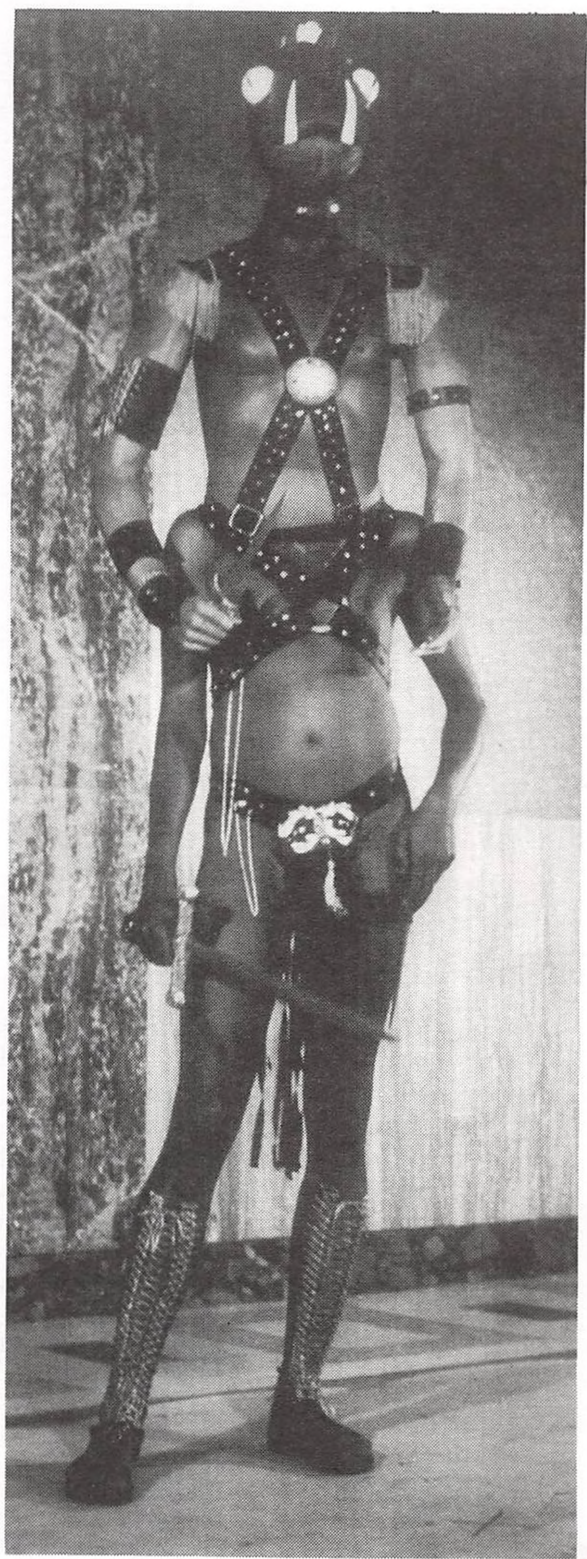


COSTUMES, CREATURES, AND CHARACTERS
Noreascon II Exhibit
Boston 1980

We are all in the trade of imagining things and folk which are not, or never were, or simply haven't been encountered yet. All of us interested in costuming make our bow to the authors who originate, the editors who realize, and the readers who enjoy these creatures and characters.

These are only a few of the outstanding costumes of recent years; may they equally remind, entertain, and inspire.



TARS TARKAS

Judith Miller

All the costumes in this series inspired by Burroughs' characters and creatures are meticulously researched: dozens of preliminary sketches, mockups of certain parts to make certain everything fit properly.

The upper torso was cast in powdered papier-mache in a plaster mold of a department-store mannequin. The head and arms were separately sculpted. The head was done in clay, a plaster mold taken and a cast made of more papier-mache. The arms are built up from wooden armatures, covered with paper and papier-mache. The hands were cast from life, using moulage molds. The arms are attached to the torso with ball joints so they swing freely. The whole thing was then painted beige and then green, so the color would most closely resemble that of the live body below. The harness is made from both real leather and vinyl, and is decorated with plastic jewels and brass rivets. It is permanently glued to the upper torso.

The wearer, in order to match Burroughs' descriptions and the texture of the upper torso, removed most of his body hair from the shoulders down before being painted green. Body painting was done with an airbrush and thinned acrylic paints, which cover evenly and wash off instantly. The upper torso simply sat on the wearer's shoulders, with vision through the "medallion" - a transparent screen.

Photo by Hank Beck



THE BLACK QUEEN

Marjii Ellers

When I attended the '67 WESTERCON, I thought "I can do better than some of these, even at 50..." Next year I shopped for two days, buying 88¢ worth of fabric and \$15 worth of feathers, large paillettes, net hose and long gloves, and the Black Queen came into existence. She was topless because I thought the Snake Goddess of Crete was an inspired way to emphasize the sacred female goddess. I tried to project the image of a dominant woman, and I think I did it; the audience was stunned. This first venture into SF costumes - at my age - launched my real career in fandom: people remembered me.

I revived the Black Queen at LACON, with a red banner for identification. This time, my life companion had other things that weekend, so I wore the dress with a bodice. Bjo and Walt Dougherty accused me of copping out, so I accepted Walt's offer of escort and protection and tucked the bodice down on the second run-through. And found myself featured in the Free Press and various men's magazines.

I have to thank years of Beaux Arts costumes for the Verdugo Hills Art Association; Forrest J. Ackerman for purchasing my first convention membership to show them off; my ancestors for a great set of Cooper's ligaments, and the support my life companion and resident engineer has given me.

Photo by Walt Dougherty
From the Collection of Forrest J. Ackerman



THE BAT AND THE BITTEN

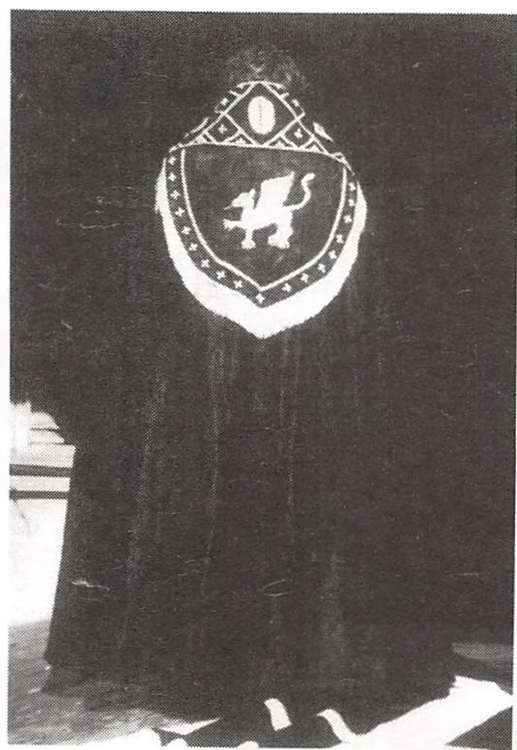
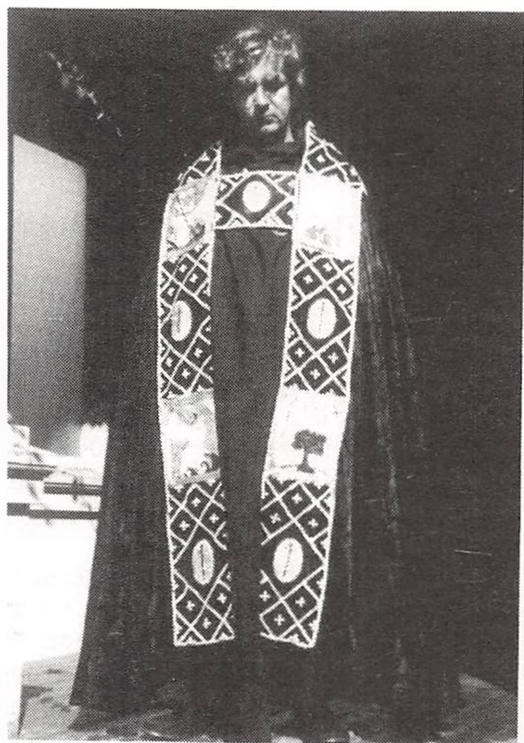
Astrid Anderson Hayes and Karen Anderson

We started with my mother's Countess Dracula costume, the Grand Prize winner at the 1958 Worldcon, and some verbal musing from my father - and a costume was born. At first, we planned to do it at the 1968 BAYCON, but the environment of lightshow and rock bands put us off and we didn't do it until the following year.

I simply copied the basic wing construction of the older costume and applied it to a short white dress. The wings are made from thin bamboo stakes, taped securely to boullion-cube tubes (metal tubes, closed at one end, about one inch in diameter and four long). The stakes formed the supports for the material of the wings and the fingers were inserted in the tubes. The wings attached to the dress along the sleeve/underarm/sideseam. The open wingspread was 14 feet, tip to tip. (The wings on mother's costume have a nice curve where the wing begins descending, but I thought that was more trouble than it was worth and simplified mine.)

Then there was the blood. After some experimenting, Mother created the now famous Anderson family recipe for blood. It consists of red ink, gelatin, and a dab of yellow food coloring for the right tint. The gelatin is dissolved in hot ink, making a solution which is liquid at body temperature and solid at room, so it flows and then hardens.

Photo by Mike Resnick



FUNERAL COPE AND PALL

Kelson

When I set out to do a Deryni costume from Katherine Kurtz's books, I originally planned to do the coronation of King Kelson. Instead, I found these lengths of actual ecclesiastical brocade which were too fine to pass up. Therefore, I made the vestments which might have been used at a Deryni funeral.

In CAMBER OF CULDI, the author describes the funeral of Cathan MacRorie, and the pall (a drape for the casket) is made with the arms of the MacRorie family, with the mark of cadency for the eldest son.

The cope, which had a chasuble (now sold) is a vestment of the Michaeline order. It is made of black church brocade. The front orphreys are silvered and pearled, and decorated with cartouches of the four Archangels. The upper left hand is St. Michael (fire); the upper right hand is St. Rafael (air); the lower left hand is St. Gabriel (water); the lower right hand is St. Uriel (earth). These are applied and machine embroidered. The hood of the cope is decorated with a silver gryphon and the flaming sword of the Michaeline order.

One wonders why - at least, I do - the modern church has dispensed with so much beauty.

Photo by Adrienne Martine



THE BELDAN DRESS

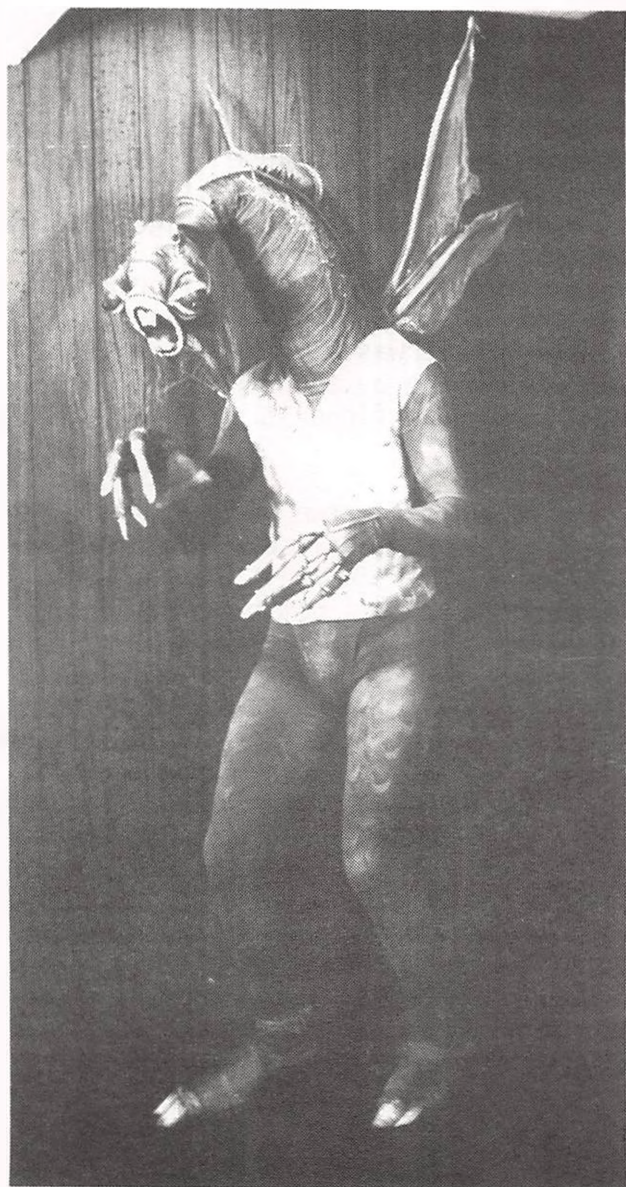
Suford Lewis

I wasn't really up on costumes when I started this, and it was partly because of a big discussion about "wouldn't it be neat to do the Beldan Dress". So I read the passage carefully and thought about stripes and velvet ribbons and got into a two-year project figuring out how to make it hang right. And then how to get into it once it was off the dummy; if you don't pick it up by the right two points it becomes a Chinese finger-trap and you can't get in.

I had lived with it for two years when I wore it, and was so convinced it was authentic that I had stopped noticing what it looked like when it was on, so I was not prepared for a judge to invoke the long-standing Rotsler's Rule of "no costume is no costume". It was a problem in suspension and construction to me, not a bare body: how to get those 6' green ribbons from front to back and what to do in back, which wasn't described! I expected some sensation, but thought people would get over it. That turned out to be naive; no one notices authenticity in a costume like this unless it's on a terrible body. And it does look suggestive because it looks like a dress with parts missing instead of something else entirely.

I wore it with a satin coat (being not wholly naive); the audience and I were about equally surprised when I doffed it with a flourish.

Photo courtesy of Suford Lewis



JABBERWOCK

Bruce McInroy

This costume is really a group of new techniques worked into a literary monster. The base is leotards, dyed and then touched up by hand to produce scale patterns in some areas. That also makes it flexible enough for the wearer to do some lurking and menacing without getting hurt.

The head is buckram on a heavy wire armature, covered with fabric and with dyed surgical gauze. Because the buckram and the gauze are very near the wearer's eyes, the eye focusses beyond them and one sees out through the whole under-neck surface. A padded extension, like breast- and back-plates, ties under the arms to keep all secure. The eyes are rubber balls and the ribbing, wing vanes, and toe welts are ethyfoam rod, whose one drawback is that it must be covered with glue before paint will stick.

The long clawed hands are more buckram, made into tubes and painted. The feet are built over athletic shoes, covered with fabric and then with gauze; the tail is stuffed, wired, and attached to the g-string, whose elastic is concealed by the vest. The vest also serves to disguise the sex of the wearer; monsters should strike one with fear and wonder rather than gender. At least, Carroll monsters should do so.

Photo by Chance



THE GOLDEN APPLES OF THE SUN,
THE SILVER APPLES OF THE MOON

Kathy Sanders

It was 1967 and I was going to my first convention. I expected it to be dull and dry, lots of speeches and not much else. I was going because Gene Roddenberry was supposed to be there. There was also a masquerade and that might be some fun.

I had long been interested in costumes, going to the Ice Capades and then copying the costumes for my Miss Revlon doll. But I had outgrown that and had moved on to making clothes for my niece's Barbie doll. She was outgrowing that herself and I had no one else of the right age to make doll clothes for.

That year at NYCON III I found a new outlet for my costuming. I didn't know it at the time, of course. I was astounded that people went to so much trouble. Now the only thing I remember of that first Masquerade are the seven Mr. Spock's and Olga Ley and her daughter as The Golden Apples of the Sun and the Silver Apples of the Moon.

10 years later, I was still doing costumes. I had done a lot that never won prizes, but I had learned a lot too. To celebrate my tenth anniversary in fandom, I wanted to do my own version of the Sun and Moon. My new husband, Drew, and I did so at SUNCON. These costumes have more sentimental value than most of my others, marking not only my ten years in fandom, but my honeymoon as well.



DRAGON CLOAK

Amy Falkowitz

The cloak is black rayon velvet and royal blue crepe-back satin; the dragon is of various green satins, felt, suede-cloth and metallic jersey. The cloak, wings, and individual scales are machine-sewn, with scales attached by hand. The head and feet are gold "disco satin" with hand-sewn unfinished edges giving the feet a fuzzy look. Finishing is done with dyed and natural feathers worked into nylon netting sewn over the cloth. The edges are finished with a strip of handsewn copper metallic jersey: total construction time was around 150 hours over three months.

The idea for the dragoncloak evolved from my artwork, and I learned a new method in creating this costume. When I draw, I begin with the form and add details to it - but the cloak works in reverse: the whole is constructed from the details. And it is much more difficult to see what the final results will be until it is done.

The entire concept of Dragonshome is developing and may eventually take the form of stories; as many as five cloaks are possible, from ICEHOLD, DUNEHOLD, TREEHOLD, SEAHOLD, and the present Lady Kemeli Tanavek of BLACKHOLD on Dragonshome: this ceremonial cloak of mountainland.

Photo by Dorothy Gene Bradley



THE ILLUSION OF THE QUEEN OF AIR AND DARKNESS

Sandra Miesel

My costuming goal is to have the experience of being certain characters. I wanted to be the Queen of Air and Darkness from my first reading of the story because I identify strongly with this archetype. The problem was to turn Poul Anderson's evocative descriptions into specific designs.

After considerable research, I decided on 14th century mode striving for a fairytale effect rather than an historic one. My costume harmonized with my partner's (black and silver on Patrick McGuire as Tim Culhane) through repeating motifs and comparable materials: taffeta, pearls, beads, silver and braid. Fortunately, a fabric store was going out of business and much was bought on sale. My cotehardie was tedious to make, of hundreds of iridescent paillettes glued on a cloth base and circled with a garland of Rub'n'Buffed plastic jasmines, each with a dewdrop bead glued in its heart. My crown was concocted of sheet copper and plastic solder over a wire core, decorated with mirror discs and dress trim.

Actually, the authentic medieval shoes were the most trouble for the effect achieved. And the key to success was the excellent physical match between my partner and myself - we're both large and dark. But costumes are more than clothing, however lavish.

Photo by Charline Avey



THE WHITE SYBIL AND THE ICE DEMON

Carol Resnick

I put more work into these costumes than any others before or since. The headdresses took more than a month to complete, and I couldn't bend my head or neck at all for 11 hours - but I wouldn't change it because it would ruin the line of the costume. And no beads ever again. The detail work is one of the strengths of these costumes; it had to be. Most costumes fall apart under the stress of that long a masquerade (DISCON II), and others were doing so all around us.

One of the reasons for the success of these costumes was the striking contrast of white-and-silver on a drab ground, which is vital with 1 minute to rivet attention. And the audience was ready to love something vivid and brief after a lot of long, disorganized presentations. I didn't like adding the baby to the Wizard of Oz spear; I didn't think it worked with the elegant, clean look of the rest of the designs. But in the photos it serves well as a counterpoint to all that whiteness.

The masquerade was very exhausting and the construction period very tedious, but these are the best-remembered and most photographed costumes I've done, and won more prizes than anyone else has ever won at one masquerade.

Photo by Ben Jason



ADJUTANT DRAGONMISTRESS

Karen Anderson

I have done a lot of costumes in the past, but this one was the hottest. It's a good example of how a costumer must cut his suit to suit his cloth.

I cannot recall if the costume grew out of the fabric or the other way 'round, but I ended up using a patterned green vinyl which simply did not breathe. The design was for a full jumpsuit, almost like a skier's outfit in that it covered the feet as well as the rest of the body. To give the effect of boots, I attached an old pair of sling-back heels to the bottoms of the feet.

The helm is made of papier-mache over chicken wire. I wanted to get a smooth lacquered effect, but it didn't work -- so I left the kind of rough pebbly look alone and painted it a dark green. I glued graded sizes of green jewels to the helm below the dagged crest and then added a visor. The visor could be lifted, so I had a chance to breathe easily.

The weapon is a mutilated brass curtain-rod, the end opened to receive a four-pointed harpoon head and the rear adorned with a power pack made from a mailing tube and silver paint. I think the overall effect was worth the trouble and that it complemented Vance's original conception.

Photo by Jay Kay Klein



SIR THOMAS BOYD OF THE QUEEN'S OWN FBI

Peggy Kennedy

In the spring of 1971, I looked at my husband, noting build and beard, and said, "Pat, you would look great as Sir Thomas Boyd". His reply sounded rather like "Bah! Humbug!" I gave the idea a while to settle, and re-proposed it a few months later - to a more enthusiastic response. Thereupon I got out my costume books, remodeled the dress form to Pat, and started patternmaking (old sheets) and fabric shopping. I spent one afternoon in NYC, prowling the garment district in search of real ostrich plumes. I learned how to cut my coat to suit my cloth (2½ yards of patterned velvet for a gown requiring 4), how to build a codpiece which would not emasculate the wearer, and what Tudor men wore for underwear (they didn't: they used their shirt-tails).

By this time, Pat had got into the spirit of the thing, constructing an impressive chain of office from Greiger's findings and buying a Replica Arms 357 Magnum and shoulder holster.

One year and one doctoral dissertation and defense later, I found that I had built a complete Tudor court dress, which Pat displayed at LACON with his usual panache. The reception exceeded my hopes, and I found I had a reputation.

Photo by Mike Resnick



BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Sally C. Fink

Pam Faint and I saw George Barr's artwork in 1976 and began a 2½ year adventure in making these costumes. We enlisted latex artist Diane Hammond to do the Beast's mask, had the horns carved from wood, and struggled with patterns for Beauty's sleeves.

The Beast has two wigs for a full mane, a crepe-hair beard, and a black velvet robe with flame cutouts of felt hand-applied. Baroque pearls are carved wood, and we decorated gloves so the Beast could hand Beauty a rose without spoiling the illusion. I had a waist-cincher under the green velvet top, and embellished white fur with chenille bumps to look like ermine.

The day of the masquerade we started in about 1 pm for a 7pm costume call. The Beast's cape had to go on first to preserve Fran Evans' delicate latex work on the face, so Pam sweated all afternoon while we dipped her hands in icewater and put cold washcloths on her neck. She got up at 6 pm in full Beast regalia - and did not sit or use the bathroom again until 2 am.

We walked two blocks in our heavy velvet gowns in 100+ temperatures to the convention hall, and as always, we were humbled by the competition. But from the applause and prizes we received, we stunned everyone that year with Beauty and the Beast - including, I think, ourselves.

Photo courtesy of Sally C. Fink



THE QUEEN OF AIR AND DARKNESS

Marjii Ellers

This costume came to me in a flash of inspiration when I found a dress in a thrift shop with princess seaming front and back! All I had to do was two costumes, one on each side of the dress, to be two different creatures.

The Reality side was papier-mache with great golden eyes mounted on a T-frame weighted to move with every move of my head, inside the sockets. The arms are jointed chopsticks, with little knobby-knuckled claws, painted and glittered to give a scaly effect. All jewels and the crown are natural materials, seaweed and onion buds, dried and then made flexible with glycerine.

The Illusion side has sequins and glitter and a green wig; I wore beaded white gloves to cover up the old hands. Quickly turning and walking backwards toward the audience did it: I practiced a bouncy glide for Illusion, and an uneven backwards stagger, looking from side to side and raising the little arms for Reality. The gasps told me it was a winner.

If it had not been for that costume, I could never have been pushed into being as independent as I am today. When I saved household money to take it to DISCON II, I had never been on a trip alone before; I did not even know how to buy a newspaper in a hotel. I owe my costumes a great deal, although I have always thought of them as a way to repay SF for the joy I have had in reading it all these years.

Reality photo by Jay K. Klein
Illusion photo by Sandy Cohen



THE WHITE GODDESS

Adrienne Martine

Joni Stopa has paid me the compliment of saying this is the most effective costume I have ever done, and for all its simplicity, it surely was the most attention-getting.

The concept is derived from Robert Graves' book, THE WHITE GODDESS, and a probably foolhardy presumption on my part. I found some neutral (clear plastic) masks and painted them with a combination of casein and acrylic paints. This produced a skin-like tone. I taped white silk inside the eyes of each mask, leaving those of the Hag unpainted, and adding blue pupils for the Nymph and green for the Matron. The Hag has long straight black hair, the Nymph blonde braids, and the Matron a red chignon. Each of the masks has a smile with the lower teeth showing. I cut away most of the teeth on the Hag, just leaving the incisors peeking up in a vampiristic way. The three masks are sewn together to fit around my head.

The chiton was white fabric like linen, sewn together at the shoulders and down the sides to the waist. I sat in a panel on Myth in Science Fiction and painted a greek key pattern on the edges the day of the ball. The white silk was very hard to see through, so that I had to be led around - not to mention that I couldn't get anything to drink.

Photo by Jay K. Klein



EMPEROR SADRIC AND EMPRESS

Ann Layman Chancellor

Elric is a wonder but there's no female his visual equal, so to work out my passion for the Melnibonean books I picked on his parents, who are mentioned but not described. This pair of costumes came from a fabric (the black with silver dots) and a treasure (the oriental robe embroidered with dragons which I received as a fee for designing MIKADO). They are so closely harmonized that I found at one point I had designed myself into a corner: I had one set of giant appliqued dragons yet to do and no separate color to use. Typical.

This is mostly curtain satin and tassels, with aluminum window screen wire for the crowns and collars. It's wonderful stuff to shape but will fray adjacent skin with a will; lots of hot caulk applied to edges makes it bearable if not comfortable. And it's lightweight and recuperates marvellously from being squashed into a suitcase. A lot of its effect at IGUANACON was due to persistence in working out some lighting cues; theatrical lighting isn't always available for masquerades, but when it is it can add enormously.

Despite the amount of skin showing, these are very warm. It's well to take that into one's planning very early in a design. Also the possibility of sitting down; serendipitously, these looked well seated. Probably due to the mass of fabric puddling about the feet.

Photo by Ray Jones

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