Costume Design for My Fair Lady by Alan Jay Lerner and Leonard Loewe

Emily I. Taradash

University of Massachusetts Amherst

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COSTUME DESIGN FOR “MY FAIR LADY” BY ALAN JAY LERNER AND FREDERICK LOEWE

A Thesis Presented

By

EMILY ISABELLE TARADASH

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment Of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

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Department of Theater
COSTUME DESIGN FOR “MY FAIR LADY” BY ALAN JAY LERNER AND FREDERICK LOEWE

A Thesis Presented

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Penny Remsen, Department Head

Department of Theater
DEDICATION

For my parents, Bernard and Martha. I adore you.

In painting a picture, the [theater] artist watches his work, step by step, towards completion, but… not until the curtain rises on the Dress Rehearsal, is the stage designer's picture seen in its complete and living form.¹

Cecil Beaton’s words capture the essence of my work during my studies as a graduate costume designer: bringing a visual idea to fruition from sketch to stage. It is with these words that I hope to one day bring My Fair Lady to fruition from this thesis.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thanks go out to the entire faculty, staff and student body of the theater department at the University of Massachusetts from the fall of 2011 to the spring of 2014: You have challenged, inspired and supported me always, what a blessing!

For their tireless support of me throughout my thesis process, I would like to thank Harley Erdman and Miguel Romero. Without your wisdom, talent and understanding, I would be lost. Thank you to Kristin Jensen and Felicia Malachite for your grace, humor, friendship and mentorship in the costume shop. Andrea Lauer, thank you for continuing to coax me out of my shell as a designer when all I wished to do was retreat. And to the unstoppable and unforgettable chair, Penny Remsen; thank you for the laughs, the tears and the reality checks.

To my mentor and advisor, June B. Gaeke, thank you for taking a chance on me when I walked into your office one cold spring morning with a banged up portfolio and a bit of spunk. You’ve taught me the value of focus, stillness and movement. You’ve laid the true foundation of knowledge to let my design spirit sore. Thank you, I’m truly blessed to have had you as a guide.

To my fellow graduate co-conspirators Adewunmi, Alison, Amy, Brianna, Elizabeth, Erin, Glenn, James, Jared, Jess, Megan, Mike, Paul, and Sarah: You have all inspired me with your creativity, curiosity and friendship. May we all continue to follow the paths that bring us the most joy, and may those paths bridge us together in work and play.
This paper discusses a theoretical costume design for the Musical “My Fair Lady” by Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe. The costume designer chose to set the production in 1912, stylizing choices clothing based on period silhouettes and social research. The paper includes character analysis, research, and a discussion of the design process.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

When choosing a production to design for my graduate thesis in costume design, the musical *My Fair Lady* (published 1956) was a dynamic choice. I was requested to choose a play, musical or opera with a large cast, varying character through body type, social standing and emotional arc. Having seen the 1965 film repeatedly as a child, I could fondly recall each song and the plot lines of my favorite characters without effort. Rex Harrison was perfectly charming as the terse Henry Higgins, a character made lovable by his combination of childish outbursts and idealistic social philanthropies. Audrey Hepburn’s Eliza Doolittle made the journey from dirty guttersnipe to waltzing debutant look easy and thrilling, especially to a prepubescent girl with an obsession for ballet costumes.

As a less naïve observer, I now know that the choices made by costume designer Cecil Beaton in the film (and in the original Broadway production, which he also designed) were pivotal to the visual storytelling; so good that I could visualize them twenty years later and discuss them with people well beyond the scope of a typical musical theater audience. His costumes were emotionally evocative and felt less like garments and more like masterpieces; they offered the wearer an opportunity to aspire beyond themselves and become a richer character. For example, Eliza’s tailored garments that Higgins has made for her reflects education and monetary status, in stark contrast to her dirty, shapeless street clothes as a flower seller. This change implies class shift, a concept feared by the elite as “fashion was seen to provide lower-class women with a social platform, a means of establishing a place in respectable
society based primarily on their appearance.”^2 What could be more relatable to a modern audience? Americans have profited from this “social platform” since the first colonist landed: social rebirth equaled social survival, or self-preservation. With the combination of Audrey Hepburn’s looks and Cecil Beaton’s costumes, Eliza Doolittle could have easily climbed the ladder and been dancing with a prince before midnight. But Eliza’s social undoing was not simply her appearance but also her way of speaking.

No matter how elegant she may look in a dress, no native Londoners would be able to get past her thick cockney accent and lack of common social graces. Enter Henry Higgins, professor of speech, who takes Eliza into his home as a social experiment on a bet: he can elevate Eliza’s social status by giving her vocal and social training to pass her off as a lady to the upper class social circles in London to which he was born.

The opportunity for contrast between the upper and lower classes was too rich of a design opportunity to pass by, though knowing the iconic reach of Cecil Beaton’s designs added an additional challenge: how could I honor the musical and the audience’s visual expectations while making the choices my own? I have attempted to answer this question through research on the original play, *Pygmalion* by George Bernard Shaw and the musical by Lerner and Lowe, the clothing trends of the period, the overall social setting of the time and place, while bringing some modern, stylistic additions to bear to entertain my current viewers and push the characterizations to a new level. My designs blend historical research with the effervescent sense of play, specifically in large group scenes when garments can become more than clothing. In these scenes, they become a story telling element, specifically making the elite untouchable, literally

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and metaphorically. Overall, my thesis re-examines *My Fair Lady* through a 21\textsuperscript{st} century lens, updating the costumes to add more modern touches of spectacle and re-positioning Eliza’s role as a strong female protagonist to align with current female social power.
CHAPTER 2
BACKGROUND OF PLAY

The musical *My Fair Lady* was based heavily on the successful drawing room play *Pygmalion* written by George Bernard Shaw in 1912. Shaw was a theater critic-turned-playwright of a colorful background and disposition. Being an Anglo-Irishman in London made him a social outsider; he could view the class structure and comment on it with an elegance and wit better appreciated by audiences farther away rather than nearer. In fact, Shaw opted to have the first productions (and publications) of *Pygmalion* in German; it debuted in Vienna in October of 1913, and immediately toured to Berlin.\(^3\) Shaw’s choice to premiere the show abroad was partially to do with harsh criticism he had received in Britain on prior work. Once a show was labeled as “boring,” no other European (or American) theater wished to play them. Also, with the honest, though humorous portrayals of the upper classes, and the sympathetic and realistic interpretations of lower class citizens, the playwright was wise to produce the show in a “friendlier” venue. The show went onto have runs in New York and London in 1914 to favorable reviews, and in its 100 year life span has been performed in over 10 languages, referenced repeatedly in popular culture, adapted for television, and finally, transformed into the musical comedy *My Fair Lady*.

Though borrowing heavily from the original text, the story in *My Fair Lady* has a different ending from *Pygmalion*: Shaw’s 5\(^{\text{th}}\) act was a paragraph in prose, not an action based scene. He felt the need to explain Eliza’s choice to marry Freddy over Higgins since Act 4 left some audience members perplexed with its’ vague romantic resolve.\(^4\) In it, Higgins’ gives Eliza a shopping list, confident that she will return to him. Lerner & Loewe loved the majority of the

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story of *Pygmalion*, but in order to make it a worthy musical, they felt there needed to be a central love story between leading characters with a clear happy ending, not an ambiguous one. They achieve this with the song *I’ve Grown Accustomed to Her Face*, giving the audience the impression that Higgins has softened to Eliza romantically. The final scene of the musical shows Eliza returning to Higgins’ study, an action which could be viewed as weakness on her part. She maintains her independence and honor by reciting the line “I washed m’ hands an’ face b’fore I came, I did,” in her native accent, a sign to Higgins that she will only stay on her terms. He accepts it from his chair by asking, “Eliza, where the devil are my slippers?” The two remain a pair of individuals in this moment, both strong and willful in their own ways, and in that the romance is completed through mutual fondness.

Romance, elegance and grace were major factors in the visual storytelling of this show, especially in the costume design. Fashion and general appearance were important class signifiers in London in 1912. For the elite, it was often said that “London set styles for men,” primarily because of tailoring, while Paris led the way in women’s wear. Our characters primarily belong to the upper and lower classes, though clothing during the time for men consisted of relatively similar cuts from class to class:

Rapid communication, widespread literacy, and increasing real incomes of the middle classes in Europe, the United States, and Canada meant more people tried to keep up with current fashions. Large-scale factory production of menswear was a reality in 1900.

The more homogenized look did not translate to women’s dress as easily since

…women’s fashions were both highly varied and rapidly changing…Dresses differed mainly in fabric and ornament. But during the twentieth century, designers of high fashion clothing created unusual cuts or patterns that were difficult and expensive to

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6 Ibid, 544.
copy. Perhaps this is what set the rich woman apart from the masses, now that machine-made laces, brocades and trimmings were readily available.7

In making my own choices as a designer, I wished to portray the costumes in period, making distinct choices from class to class. Beaton made elegant, iconic design choices. Coming to costume design late in life after a successful career as a photographer, Beaton had a personal memory of the Edwardian period which he married to a sense of playfulness rooted in the script. The movie’s stylization looks at the show through rose-colored-glasses in 1960s color palette (Eliza leaving the house in a salmon colored dress when abandoning Higgins), though this also could have been a change made as the characters were re-cast. Julie Andrews, who originated the role of Eliza on Broadway, had a slightly fairer complexion than Hepburn, with blue eyes, curly hair and a cute, button nose. She had a traditionally trim figure for the 1950’s: small waist, small perky bust and proportionate hips. Hepburn looked more the part of the 1960’s willowy body-type that women in mainstream society were aspiring towards, especially with other style icons including the super model, Twiggy and First Lady, Jackie Kennedy. I speculate that body type was a central reason for casting Hepburn, who could not sing, though acted the part of Eliza very well. Andrews was a star on stage, Hepburn was a star on film, and Beaton got to flex some creative muscle when transitioning the designs from one actress to another AND from stage to screen.

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7 Payne, 546.
CHAPTER 3

CONCEPTUAL STATEMENT

As I worked, I could not break away from Shaw’s original intent in *Pygmalion*: a young girl who is trying to rise in social class for personal benefit in quality of life through the use of education. Shaw wished to create a strong middle class through socialist policies, thinking equality would break down the then-current structure and allow a better life for all people. His socialist stance does not jibe well with Lerner & Loewe’s capitalist vision for a successful Broadway musical. They are quite juxtaposed, with differing endings and separate modes of storytelling, despite being born of the same plot line. How am I to use the essences of both in my visual storytelling? I achieve this by rendering the costumes in the 1912 London style, keeping true to the fabrics and silhouettes of the period. The lower classes are authentically dirty, worn, or scrubbed when they need to be (for example, when Eliza approaches Higgins about speaking lessons). The wealthy are bedecked in the fashions appropriate to the occasion, time of day, and stage of life. They must adhere to the strict social regime in which they operate, which means following dress codes to the letter.

*My Fair Lady* is a story of changing values within a society possessing a rigid class system. It is as if Eliza and the lower classes are viewing a stained glass window in a church in which the upper class is pictured; there is a reverence and respect felt from the onlooker at this beautiful and perfect object partially through the process of making it and for the object itself. But the glass is fragile and must be kept just out of reach in case a clumsy onlooker should trip into it or intentionally shatter it. Thus the classes are preserved, until Eliza becomes a character in a scene in a window. She is then unrecognizable by the onlookers, her former cohorts, but
dazzles and puzzles her new glass counterparts. As the story continues, she wishes to break from
the glass often, but eventually settles into a comfortable position within it and accepts what she
has become: a lady.

This metaphor implies that there is an untouchable quality to the upper classes. In each
scene with an upper class chorus, I have made specific choices which would visually repel or
confuse a person of the lower classes. At the top of the show, the upper classes are bedecked in
exotic furs, but with a vengeful quality. These pieces are more relatable to taxidermy than
comfort, with each animal’s shape still identifiable, their teeth and claws showing in a final look
of attack. The upper classes relate to these pieces as trophies or a mark of privilege. Their wares
are the result of an expensive safari, and show the dominance of the class system – that is, the
upper classes kill anything that does not fit into the system. Meanwhile, the lower classes appear
in a more sensible, layered look to combat the cold. They wear what is practical for the elements
and what is easily manufactured in the home or close by to it. There is nothing exotic about their
looks, nor are they trying to compete with the upper classes, which are so specific about wearing
clothing for attention, knowing that they are being both viewed and judged by one another.
Visual status symbols rule their scenes. They include exotic materials, complex construction,
unusual shapes and a sense of elegance.

Throughout the play, there is also a progression of color, particularly in the character of
Eliza Doolittle. In the beginning of the show, we meet her on a chilly March evening outside
Covent Garden selling flowers. Her look is utilitarian and cobbled together over time without
much car. Her clothes are layered and mismatched, though she is predominantly in blues and
greens. The look is rather bulky and unsophisticated, not defining her waist or other feminine
body features that may make her look physically desirable to a partner. As the play progresses,
her color palette becomes more refined, much like Eliza herself. Under the guidance of Higgins and Pickering, Eliza’s wardrobe becomes far more sexually appealing, but without ever being improper. The colors move to pinks, blacks, whites and grey blues, which show the melding of opinions: Eliza’s will being signified by the blue color, and the pinks and whites representing her mentors’ vision for her. She returns to wearing blue in the last scene when she leaves Higgins and returns to her. This color shift is concurrent with the characters of Mrs. Higgins, Mrs. Pearce and the female opera goer in the first scene. Strong women of poise and self-assurance wear blue: a traditionally masculine color, any woman willing to put up with Henry Higgins for an extended period of time must be a strong individual.

I wished to be stricter about color and texture: the poor must look poorer and the rich richer. To achieve this, I have chosen fabric swatches for the poor in more common plaids, wool tweeds with an open knit, felted and rougher hand, utilitarian fabrics. The wealthy are in finer fabrics: silk charmeuse and chiffon, fine wool and linen suits, embellished with trims for added grandeur. However, there are three scenes where extreme stylization is necessary to achieve improved storytelling: the Opera, Ascot and the Embassy Ball.

The opening scene of the entire musical takes place in Covent Garden on a chilly spring evening. This scene must get the audience’s attention from the first moment, and root them in the time and place that is the show. This is also a scene that demonstrates the vast class differences that were occurring during the time in which the play is set. Street performers, vendors and flower girls are present in their domain: the public streets, where the upper classes try to spend as little time as possible. There is a severity to their clothing and their attitudes: Do not touch me, but look at me from afar. To further illustrate this point, I have chosen to put the opera goers in furs of animals that they have themselves killed. Fur is a symbol of patriarchy, power, money
and colonialism; the street folk could only dream of traveling on safari, never mind returning with prize game such as a lion pelt stole or a crocodile belt. There is also an implication that the furs being worn are more valuable dead than the street people are alive, strengthening the class divide. The lower classes know they are not equal, in their homespun, layered looks, but there seems to be nothing to do about it. This scene uses clothes as a warning and a reminder of who is in charge and whose authority should not be questioned.

At Ascot, these upper classes wear inflatable, bulbous costumes in the Edwardian silhouette which demand adequate space around each character. There is a delicate vulnerability to them in this moment when they could be punctured by a social swashbuckler, wielding a sword of words and actions. Their costumes make it impossible for them to get close to one another in the scene, and they demand a proper amount of space from one another and their escorts. The further away they are from each other, the better look they can get of their entire costumes, and the event is for seeing and being seen, not for touching. Enter Eliza, the newcomer, dressed in the appropriate garment, and practicing her manners until her small talk nearly gives her away. By the end of the scene, she does out herself as an “other” by becoming quite emotive and screaming, “Move your bloomin’ arse!!”8 to her horse in the race. At this point, onlookers faint or look agog at Eliza, but in my production, I would love the costumes to pop as literally as the illusion of Eliza as a lady.

Finally, at the Embassy Ball, the garments need to feel encrusted. The show is very heavily dependent on varying visual textures, and the ladies of this scene need various jewels to show their husbands’ (or country’s) monetary status and taste without being grotesque in order to show stature. These jewels contrast the soft satin and chiffon fabrics which are particularly

feminine and elegant. This combination of power and elegance visually allows Eliza to shine, who is played by a beautiful woman who has parroted the physicality and rules of the upper classes. No longer an awkward signet to society as she was at Ascot, she has grown into a poised lady who possesses a swan-like elegance. The men and women of this scene are also an international crowd and reflect those visual cues in the most elegant ways possible, such as Colonel Pickering wearing a turban following his time in India and the Queen of Transylvania’s consort wearing a paisley waistcoat, giving him a more Eastern feel than his British counterparts. They are, ironically, all in costume in this scene, which is why it is possible for Eliza to be so effective: she’s playing her part as they are theirs.
CHAPTER 4

ELEMENTS OF PRODUCTION

In this particular production of *My Fair Lady*, the style of the set would have to be realistic enough to suggest specific locations to the audience, but not forget that we are watching a playful show. I imagine that there are large moving sets to help indicate location and to accommodate the choruses during the opening scene outside the Opera in Covent Gardens, in Mrs. Higgins’ Box at Ascot, and at the Embassy Ball. This story is meant to delight, and the set should do just that. Other distinct locations less known but still public include outside Henry Higgins’ house on the street, outside a Lower Class Public House and the flower market at Covent Gardens. These juxtapose with the intimate locales including inside Henry Higgins’ study and inside Mrs. Higgins’ house, where the most important scenes for personal growth happen for Eliza. These interiors are appointed with antiques and family heirlooms without much sentimental value, more for show than remembrance.

The lighting will help distinguish whether we are in an interior or outside in natural light, as well as time of day and time of year. The musicians will be playing from an orchestra pit in a proscenium style theatre so that actor traffic pattern can be free throughout the stage and the wing area. I would like there to be a large scrim up against the back wall of the space for the lighting designer to tone when needed for added mood (such as when Eliza and Higgins are fighting or when Eliza makes a faux pas in a group at Ascot). The stage should be wide enough to accommodate large dance numbers, and the large scale, stylized costumes in Ascot.
In the opening scene, we meet a variety of people in the context of London’s Covent Garden after an opera on a frigid March evening. The Opera goers (Sketch 1) are dressed for the occasion in grandiose outerwear with a twinge of colonial flare. Wanting to make the upper classes seem unapproachable from their first appearance on stage, I chose to dress this couple in the pelts of exotic beasts. The wife has a lion pelt draped over her shoulders, legs, claws, eyes and teeth all shining with the assertion of danger to anyone who came into close range. Her husband wears bits of fur on the underside of his raised collar and a sash of tigers’ claws, adding to the intimidation of his already tall, strong stature. A group of street performers (Sketch 2) take advantage of the waiting crowd to try to earn some extra cash for the evening. Eliza (Sketch 9) is also trying to earn her keep selling flowers to the vanishing crowds leaving the performance space. Unfortunately, Freddy (Sketch 5) bumps into Eliza on his way to find his mother (Sketch 6) a taxi. Her violets scatter all over the ground and she is frustrated that her product has been compromised, as well as her evening’s earnings.

Here we meet Henry Higgins (Sketch 7), who is dressed for the cold weather in tweeds, but not as a police officer, which he is first mistaken for by the working class members of scene 1: Street Vendors, Taxi drivers and Flower Girls (Sketches 3 & 4). He has been recording the various speech patterns of the working class, and holds a notebook in which he writes notes in his own phonetic short hand. Colonel Pickering (Sketch 8) has just exited the theater and is attempting to help Eliza when he and Higgins meet. They had both been seeking the other and make arrangements for Pickering to move in with Higgins in order to further their mutual
interests in human speech patterns (Pickering’s in Indian dialects and Higgins’ in phonetics). Higgins gives Eliza money for the violets, but also makes a passing comment about being able to make her sound like a proper lady. A glimmer of hope sparks in her, and she will begin her visual transformation from dower street urchin to elegant lady in scene 3.

In scene 2, Eliza is passing through a downtrodden part of town where we come upon her father, Alfred Doolittle (Sketch 10). Alfred is a common dustman, and wears the hat of his profession, even when being escorted out of a bar. We also meet his friends Harry and Jamie, who are being thrown out of the pub by George the bartender (all in Sketch 11). These men are of the lowest classes and are dressed in high contrast to the opera goers of the previous scene. We see them in homespun wools with holes, a few patches and a good deal of stains and mud. George the bartender is clean and neat by comparison, but in a more utilitarian, professional look. Eliza walks through the scene on her way to her lodgings, and Alfred manages to get some money from her. With it, he, Harry, and Jamie head back into the pub singing *Little Bit O’ Luck*.

The following day, we see Higgins (Sketch 12) and Pickering (Sketch 13) inside of Higgins’ study listening to recordings of various people speaking in different dialects. They have relaxed into one another’s company, but are still dressed appropriately for the time of day and their stations. It is a much more formal silhouette than current men would wear around the house, but shows the rigidity of their class in another way. Mrs. Pearce (Sketch 14), Higgins’ housekeeper, announces that there is a young lady here to see the men, and Eliza is shown in, making a plea to take speaking lessons from Higgins. Eliza has made a genuine effort to look as clean and neat as she possibly can be given her circumstances, scrubbing her hands and face and cleaning her attire. Both men are impressed with this offering and in this moment, Higgins make

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a pact with Pickering, betting that he can improve Eliza so much so that she will fool the upper class into believing she is one of them. It is set up that Eliza will live at Higgins' house, get an entirely new wardrobe and learn to be a proper lady.

This precipitates wonderful reactions from a group of neighbors in Eliza’s old neighborhood (Sketch 15) when they report to her father that she’s moved in with a gentleman and did not ask to send any of her clothes! Thinking something has gone horribly wrong, and that he can leverage some funds from Eliza’s new benefactor, Alfred sets out to Higgins’ house to see what is actually going on. He arrives to Higgins’ study in his dustman’s uniform, starkly contrasting with Pickering (Sketch 17) and Higgins (Sketch 16) who are both in casual but impeccable outfits. Eliza appears in her new clothing (Sketch 18), almost unrecognizable to her father, except that she appears to be in a blind rage over frustration in properly pronouncing vowels. Satisfied with Eliza’s arrangement, Alfred leaves Higgins’ study with five pounds and the audience shifts their focus back to the action at hand: Eliza improving her general verbal handle on the English language. She goes through several exercises with Higgins’ before achieving success, between which we hear the servants singing their laments, pleading with Higgins to relent before they all go insane (Sketch 19). Success comes at the end of scene 5, culminating with *The Rain in Spain* and *I Could Have Danced All Night*. Higgins is so excited that he decides it is time to test Eliza in society. He will take her to his mother’s box at Ascot, without warning her ahead of time.

Ascot is a place where society rules. The horse race seems secondary to the great care which people put into their dress for the occasion. Scene 6 opens with Pickering, Mrs. Higgins and her Chauffer Charles, in uniform, approaching her box just outside the stands at Ascot (Sketches 20-22). Pickering is dressed in the requisite morning suit and silk top hat when he
meets Mrs. Higgins in her age-appropriate dress of extreme elegance and taste, topped off with a tall hat. She is unhappy that her son may arrive and spoil her time at the races as he tends to cause her to lose friends, but she and Pickering enter the stands nonetheless.

Inside the stands at Ascot, we meet three sets of onlookers, friends of Mrs. Higgins who are also enjoying the race (Sketches 23-25). They are all dressed appropriately, slightly more formal than upper class day wear with grand hats and accessories, all inflatable and bulbous. Henry Higgins is the only one who arrives improperly suited for the day (Sketch 26). He wears his customary tweeds, much less formal than what is expected or allowed which only his mother seems to comment on. He is more concerned about how Eliza (Sketch 29) is received. She is dressed in a beautiful dress, much less floral than the other woman, but still elegant and feminine. She charms Freddy (Sketch 28) and his mother (Sketch 27), who do not recognize her as the flower girl from scene one. Freddy finds her to be quite amusing, especially when she speaks about her aunt being “done in.” Higgins’ and Pickering both squirm uncomfortably as Eliza uses perfect pronunciation to describe events that are uncharacteristic of a lady. The final nail in the coffin is when she screams for her favored horse to “Move [his] bloomin’ arse!” People in the stands faint, costumes pop or deflate, Pickering is embarrassed and Higgins cackles with amusement.

Despite of (or perhaps because of) her social faux pas at Ascot, Freddy has become completely enamored of Eliza. He arrives in street clothes (Sketch 30) on the street where Eliza lives with Higgins. He asks a constable (Sketch 31) if he has the correct address, and is answered in the affirmative. He encounters a flower girl (Sketch 4), from whom he buys a small nosegay with his last shilling. Freddy, who is overcome with joy and love, begins to sing “On the Street
Where You Live,” while talking to Mrs. Pearce (Sketch 32) and waiting for Eliza. Mrs. Pearce reappears to tell Freddy that she will not be seen, but he seems content to wait indefinitely.

Moving into the most formal looks of the show, we see Higgins and Pickering (Sketches 33 & 34) nervously waiting for Eliza (Sketch 35) to come down stairs in her ball gown. She is a vision in the lightest-hued garment in which we will ever see her. It is mentioned in the script that she is wearing a French-made gown, so I used research from the House of Worth in Paris. They made ball gowns for numerous queens and upper class women throughout Europe during this period, and showed such gorgeous variation that I could create an authentic period silhouette that nevertheless is unique to Eliza, giving her the feeling of a Greek goddess reborn.

The Footman and Butler come on with coats and wraps for the trio, as they move into the most decadent scene: The Embassy Ball. This is an occasion where the foreigners come to London to see and be seen. There is an air of elegance, but also of worldliness; many of the attendees have affiliations with foreign countries. Here we meet several couples at the ball announced by a footman in formal attire (Sketch 36): Sir Reginald and Lady Tarrington share a plate with the Queen of Transylvania and her consort (Sketch 37). The men in this scene are in high contrast looks of black and white, while their female counterparts have softness in both hue and texture that complete and complement one another. Professor Zoltan Carpathy (Sketch 39) is dressed in the appropriate tail coat, white waist coat and white tie, but wears a sash full of meaningless orders (allegedly awards for his language skills acquired while studying with Higgins). His beard borders on socially offensive, therefore giving him an air of a foreigner, since the current style for facial hair in London is either clean shaven or with a mustache. Mrs. Higgins (Sketch 40) is also at the ball, in a beautiful gown that is gracious and up-to-date. Her
long opera gloves cover her hands and help give her agelessness appropriate for any occasion without making it seem she is trying to look younger than she is.

After the ball, there is a great deal of emotional fall-out. Eliza comes back to Higgins’ house with him and Pickering, though she is no longer the center of attention. There is much back patting from both of the men, but Eliza is practically ignored until she throws Higgins’ slippers in his face. Mrs. Pearce (Sketch 41) only stays around long enough to be seen in her bathrobe, thus setting the scene as extremely late in the day (or early in the morning). She and the servants have waited to hear the results of the ball, but do not hear how Eliza truly feels, for she is mute until after they leave.

After her fight with Higgins, we see Eliza (Sketch 43) exiting the flat in a sensible, but well-tailored day suit. Freddy is there to greet her with a romantic song, but she throws his crooning back in his face with the song Show Me! She marches off into the night toward Covent Garden, toting a small suitcase, with Freddy trailing behind her. When she arrives to that familiar square where our story began, we see members of the working class to which she no longer belongs. She warms her hands over their fire until she sees her father come out of a pub in a morning suit dressed for his wedding (Sketch 44). Apparently he has come into some money by way of Henry Higgins’ power and is solidly entrenched in the middle class. Now he is marrying Eliza’s stepmother since she feels entitled to the social formality, whereas he did not feel obligated to do so when he was less financially solvent. Eliza bids her father goodbye as Freddy arrives in a taxi to collect her. They end up going to Mrs. Higgins’ home where Eliza takes refuge for a few hours.
Our last look at Mrs. Higgins is in a tea gown (Sketch 45) in her home with Eliza. She is as elegant and age appropriate as ever, with only the skin on her face and hands open to the air. Her garment is a mix of charmeuse silk, flowing from the waist line to the floor and heavily embroidered around the hemline. We finish the look off with a high lace neck collar which has a coordinating inset in the front of the bodice over the collarbones, as well as a pair of tiered lace sleeves ending at the wrist. Mrs. Higgins is a perfect English lady in her house, probably more formal than her younger counterparts with a contemporary silhouette that harkens back to her prime enough to maintain a feminine waist and bust line. But Henry and Eliza, not Mrs. Higgins, are the last characters seen in the play, and are rather simply dressed. Higgins is in his study in customary casual tan clothing (Sketch 16), slipperless and pensive, listening to Eliza’s voice on his gramophone. Eliza enters in the same day suit that she left the house earlier that day in, a pragmatic, but powerful blue ensemble (Sketch 43). She speaks to Higgins in her native Cockney accent, signifying that she will stay on her terms. He relaxes into his chair and smiling, asks her to retrieve his slippers. The lights fade on the two figures in the space, Eliza standing strong and setting down her bag, Higgins dozing off until the last moment when he opens his eyes and turns to make sure she is still there.
APPENDIX

COSTUME RENDERINGS
Sketch 1: Opera Goers, Act 1, Scene 1. Acrylic, graphite & color pencils on paper.
Sketch 2: Street Performers, Act 1, Scene 1. Acrylic, graphite & color pencils on paper.
Sketch 3: Street Vendors, Act 1, Scene 1. Acrylic, graphite & color pencils on paper.
Sketch 4: Flower Girls, Act 1, Scene 1. Acrylic, graphite & color pencils on paper.
Sketch 5: Freddy, Act 1, Scene 1. Acrylic, graphite & color pencils on paper.
Sketch 6: Mrs. Ensford-Hill, Act 1, Scene 1. Acrylic, graphite & color pencils on paper.
Sketch 7: Henry Higgins, Act 1, Scene 1. Acrylic, graphite & color pencils on paper.
Sketch 8: Colonel Pickering, Act 1, Scene 1. Acrylic, graphite & color pencils on paper.
Sketch 9: Eliza Doolittle, Act 1, Scene 1 & 2. Acrylic, graphite & color pencils on paper.
Sketch 10: Alfred Doolittle, Act 1, Scene 1, 4 & 5. Acrylic, graphite & color pencils on paper.
Sketch 11: (Left to Right) Harry, George the Bartender, and Jamie, Act 1, Scene 2.

Acrylic, graphite & color pencils on paper.
Sketch 12: Henry Higgins, Act 1, Scene 3. Acrylic, graphite & color pencils on paper.
Sketch 13: Colonel Pickering, Act 1, Scene 3. Acrylic, graphite & color pencils on paper.
Sketch 14: Mrs. Pearce, Act 1, Scene 3. Acrylic, graphite & color pencils on paper.
Sketch 15: Eliza, Act 1, Scene 5. Acrylic, graphite and colored pencil on paper.
Sketch 16: Higgins’ Servants, Act 1, Scene 5. Acrylic, graphite and colored pencil on paper.
Sketch 17: Charles, Act 1, Scene 1. Acrylic, graphite and colored pencil on paper.
Sketch 18: Pickering, Act 1, Scene 6. Acrylic, graphite pencil on paper.
Sketch 19: Mrs. Higgins, Act 1, Scene 6. Acrylic, graphite pencil on paper.
Sketch 20: Lord and Lady, Act 1, Scene 7. Acrylic, graphite pencil on paper.
Sketch 23: Freddy, Act 1, Scene 7. Acrylic, graphite pencil on paper.
Sketch 24: Eliza, Act 1, Scene 7. Acrylic, graphite pencil on paper.
Sketch 26: Constable, Act 1, Scenes 8. Acrylic, graphite & color pencils on paper.
Sketch 27: Henry Higgins, Act 1, Scenes 9 & 10. Acrylic, graphite pencil on paper.
Sketch 28: Colonel Pickering, Act 1, Scenes 9 & 10. Acrylic, graphite & color pencils on paper.
Sketch 29: Eliza Doolittle, Act 1, Scenes 9 & 10. Acrylic, glitter, graphite & color pencils on paper.
Sketch 30: Footman, Act 1, Scene 10. Acrylic, graphite & color pencils on paper.
Sketch 31: Sir Reginald and Ladying Tarrington, Consort to the Queen and Queen of Transylvannia, Act 1, Scene 10. Acrylic, glitter, graphite & color pencils on paper.
Sketch 32: Zoltan Carpathy, Act 1, Scene 10. Acrylic, glitter, graphite & color pencils on paper.
Sketch 33: Mrs. Higgins, Act 1, Scene 10. Acrylic, glitter, graphite & color pencils on paper.
Sketch 34: Mrs. Higgins, Act 2, Scene 1. Acrylic, graphite & color pencils on paper
Sketch 35: Eliza, Act 2, Scenes 2, 3, 5 & 6. Acrylic, graphite & color pencils on paper.
Sketch 36: Alfred Doolittle, Act 2, Scene 3. Acrylic, graphite & color pencils on paper
Sketch 37: Mrs. Higgins, Act 2, Scene 5. Acrylic, graphite & color pencils on paper.


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