in turn, contributes to the content of the stories produced. The process of this particular work, which brings the entire company along the same path, provides time to pause and reflect, and to look at the larger picture. The incorporation of a political or sociological content into work is a personal preference and is a conscious choice. Although there has not been a large response from the participants connecting culture with this development, the current works are (e.g. *Son's of Charlie Paora*) reflecting stronger themes and this inevitably is associated with the building of a national identity (Barker, 2000).

5.7 Fashion Perspectives

Initially, most of the participants and the literature refuted incorporating fashion fervently into their work. Retaining the concept has higher priorities than falling for the fickle aesthetics of fashion. However, ignoring fashion is impossible as it does have a defining role in society. As the visuals are the introduction to a performance they will inevitably place a production. Fashion is used as a familiarisation tool to provide accessibility for the audience. Although the majority of the participants would rather focus their attention on other prevailing issues in the process a designer needs to be conscious of the existing fashions, keeping an eye on current trends to attract not only the youth but also an attending public. Noteworthy is the fact that the participants ages range from their thirties onwards.

Although the significance of fashion is felt by the costume designers to have a far lower level of importance in society, and is only incidental to what theatre contributes, I surmise this not to be a public consensus. Fashion has often been used as a platform for designers from the early 20th century (Kaplan & Stowell, 1994) and has proven to be increasingly popular currently. The necessary skills for theatre are often thought too difficult for a fashion designer to master (Anderson & Anderson, 1999) with theatre costuming needing content and background, whereas the catwalk does not have these requirements. However, .the increasingly contribution from current fashion designers to theatre is proving the assumption debatable. The fashion designer, Barbara Lee (Figure 2.17, p. 51) provided the correct insight into the character which, although she was a fashion icon, maybe a

costume designer could not have done. A more recent example is the acknowledged attention Marilyn Sainty applied to the interpretation in the *World's Wife* in Auckland (Bain, 2002).

5.8 Previous Background of the Participants

The responses received from all of the interviewees gave little credit to their academic qualifications, even though all had pursued some form of artistic or tertiary education. This was unexpected, considering all supplement their earnings by tutoring at various learning institutes - not to mention the fact that all of the interviewees have received study grants and furthered their practical experience within the industry. The actual qualification has not been given high merit, even when the level was Masters and honours, but the discipline and study skills acquired were seen to be of benefit. Life experience and a disposition of mind were considered more important in influencing work ethics. This reinforces the doctrine within established training institutes that places emphasis on pursuing the practical component of theatre experience which must accompany academic study.

Historically, New Zealand has always placed education in high esteem as shown in the drama programmes at Victoria University started in the 1950s (Sinclair, 1959; Wickham, 1992). This push to initiate these courses has raised the standard evident in the contemporary literary work and I have encountered entertainment technology students who initially started in theatre studies with the intention of going on to theatre design.

5.9 Approaches Formed in the Design Process

As literature on costume design process is limited the related topics of research general design and drama theory were also pursued. Similarities were found in the terms used to describe the visual aspects, although the art of theatre requires an active emotional involvement from the actor and audience. This additional consideration places another layer onto the expectations of the design. There are also the practical limitations of wearing the design for the actor, and the engagement of the audience. The process for a theatrical designer will ultimately

accompany interaction unlike that of a general artist who can remain quite isolated throughout. The theory on theatre drama (Elam, 1980; Eyre & Wright, 2000; Fortier, 1997; Schender, 1988) although they all applied to overseas interpretations, was useful and the participants have obviously explored these avenues. All the interviewees show a comprehensive knowledge of performance styles and approaches in theatre.

A great deal of investigation was conducted into the theory involved in design principles and how they are applied. This part of the process relates primarily to presentation of the illustrations and the realisation of the final designs. It was not possible to find from the interviews discussion points on how the designers arranged the aesthetic components of their designs. This was due, in part, to the design of the questions, as the way in which they were framed did not allow this area to be pursed in adequate depth. Revising the objectives again placed the focus on how the participants applied the process and not on the description of an individual design - thus the need to present the principles in such depth lessened. With the benefit of more experience and knowledge, this aspect would lend itself to further research.

With the focus narrowed, an investigation was conducted into the production process leading to a greater insight into the creative processes. Although parts of costuming literature (Anderson & Anderson, 1999; Cunningham, 1989; Russell, 1973) were useful, the major part of the information was accessed from Beach (1998) and Blom (1982). These originate from overseas, as only brief sentences were found in New Zealand literature - and this in journal interviews. The research by Beach and Blom did not include the investigation of the individual design principles and as Cunningham (1989) noted; it is a very complicated and subjective area of endeavour to investigate.

The model derived from the results associate specifically to costume design experienced in New Zealand. The steps in the processes have been compared and initial three stages proposed have been followed through; **Preparation, Production, Evaluation.** I will keep these headings as they have remained consistent under the explanations of the literature researched.

5.10 Preparation

The first step in the preparation stage for Beach (1998) and the interviewees corresponds with the initial responses of taking on the role of the designer. Beach (1998) defines 'assessment' as the personal motivation with the acceptance of the role. Often this involves the intrinsic motivations as to whether there are alternative aims, or if it is purely personal. One costume designer identifies this as a more formal appraisal stage, whereas another explains that the experience is simply motivated by a great idea. Ultimately, overseas and local practitioners both face the same personal and financial dilemmas in accepting the proposal at this stage. The details extend to the expectations of contractor, director, and crew and the problems arising there from. This part of the process is clearly the most intangible part and yielded the least explanation.

A great deal of the preparation stage is spent in putting structures into place. It is in the initial production meetings where the nature of the production is defined and effective communication is imperative. The interviewees emphasise an ordered process and the literature (Beach, 1998; Cunningham, 1989) highlights the need to establish whether the production style is more formal or developmental. Discussions on their own style definition in the production meetings was not considered by the interviewees – nor was it discussed in the literature. This is an evaluative process and the responses reveal the fact that the New Zealand collaborations are constantly developing thus making it hard to distinguish what is actually happening. This is naturally different from the evaluation which participants pursue throughout the production process. The conscious evaluation referred to by the interviewees is a joint feedback related to the work produced.

The content of the meetings corresponds to overseas literature (Beach, 1998; Blom, 1982; Ingham, 1998) and the suggestions from the interviewees. The early preparation stages are used to evoke inspiration and motivate cast and concept. Ideas are sourced from the collection of literature, images, improvised sketches and textiles and used to develop the ideas. Although the discussion of ideas is an accepted part of the process by participants and the writers of the literature (Collingwood, 1964) the success chiefly is reliant on by whom and how this is guided. Again, the dynamics of the collaboration will decide the direction this will take, but it is a deciding factor in achieving the utmost out of the vision.

A method used by one of costume designers interviewed, in the form of a précis, was implemented at this stage. This process has been explained in relative detail but has not been mentioned in any published literature in New Zealand or overseas. The closest to this annotated breakdown of the performance has been described in the compiling of a storyboard. The advantage of a précis is that it increases the possibilities in which to define, expose or rearrange the action points. This is a conscious choice involving additional effort but its value has been substantiated by the fact that this costume designer has been consistency employed.

The next step explained in the literature (Beach, 1998; Blom, 1982) is described as an *"incubation"* period and as suggested by one interviewee it is time for ideas to *"gestate"*. It is described as time for the rational mind to contemplate. It is highly recommended but realistically conceded to be a luxury in the production process in New Zealand. The next step in the process is where the need to produce something concrete usually overrides this indulgence. Although the cast often have a need to place themselves mentally into their costumes, it is more often than not economics that govern this. The fee received usually decides the amount of production time which is acceptable.

5.11 Production

During the production stage the costumes are constructed and realised into material form. Both Beach (1998) and the interviewees with a preference for a developmental process also use this stage for the costume to evolve. Construction has commenced, but freedom is still left to alter the design. Literature from America (Beach, 1998; Blom, 1982; Cunningham, 1989) mentions this flexibility more so than does the English (Holt, 1993; Russell, 1973) literature. Maybe the more traditional interpretation has a stronger hold in England?

Although some designers require more developmental time than others this step still requires the realisation, as it consists of the production week where the final designs will be presented. Of the costume designers interviewed, only one who has developed a high level of technical skill in construction these days professes to assemble only the toiles. None of the other designers play a part in the assembly, therefore the importance of the appropriate crew is crucial. Knowledge of costume construction is covered quite extensively in most costuming literature (Ingham &

Covey, 1992) and it is still considered helpful to produce the garments personally. It is evident that technical skill is not required for employment, however all the participants admit to having a keen eye for detail and problem solving. This tendency does raise the question whether the distinction between the roles of the costume designer and the technician is becoming smaller. I think not.

5.12 Evaluation

Evaluation has been experienced in some form by all of the interviewees and it is found, as part of the steps in the model by Beach (1998) and Blom (1982). In these examples (Beach, 1998; Blom, 1982) the evaluation was applied at different stages which was consistent with feedback from the interviewees. Beach found evaluation to be ongoing, however Blom experienced it only at the final presentation and the literature did not specify who was involved. This part of the process has also received more attention in the American research whereas very little evidence of this was found in the English publications.

It is apparent that unless the evaluation has been introduced within a structured process the feedback does not consciously occur. The participants working on recent developmental work evaluate the costumes throughout their process and also incorporate the crew. They rely on the responses from the audience and question the box-office numbers. Formal evaluation is an accepted procedure in a teaching environment and is also currently part of the requirements when working in a professional company. The distinction appears to be that the more recent entrants to the industry encourage internal and external feedback. It would seem, considering the current climate of accountability, unwise not to do so. The question which remains is 'to what extent is the voice of the costume designer heard'?

5.13 The Effects of the Costume Designer/ Director Relationship

It is evident that these roles are developing as the practitioners and the public are becoming more educated. Many costume designers, particularly within the selection of participants, ensure that they have an extensive knowledge of the play and often know the work as well as the director does. This increased knowledge applies to the director in his/her need to have not only an understanding of design, but also the ability to communicate these concepts. Not all directors have been able to

accommodate the additional skills. The expectations of the director have been met with criticism in the development of collaborative work. It is felt that the where the director and costume designer are on an equal footing, the director has forfeited his/her role of nurturing talent. Although I am sure this perception has validity, in retrospect the costume designer does not have this level of social responsibility placed on his/her role.

The major preference at this stage within the interview collaborations and in the literature (Cunningham, 1989) is shown to be a strong need for a shared vision and the ability to communicate this. The way in which this is done raises issues for the interviewees, and caused varied conflicting responses. Whether it is a collaboration with joint decisions or an autocratic process where one person has ultimately the deciding role, both have received criticism. The increasingly popular collaborative structure exposes the realities of working with the concessions of a group. With this more democratic stance, although strongly related to the personalities involved, the situation is constantly beset with disputes (Dowling, 1980) - whereas while the more traditional authoritarian role normally assumed by the director is being questioned, when supported by a strong vision work under such leadership has been shown to proceed more smoothly.

The balance of power and expectations differed within the responses of the interviewees. When the designer took on the joint roles of set and costume he/she had no problem defining his/her expectation of equal placing within the hierarchical structure, whereas when solely employed as a costume designers his/her expectations of the director were for greater authority and leadership. It was generally agreed that the decisions concerning visual aspects and often production values are shared, however the director was expected to be responsible for the major decisions and the total concept. This is supported by the literature (Russell, 1973) in stating that the director usually has the driving vision and on only a few occasions has this role differed.

The success seems to sit, regarding a collaboration or dictatorship, in the right leadership and also the appropriate combination of participants. This is said to encourage creativity to its full extent. This may have contributed to the success of

the longest surviving professional and amateur theatres which, along with the board, have always had an artistic director.

5.14 Derived Working Processes

Providing the ability to get involved in the rehearsal process was considered enlightening for the costume designers and constructive for the directors (Dowling, 1980). Sitting in on this part of the process assists not only in designing the costumes, but also in giving an insight into how the creation of a performance works.

Two alternative processes have emerged in the discussions between the costume designers and directors. In the first example the designs are presented at the start of rehearsals and in the other they are left to develop during the rehearsal period. The first has more controlled process and follows a time line. However, it can result in less contact and feedback as the designs are usually pursued in a studio. The other process is more developmental and the costumes take shape as the characters evolve. This method is often termed *"organic"* and the actors also have a choice in costumes. The predominant distinctions within the two processes lie in the communication with the director. In the second process, also popular in America (Cunningham, 1989), the script and how it is performed can have contributions from the whole cast and also from the designer. This inevitably results in less distinction between the members of the hierarchical structures and the production crew.

5.5 An Insight into New Zealand Theatre

The marked changes in theatre over the last two decades were highlighted both in the literature (Rubin, 1998; Sinclair, 1996) and by the participants. The increase in new multi-cultural work and easier interaction between overseas influences have heightened the level of work produced. This accessibility has been encouraged through the wider global communications systems and development in technology. The boost in new forms of technology within the visual arts and performance has received a mixture of reactions from the interviewees. Although the incorporation of the new developments encourages innovation and experimentation work, there is a part of the theatre community that is fighting to preserve the essence of traditional theatre.

There is concern for theatre to retain its integrity, particularly for the audience, and to remain actor-based, with a narrative content. It is not so much the growing interest in developmental work within New Zealand Theatre but the contemporary, more visual performances which are attracting the younger audiences. It is also noted within the literature (Wickham, 1992) that the younger population steer away from text-based theatre, where the audience is actively involved in interpreting the work, and prefer presentations which demand little by way of active thought processes. In saying this the ever-popular musicals (Downes, 1979; Harcourt, 1978) create the same euphoria in the form of diversion. A connection was made by a designer relating the desire to be surrounded by light entertainment escapism when the reality is not so appealing.

Chapter 6

6.0 Conclusions

Costume design in New Zealand theatre is influenced by a range of economic, political, cultural, social and aesthetic factors that were identified by the participants in this research (objective one of this research). Support from the public and private sector with regard to the performing arts was thought to be positive, but this did not solve the perceived problems of the decrease in funding and increase in expenditure. It was considered that support was needed within companies as although many companies are now more professional in their approach to performance as a business; a good management infrastructure was seen as important.

Many directors and designers felt that in New Zealand the theatrical community needed to be more connected, as practitioners often work in isolation. Discontinuity of employment (e.g. through working on short contracts) often means there is a need to re-establish the resources (e.g. workroom space and facilities) for each production. The struggle to compete against each other in acquiring the few contracts contributes to the isolation of the artistic community. A call for more recognition for costuming expertise within production in combination with costume design was identified. It was suggested that encouraging more public exposure for the costume designer - for example, through symposia - may help the profile of the costume designer. Having experienced the latest Symposium at Circa (2004) in which one set/lighting designer had an hour to be heard the researcher is well aware that there is work to be done. The current decrease in funding for the arts ultimately filters its way down, and as the wardrobe is still considered low priority, this is the first area to be downsized.

It was thought that budget restraints ultimately shape the nature of a production. An audience enters with preconceived expectations of the aesthetics of the work, usually reflected in the ticket price - although it is shown that the public will pay more for good work well publicised. However, the interviewees did not accept a

low budget and small fee as reasons to produce substandard work, since often the design and quality of costumes are reflected in the skill, rather than the money spent on them.

New Zealand's styling was suggested as swinging towards the minimalist approach of the 20th century, but it was suggested that this was governed by economics of funding. Herein lies another *"chicken and egg"* example: which caused which? The entrepreneurial trait of making something out of nothing was associated with a New Zealand approach, but this view may date back to when materials could not be acquired locally. Instilling the inherited desire to make rather than buy has produced a high level of skill in New Zealand that was evident and recognized and pursued by all of the costume designers. The attention to detailing and the aim for perfection incorporated into the work ethics were associated with religious and educational background by some participants.

The question of defining an identifiable style or culture pertaining to New Zealand by the interviewees did require a degree of probing, and although some interviewees referred to popular icons ('Kiwiana') as examples, it was suggested by others that this was more a flavour rather than a styling, and hard to relate to costuming. Influences drawn on by the designers came from the landscape, flora and fauna and art. The costume designers identified the incorporation of indigenous motifs into New Zealand design but not specifically in their own work. It was not discovered whether or not these specific designers incorporated Maori ornamentation, this may be because the interviewees were all from a European background. An attempt was made by the researcher to seek a multi-cultural selection in the participants; however the researcher was unable to find designers from other than the European culture who primarily designed costumes for theatre. The multi-cultural designers work in fashion retail and only occasionally design for performance.

There is more mention of a universal style than of a New Zealand style, as reflected in the work ethic of collaboration, in which director, designer and production team often work in a group that has a multi-cultural content. A strong, tense energy was attributed to 'Celtic' and 'Pacific Island' origins and has been associated with New Zealand work as a predominant characteristic compared to the work overseas.

It was concluded that in theatre a costumier avoids a cultural aesthetic that is specifically a New Zealand identity. The designers universally agree that costumes must be true to the concept of the play, and only when the content calls for a particular costume with symbolic connotations would this be considered. When literature was consulted, the search for a national identity has been associated with a desire to have a shared view, and/or if one's own identity is being threatened (Barker, 2000). For most interviewees, the need to identify a personal or national style was not something that was considered very seriously. This difficulty of identifying New Zealand uniqueness within theatrical costuming may be either because the participants do not feel threatened in their work or because they have no desire to fabricate an identity.

The New Zealand climate with regard to the fostering of developmental and good script writing was seen to be improving. The public, be it younger or older, was definitely perceived to be more discerning and intolerant of poor work. There are now more multi-cultural performances than there were previously, and theatre was perceived to be benefiting from the provision of specific training over the last decade. However, it was still considered hard to get youth participating in the theatre, with the drift towards a more visual performance. This may be because the content is less cognitive than traditional theatre and that may be where the attraction lies. Noted important for design is that, in non-text based performance, more emphasis is placed on the visuals - thus the costume can actually play a large role in the defining aesthetics.

Defining the roles of the costume designer and director and the part they play in a production resulted in some similar responses from the interviewees to the researched literature (objective two of this thesis), but there were also some issues specific to New Zealand. Both designers and directors acknowledged the need to acquire a wide variety of skills associated with the interpretation and production of a performance. Whilst technical (e.g. construction) skills were highly regarded, more emphasis was placed on the ability to communicate and apply rational or problem-solving skills to tasks associated with the production process. This view may reflect the changed role of a costume designer which is now moving towards having a greater role in design decisions, and away from the concept of wardrobe mistress that existed before the 1950s (Strange, 2000). Although it is acceptable for the

costume designer not to have the costuming technical skills, knowledge about the construction process was suggested as being important.

The director was expected to provide knowledgeable feedback in the realms of the costume production. For the director to take a stronger role in the design process, an understanding of design concepts is required to enable full utilisation of the designs. Views differed regarding the role of the director and the relationship with the costume designer. Responses suggested that the level of authority assumed by the director was related to the nature of the production. With productions in which the company required a well-defined structure to keep within proposed deadlines, the director needed to assume an authoritarian role. However, many designers and directors favour a collaborative approach with the decisions regarding production design and performance opened up to the whole cast and crew for evaluation and discussion. Although this created a more egalitarian approach, it was recognized that there was still a need for a leader with extensive knowledge of a wide range of skills to manage the group and cultivate creativity.

The arts around the turn of the 21st century have progressed through a significant change in roles concerning the expectations by the public and practitioners. This study has identified strong input from the costume designer in the shaping of the performance. In the past, the costume designer has often not had a very active part in developing the performance, and costuming has frequently played a subservient role, particularly when design decisions are made concerning the visuals of the show. Usually, it is the director and set designer who establish the aesthetic vision and the costume designer - within the constraints of time and budget - was incorporated into the design decisions much later. It is now preferred by both the directors and the designer to have the complete design team at the initial concept. However, it was evident - especially to the participants of this research - that, for ongoing employment, the ability to design both set and costume ensures a greater chance of full employment.

The creative processes used by New Zealand costume designers were investigated and, based on the interview responses of designers and directors, a model was constructed. This model was compared to published literature, and while there were similarities, aspects particular to New Zealand were also identified. The model

consists of three steps, which are identified in order to structure the design process and therefore encourage the ability to create design. Subcategories within each step were also identified:

Step 1. Preparation: Appraisal: personal motivation and acceptance of work
Initial production meetings: Structures introduced to nature of production. Collaborations defined.
Idea Generation; sharing of ideas and in these interactions creating a concept.
Experimentation; sketches, and exploring materials and designs.
Formulating a précis or storyboard method
Reflecting on the variations explored.

Step 2. Production: Implementing; realising the design with regard the conception and toiles (mock-ups).
Production of the garments.

Step 3. Evaluation: Reflection; including evaluation that can happen not only after opening night but as a closure to the process, and indeed throughout the process itself.

Interviewees follow all the steps in general; however it is in the nature of the work where there is a distinction. Two predominant styles of work are identified as being:

- A more traditional structured process where the production schedule and a time line are defined.
- A developmental process where the process is intuitive and generated by collective ideas.

The first style follows the three steps of the model closely with a defined production schedule; however, the second model style is where experimentation happens for a longer period, without a rigid time line and there is more occasion for reflection. The order in which activities are performed is more fluid. The responses indicate that a more structured approach is also needed for the larger productions and there can be more flexibility with smaller alternative theatre

productions. When permitted, a fusion of the two forms is applied. Availability of crew and the amount of funding may determine which model is adopted. It is acknowledged that Creative New Zealand attempts to nurture the opportunity for this developmental work. Encouraging developmental work is suggested to create culture and this evolves within the work.

The model for the design process identified in this research differs from that outlined by Beach (1998) and Blom (1982) in its straightforward simplicity. The steps have been economised and although the primary tasks are identified, there appears to be more flexibility in job role and collaboration within the New Zealand context. One predominant reason is undoubtedly the economic limitations, but also the clear design focus in New Zealand theatre of eliminating unnecessary excess in aesthetics. The budget restraints will cut down elaborating the steps further than more finance would allow.

New Zealand has a smaller theatre community and forms smaller companies than our counterparts overseas, for example Australia and England. It has been suggested by the interviewees that the reliable advantages in larger companies include stability in employment and continuity of work and professional development; however, the smaller companies do allow for more flexibility and the individual contributions of the costume designer are heard with more chance of personal development.

Also, fewer steps can contribute to the necessity but also the ability for practitioners to multitask and apply themselves with the confident ethic and incorporating more than one task within the steps. This research has shown that most of the costume designers will often be contracted in the dual role of set and costume design. All the interviewees have undergone tertiary training at some level, with many now also employed in tutoring in costume design or in the wider performance industry and other interdisciplinary vocations. This challenges us to consider the demands placed upon the New Zealand jack – of - all - trades in this age of specialists. The global preference for business to prosper is that there is a need to specialise. Training within tertiary learning institutes was highly valued, but experience from within the industry was rated even more highly.

The dilemma of the 21st century is the challenge of home entertainment or live theatre for the practitioner and the public. Basic amenities like restaurants, a bar and easy pay facilities are all found in the prerequisites of today's performance venues (Wickham, 1992). The professional companies are conscious of the importance of providing what the audience wants and attracting the discerning public.

6.1 Recommendations for Future Research

The distinguishing aesthetics of the main cities seem to be defined by the preference for a particular production process and also governed by how much finance is injected into the arts. Auckland is suggested to provide more financial support than Christchurch or Wellington. The finances provided in these different locations may govern the ability to provide materials and resources, which has a direct influence on the quality of the performance. It is identified by the participants that the Wellington theatre community is driven strongly by the actors, whereas, Auckland is controlled by the managers and directors. The result of this exhibits itself in the co-ops and fringe festivals - whereas Christchurch prefers to contribute to the mainstream and more reliable forms of entertainment as they have one professional theatre and an opera, but do not have a fringe festival. The researcher feels that the information that has been found so far has not provided a conclusive picture covering the aesthetics of the different cities, and suggests this as an area for further research.

The other shortcoming, which asks for further research, is the evolvement of visual analysis to pursue and identify distinctions in the New Zealand aesthetic. Research has gone into published literature explaining the elements and principles of design - however, to explore these effectively and to discover how the costume designer applies them to a New Zealand content, it seems appropriate to use an individual case study as methodology with which to analyse this.

Another signpost for further research is investigation of ways to develop the theatre community, and better communication between the cities and the work that is produced. A more efficient network is suggested to support and develop not only the design standards but also the conditions to encourage this.

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Appendix 1

Initial Questions for Interviewees

Categories and Questions

(i) Demographic Details

(1) Birthplace

(2) Culture

(3) How culture and birthplace have influenced

(4) Reside/work

(5) Influence location of work place has on employment

(ii) Personal history

(1) Birthdate

(2) Period of focus

(3) Education and vocational qualifications

(4) Length of work in theatre industry

(5) Employment status

(6) Employment other than Theatre design

(7) Ability to support themselves on theatrical work alone

(8) Ability to acquire work

(9) Preference

(10) Strengths

(ii) Constraints, connecting themes and influences

(1) Director influences

(2) Play staging influences

(3) Script influences

(4) Individual design concepts and influences

(5) Availability of materials and resources

(6) Location and environment of city or town

(7) Differences in location

(8) Set requirements

(9) Production style and company

(10) Cultural influences

(11) Technical skills

(iii) Main principles of design in theatre

(1) Personal passion for style or theme

(2) Particular approach in styling.

(3) Inspirational sources

(4) Function over form and aesthetics

(5) Fashion climate

(6) Process

(7) Key principles

(8) Influences

(iv) How is success measured in Theatre

(1) Design

(2) Fame associated

(3) Profile of the theatre itself

(4) Integrity of designs pursued by the designer

(5) Public acclaim and feedback

(6) Box office takings

(7) Survival of the particular art form.

(8) Money

(9) Enjoyment and pleasures of work

(10) Respect of the peers

(11) Further employment

(12) Literary critique

(v) Future of theatre in New Zealand

(1) Theatre and its Future in New Zealand

(2) Theatre Design in the Future

(3) What is important for the advancement of theatre?

(4) Designer's place in the future

(5) Ways of improvement

(6) Describe the current state of theatre

(7) What the public want

Appendix 2

Follow up Questions for Interviewees

Interview Questions

In this thesis an attempt will be made to identify how the costume designers approach the design process within the theatre industry. Specifically the factors that influence costume design for theatre in New Zealand will be examined, including the relationship between the director and the costume designer. The data will be investigated and analysed to establish a model for the costume design process and to identify the aesthetic, political and cultural influences commonly used by New Zealand costume designers

4.1 Demographic questions

4.1.1 Origin/Country of birth

4.1.2 Ethnicity

4.1.3 Place of residence

4.1.4 Location of employment (City/town)

4.1.5 Practising years in the industry

4.1.6 Education and vocational qualifications

4.1.7 Form of employment

4.2 Questions relating to design Processes

4.2.1 What is your current perception of the role of the theatrical costume designer?

4.2.2 How would you interpret your role as a costume designer?

4.2.3 How do you see the role in the performance process within theatre in New Zealand?

4.2.4 Do you feel there is there adequate support in the areas of amateur and professional theatre? For example the Arts Council and the infrastructures Access to facilities and funding?

4.2.5 If so, what do you suggest?

4.3 What *design principles* do you apply to direct/ produce/ design costumes for New Zealand theatre?

4.3.1. How do you approach a design brief?

4.3.2. How do you break down your own process?

Given are some examples:

Preparation

Production

Evaluation

4.4 Can you discuss key influences on your *design process*?

4.3.1 How have previous or existing forms of education played a part?

4.3.2 Has acquired technical training assisted in the process?

4.3.3 How strongly has fashion been an influence?

4.3.4 How do you feel personal cultural influences have been incorporated within the process?

4.3.5 Has New Zealand's political and sociological climate been reflected? If so, how?

4.3.6 Does the available budget govern your design process?

4.3.7 Market driven: How important are the availability of materials and financial resources?

4.3.8 What are your personal values and approach?

4.3.9 Are there any other influences not mentioned previously applied in the process?

4.4 Is there evidence of a distinctly "*New Zealand aesthetic*" in costume design? If so how would you describe it?

4.4.1 What are the inspirations used by you as a New Zealand costume designer and how are your concepts formed?

4.4.2 How does the indigenous NZ culture influence your design?

4.4.3 Have you been able to incorporate this into your designs?

4.4.4 Are there distinguishable characteristics of New Zealand in your designs?

4.4.5 Do you think there is a theatre culture that is emerging amongst costume

designers and the mass populace, if so how would you describe this?

4.4.6 How do feel your style reflects you?

4.4.7 Does the location of production affect the process?

4.4.8 Does a preferred organisational arrangement of the workplace influence; e.g. particular form of production and company?

4.4.9 Are there monitoring measures: (e.g. reviews), that are of value?

4.6 As a designer or director, could you reflect on what influences you in your working relationship?

The following questions relate to the director/designer relationship, specifically to your working relationship with... director/designer

4.6.1 What participating role does the director/costume designer relationship play in the design process?

4.6.2 What have been the influencing factors on this relationship?

4.6.3 What sort of working process can you identify?

4.6.4 Do you feel this relationship has produced a result indigenous to New Zealand?

4.6.5 How do you feel this process relates to the development of a New Zealand theatre culture?

4.6.6 Are there any other comments you would like to make?

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Dear...

I am looking forward to meeting you for the interview discussed on the phone.
This is as regards the requested information needed for my Master of Design thesis on Costume designers in New Zealand.
At the interview you will be invited to participate in this study and the aims of the research will be briefly explained. It is expected the length of time to conduct the interview will be approximately 1.5 hours and anonymity will be assured.

All of the participants will receive: a letter of conformation regarding the interview time and date, a copy of the abstract of the proposed research enclosed for their information, and a confidentially form.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to the interview and value your participation. Should you have any further questions do not hesitate to contact me.

Signed: