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Once in a Lifetime: Designing Hair and Makeup for the Era of Sound

by

Olga Goupalova

A Thesis
Submitted to the Honors College of
The University of Southern Mississippi
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of Honors Requirements

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ABSTRACT

This thesis describes the design process of an undergraduate theatre student creating hair and makeup looks for a production of George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart's *Once in a Lifetime*, presented by the University of Southern Mississippi in the Fall of 2021. This thesis involved a detailed analysis of characters, the collection of primary research from the Roaring Twenties period, and constant communication with both the production team and the performers in order to achieve the most functional yet aesthetically pleasing hair and makeup designs possible.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to my family and friends for their unfailing support, to everyone else who has patiently helped me through this process, and also to the memory of Robert Brent, who should have graduated alongside the USM Class of 2022.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BFA   Bachelor of Fine Arts

DAS   Dramatic Action Statement

DS   Design Statement

KCACTF   Kentucky Center American College Theatre Festival

LA   Los Angeles

NYC   New York City

POC   Person/People Of Color

SETC   Southeastern Theatre Conference

USM   The University of Southern Mississippi

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

I am a senior Honors College student at the University of Southern Mississippi majoring in Theatre Design and Technology (BFA). My undergraduate Honors Thesis consists of a creative project in hair and makeup design for USM Theatre's production of *Once in a Lifetime* by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart. The show premiered on November 18th, 2021 and ran for a total of four performances, the last one taking place on November 21st. The objective of this thesis is to illustrate my artistic journey through a thoughtful examination of my design process, from initial script analysis and period research of Hollywood in the roaring '20s to the crafting of unique hair and makeup styles for each distinct character. This paper also reflects on the challenges encountered throughout work on the production, most notably those induced by the COVID-19 pandemic. My primary collaborators on this project were director Louis Rackoff, costume designer Madison Queen, and my mentor, J. Theresa Bush. A complete list of cast, production, and crew members is included in Appendix A.

This thesis involved extensive preparation in accordance with USM's stand design process guidelines. The following is a condensed list of the main steps of the process discussed in this paper:

- Initial read-through of script and independent analysis
- Discussion of mood and central themes with Production Team
- Character analysis
- Period research and collection of primary images for 1920s Hollywood
- Creation of digital research presentation, including mood images, primary period research, and character inspiration images

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- Creation of makeup design renderings from actor croquis, addition of color and detail using mixed media

- Creation of Pieces List

- Survey of USM Theatre inventory, stock pull, and online sourcing

- Distribution of supplies to actors

- Wig fittings and individual makeup consultations with performers

- Attendance of Dress Rehearsals, note-taking

- Addressing final design notes

The Design Challenge pursued in this thesis was finding a way to visually represent the contrast between the two main cultural groups, those of Hollywood and New York. An additional aspect of that challenge was incorporating the natural hair texture of multiple actors into the hair and makeup designs without generating a distraction for the audience or causing the production to appear anachronistic. Overall, I deem my designs to have been successful in achieving these goals and supporting the general style and themes of our production.

CHAPTER II: BACKGROUND

Plot Overview

Once in a Lifetime follows three vaudeville actors from New York on their journey to find fame and fortune in the West. Having personally witnessed the explosive arrival of "talking pictures" to the big screen, the three friends hastily decide to capitalize on the innovation by moving out to Hollywood and starting their own enterprise, a voice school for film actors. Upon arrival to LA, the group quickly discovers that the entertainment industry operates off of two key principles: nothing is permanent, and it's every man for himself. As the New Yorkers begin to navigate the chaotic world of commercial motion pictures, they must choose between adhering to the unyielding precepts of Hollywood society and honoring their own, contradictory values —those of collaboration and camaraderie.

Historical Period Information

Once in a Lifetime takes place at the culmination of the Roaring Twenties, shortly before the onset of the Great Depression. The play is set in the year 1927, which marks the debut of speech and sound technology in a feature-length motion picture (Crafton 275). The film in question, titled *The Jazz Singer* and featuring actor Al Jolson, was directed by Alan Crosland and produced by Warner Bros. Pictures and its subsidiary studio, Vitaphone (Crafton 120, 275). The *Jazz Singer*, Al Jolson, and Vitaphone are all directly referenced in the *Once in a Lifetime* script by the character of Jerry Hyland, who excitedly relates his experience at the film premiere to his two friends, George Lewis and May Daniels, at the beginning of the play (Hart and Kaufman 12). In fact, *The Jazz*

Singer and its rousing reception become the direct cause of the trio's relocation to Hollywood.

The idea to go "out West" was not an original one at the time. As pointed out by director Lou Rackoff in his preliminary notes on the play, journeying to California has historically represented "the search for adventure, for fame and fortune in many eras," including the Gold Rush of 1848 and, nearly a century later, the Great Depression. In *Once in a Lifetime*, the "Golden State" likewise attracts a multitude of visitors, this time with the lure of the rapidly developing —and highly lucrative— film industry. However, the play offers a much deeper exploration of Hollywood than a mere awed glance at its shiny façade. Intimately familiar with the sparkling world of Broadway yet having never set foot in Los Angeles, *Once*'s playwrights, George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart, were privy to a unique perspective on the motion picture industry (Maslon 2). According to professor Laurence Maslon of New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, "Hart and Kaufman saw Hollywood as exactly what it always has been and always will be: an absurd wonderland where anything can happen, a kingdom of the aesthetically blind where the one-eyed man is studio chief " (2). Thus, their play effectively satirizes the madness, volatility, and hypocrisy inherent in the movie business of the time while simultaneously contrasting it with the vaudeville circuit in the East.

The play's trio of main characters —George, May, and Jerry— starts off as a vaudeville troupe on the New York theatre circuit. Vaudeville was a very different medium from film; it was a form of entertainment based in variety, featuring many consecutive but usually unconnected "acts," including singing, dancing, instrumental and dramatic performances, as well as the more bizarre "human freak shows" and animal

training numbers (made famous by P.T. Barnum). Though vaudeville was an extremely popular genre spanning over three decades, its physical demands and traveling requirements made it an exhausting and unpredictable career; "It was every performer's dream to stop travelling around and go to New York or Chicago, [where] one might have a less itinerant existence," explains Maslon (1). As filmmaking began to develop a significant public presence in the 1920s, many vaudeville performers sought to enter this new industry in the hope of securing (relatively) more steady and profitable careers (Maslon 1). Al Jolson, who went on to star in *The Jazz Singer*, is one such example, and, moreover, the perfect model for George, May, and Jerry, who set out to search for similar commercial success in LA.

Apart from actors, motion-picture studios also employed a host of other staff, including script and "scenario" writers. Playwrights were frequently scouted in New York and then shipped out to work in Hollywood; they possessed very little, if any, creative control over their own work, and commonly toiled for long hours in cramped office rooms (8). In *Once*, this occupation is exemplified by the character of Lawrence Vail, a bemused and weary New York writer who has become disillusioned with the film industry and everything it stands for. Interestingly, this role was portrayed by Kaufman in the original stage production. Though Kaufman's involvement with Hollywood extended only to selling studios his material (he never visited or worked there), the significant overlap between Vail's character and Kaufman's own "reserved and cynical East Coast playwright" persona rendered the role much more personal and authentic (Maslon 1).

CHAPTER III: PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

My analysis of *Once in a Lifetime* began with the first official Design Team Meeting, held virtually on August 20th, 2021. I had completed my first reading of the script beforehand and was ready to listen to and discuss initial thoughts about the play with other members of the production team. We began by exploring the main themes present in the story; the director, Lou Rackoff, reviewed notes from his own reading and took suggestions from everyone else. We came up with the following preliminary list of major themes:

- "Going to Hollywood" is a metaphor for finding happiness

- Happiness is not based on fame or fortune, or artistic success

- Theatre seeks to create art while Hollywood seeks to make money (both do so through the medium of entertainment)

- The simplicity of vaudeville vs. the complexity of film

- In Hollywood, what makes money often doesn't make *sense*

- In Hollywood, talent isn't as important as connections

- In Hollywood, things people *say* often become reality

After this brainstorming session, Rackoff —with everyone's approval— settled on a single theme as the foundation for his Dramatic Action Statement, or DAS. A DAS is a short statement that describes the overall action of the play, succinctly outlining the main motivation for the story and the characters (though each character has a separate, personalized action statement, as well). Rackoff's DAS ended up being "to reach for happiness," because all of the characters in the show are united by this goal, even though

"happiness" means something different to each of them. For the trio, for instance, happiness ultimately manifests as friendship; Lawrence Vail finds it in free creativity and control over his own work; meanwhile, the majority of the remaining characters equate it with wealth and fame.

When looking through my own notes, I came across a thought-provoking quote that I had written down while reading the play earlier. This quote appears approximately halfway through the script and marks the first major point of conflict, or "crisis," in the story. Having operated her "school of elocution and voice culture" for some time now, May starts to get suspicious when she receives no feedback on her progress from the studio head, a Jewish motion picture magnate called Mr. Glogauer. After a worrying exchange with another prominent Hollywood character, May bumps into Mr. Flick, only to learn that he is there to scrape the name off of her office door —officially confirming her worst fears. After May wryly remarks on the speed with which he completes the job, Mr. Flick offhandedly says, "Oh, it don't take long. You see, on those doors I never use permanent paint" (Hart and Kaufman, 73). The use of temporary paint as a metaphor for the fickle fortune of Hollywood led me to come up with the following observation: Success is transient, but happiness doesn't have to be. This idea, in connection with Rackoff's DAS, guided my research process and later helped me develop my Design Statement. I also incorporated the themes of "simplicity vs. complexity" and "authenticity vs. artifice" into my design concept, as I wanted to visually highlight the contrast between the Hollywood characters and the New York characters throughout the story.

CHAPTER IV: CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Having developed a good understanding of the play as a whole, I could now start breaking it down further by examining its characters. For ease of analysis, I divided the characters of Once in a Lifetime into three groups: New York, Hollywood, and the "In-Betweeners." Members of a particular group share similar worldviews, motivations, and general stylistic elements (with the exception of the In-Betweeners, as these are a mixed group).

George Lewis, May Daniels, and Jerry Hyland make up the New Yorkers. All three are living in NYC at the start the play, but their physical location is not the only thing that qualifies them for this category —the trio also performs as an act on the vaudeville stage. Vaudeville was a very distinct form of entertainment, truly a genre of its own. Though the types of stage acts and performers taking part in it were extremely varied, the principle of vaudeville itself was quite simple: traveling live entertainment. Whilst acts were regularly modified to best suit the tastes of the audience, performers generally had a specific routine they were known for; this routine was performed three or four times per day over the course of a week in a particular city, and then moved on to a different city in the theatre "circuit" (Maslon 1). Thus, George, May, and Jerry would have presented more or less the same version of their act almost thirty times in any given week. Though no doubt exhausting, this highly repetitive system seems like a relatively simple means of making a living —much unlike the practices of Hollywood.

The Hollywood grouping is the largest of the three and includes nearly everyone the trio meets outside of New York. The first character to fall into this category is Helen Hobart, the influential Hollywood reporter May encounters on the train to LA. In the

script, Helen's appearance is referred to as "little short of marvelous," and she is described as "literally sparkling with gems" (Hart and Kaufman 23). This account provides a clear visual indication of Helen's materialism and gives the reader an early (and accurate) impression of Hollywood's values. The rest of the characters in this group are part of a major movie studio and are organized as follows: Mr. Glogauer, all-powerful owner of Glogauer Studios; Miss Chasen, a studio executive and Glogauer's second-in-command; Kammerling, a movie director; Phyllis and Florabel, generic movie stars; Fulton and Sullivan, scenario writers; Weisskopf and Meterstein, Glogauer's servants; Miss Leighton, a secretary; Tech crew (Mr. Flick, film crew, electricians, etc.); and "Wannabes" (Bell Boys, Pages, Actors, Waiters, Voice Pupils, etc.). All of these roles are primarily motivated by the desire for connections, money, fame, and upward mobility — superficial incentives that make for (morally and physically) artificial characters. Consequently, the studio model of producing motion-pictures is itself powered by these values. The sheer number of people, volatility of the market, and enormous sums of money involved in this industry make it a ridiculously complicated endeavor, fraught with constant communication lapses, re-dos and "retakes," massive loss of time and money, and general scandal. Both this way of life and this way of working starkly contrasts Hollywood with the straightforward nature of vaudeville's recycled traveling act.

The remaining characters are designated "In-Betweeners" and are of varying types. The first of these is Susan Walker, a stereotypical wide-eyed, small-town girl with big dreams. Susan is one of hundreds of thousands of "aspiring actors" flocking to Los Angeles in the 1920s to try their luck at gracing the silver screen. She is very naïve and

rather slow on the uptake, yet her persistence (and conventional beauty) ends up turning the odds in her favor. Susan does not fit into the Hollywood grouping because she has not yet been corrupted by the system. Though she is infatuated with stardom, Susan's intentions are honest; she genuinely wants to become accomplished at acting, and her awe of the accompanying lavish lifestyle —especially considering her age and modest background— is to be expected. These traits make Susan Walker one of the simplest characters in the show. The next character in this cluster is Susan's mother, Mrs. Walker. In her mid-forties, Mrs. Walker is visibly more mature, displaying a tasteful wardrobe and a certain elegance. Mrs. Walker herself does not share Susan's obsession with the film world and is shown to be largely ignorant on the Hollywood front, even mistaking a waiter for a famous actor while at a posh hotel. However, Mrs. Walker is quite ambitious for her daughter, and staunchly supports Susan throughout the play.

The final role to fall into this mixed category is that of cynical playwright Lawrence Vail. Vail offers an interesting perspective on the film industry because he is able to view it both from the outside and the inside. Originally based in New York, Vail is a down-to-earth writer who takes his job seriously. Though he agrees to work for Hollywood, the script makes it clear that this decision is influenced by immense pressure from studio executives and not his own desires: "I didn't want to come out to this god-forsaken country… But they hounded me, and hammered at me and belabored me… In a moment of weakness, I came" (76-77). Thrust into this unfamiliar environment, Vail carefully observes his surroundings and is astounded when he discovers that the most prominent industry in the country is built on nothing. Having spent six months isolated in an office, receiving no instruction or communication from anyone whatsoever, Vail is

completely baffled and more than a little frustrated. It should be noted that, over the span

of those six months, Vail remains utterly unaffected by Hollywood's incessant power-

play. Though he gets paid well and regularly, Vail is still dissatisfied because of a lack of

creative, intellectual, and/or spiritual fulfillment. This is a crucial facet of Vail's

personality, as it sets him apart from everyone else; unlike the rest of the characters, Vail

is disillusioned by fabrication and opulence instead of seduced and corrupted by it. It is

true that Vail shares some key values with the main trio, namely those of friendship and a

certain morality (as is evident from his conversation with George about two-thirds of the

way through the play), yet Vail chooses to leave the industry while George, May, and

Jerry ultimately choose to stay (albeit together). Lawrence Vail is, therefore, a

delightfully insightful individual, and his candidness is what enables him to serve as the

audience's point of reference throughout the story (which makes the casting of George S.

Kaufman himself as Vail in the original stage production all the more appropriate).

CHAPTER V: DESIGN PREPARATION

After familiarizing myself with the characters through script analysis, I was ready to start collecting research. To supplement my knowledge of the time period, I referenced several academic articles and books on hair and makeup practices in both Hollywood and during the 1920s. I also searched various archives and databases for photos from the period; I then uploaded these images into a PowerPoint presentation and organized them by character (roughly in order of appearance in the script). This step was necessary for visually communicating my design concepts to the rest of the production team and the actors. My reading and image culling helped me gain a good understanding of the style of the period and enabled me to begin brainstorming specific character looks.

Period and Style Research

To start with, I needed to learn about the style norms of the Roaring Twenties, so I consulted the book *Costume, Makeup, and Hair* by Adrienne McLean. Under the section "Makeup and Modernity," I discovered that makeup use among the general population became prevalent only at the start of the twentieth century. In previous years, wearing makeup was considered taboo for most classes for various reasons; in the 1800s, for example, makeup had heavy associations with prostitution (McLean 35). By 1910, however, beauty makeup had come into fashion, in part due to the vibrant dancers of the sensational Ballets Russes, who were known for their green-and-gold eyeshadow (35). Theatrical makeup was also undergoing important changes during this time. For the past few decades, actors had been resorting to a product called "greasepaint" to create their onstage looks (33). This substance was unsuitable not only for the actors themselves (its thickness masked all emotion, and it was incapable of withstanding stage lights), but also

for the camera; black-and-white (or orthochromatic) film was already ineffectual at portraying skin tones and, when combined with greasepaint, resulted in a pasty, nightmarish image of the actor (33). Nevertheless, with no other alternative, the widespread use of greasepaint continued until the 1910s, when a brilliant new makeup designer suddenly stepped onto the scene. Originally from Poland, Max Factor was a skilled designer and inventor, pioneering countless makeup products for the entertainment industry. The most notable of these was Factor's face cream, developed to smooth skin tones without caking and remain unobtrusive on camera (36). Max Factor went on to revolutionize the world of theatrical makeup; his multitude of specialized products, including a wide range of skin-tone creams, waterproof makeup, and human-hair wigs, turned film stars into beauty ideals and makeup into its own art form (37).

Now that makeup was finally normalized and widely accessible, specific guidelines for wearing it began to emerge. Lipstick, which soared in popularity starting in the 1910s, was commonly worn in medium or "rose" reds (Ragas and Kozlowski 24). Other shades of "natural" colors, ranging from "deep rose" to orange, were also available for daily wear (De Castelbajac 55). Members of the "flapper" subculture, however, preferred more daring hues that could reflect their rebellious lifestyle, opting for a "well-designed crimson mouth" that was "expressly meant to attract men" (40). Movie stars were known to wear darker lipstick in order for their mouths to show up on the primitive orthochromatic film of the time (43).

Makeup trends were habitually set by contemporary big-screen actresses, a phenomenon dubbed "star face." Film stars Clara Bow and Gloria Swanson, for example, popularized the "cupid's bow" mouth shape (pointed upper lip, rounded/full lower lip)

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during the '20s (McLean 38). The biggest influence on eye makeup, meanwhile, was undoubtedly Swedish actress Greta Garbo. The "arresting, precise, stark lines" accentuating the lids and edges of her eyes simultaneously "symbolized both the twentieth century's future and the late 1920s woman as modern, urbane, and Western and… sleekly mature" (38). A variety of eye products, including solid, liquid, and paste forms of mascara, as well as eyebrow pencils, eyeshadow, and kohl, were readily available to the public as a means of imitating this iconic look (De Castelbajac 57). Apart from the basic black and brown hues used for "shading," women would also employ bright eyeshadow colors such as blue and green for evening events (36). Combined, these makeup techniques and products created a sharp emphasis on the eyes and mouth, defining the signature look of the Roaring Twenties era.

Figure 1. Clara Bow (Left) and Greta Garbo (Right) in signature 1920s makeup.

Hairstyles of the '20s were equally distinctive. In response to feminist sentiments, the romanticized, flowing locks of the 1910s gave way to much shorter women's cuts,

corresponding to the more modern image of the "urbane woman" (McLean 43-44). In her

book *Decades of Fashion*, Harriet Worsley suggests that this look was inspired by the

aftermath of the First World War: "The 1920s celebrated youth and life after the dark war

years. Fashion was no exception. As if to compensate for the deaths of so many young

men, an androgenous 'bachelor girl' silhouette emerged" (100). The shortest cuts were

the shingle and the Eton crop, both styled in a masculine look that could easily fit under

the close-fitting cloche hats fashionable at the time (Worsley 100). Several longer

versions of hairstyles were also prevalent, the most famous being the 'bob.' Bobs are

notable for their direct association with the "flapper" trend of the Twenties: the image of

"young women in shimmying sheath dresses… representing a nation of girls drinking,

driving, and having sex" publicized by some of the biggest film stars of the era, including

Clara Bow and Louise Brooks (McLean 44). Bobs came in a variety of lengths and

textures. One of the most iconic iterations was the glossy straight bob with its sharp,

cheek-bone-framing edges and full forehead bangs (44). Actresses Colleen Moore and

Louise Brooks were the most well-known exemplars of this style.

Figure 2. Louise Brooks with her signature bob.

The bob was likewise favored by both those with curly hair and those seeking added texture. The "finger wave" technique was commonly used to achieve a waved bob: women moistened sections of their hair with water or homemade gel, arranged them into tight "pin curls" using their finger (hence the name), and pinned them to the head (Sherrow 132). This resulted in smooth, defined waves undulating around the head. Another method of creating a similar look was known as the "Marcel wave," conceived by Frenchman Marcel Grateau. Marcel used his own custom-made curling tongs to "make deep, regular waves" by flipping strands of hair upside down, which "produce[d] a natural-looking effect that resembled real curls" and could not be matched by earlier crimping irons (257-258). Actresses Gloria Swanson and Yvonne Printemps were among those who wore curled or waved bobs, which became popular in the latter half of the '20s (Worsley 160-161).

Design Concept and Tentative Looks

Having completed the bulk of my research by early September, I shifted my focus to formulating my design concept. My first realization was that my design would need to place emphasis on the actors' eyes; since our production was taking place during the COVID-19 pandemic, state and university guidelines dictated that the actors were to wear masks while onstage. Fortunately, this edict partially overlapped with the period norms of *Once in a Lifetime*, as eye makeup was especially conspicuous in the 1920s. The mask mandate did, however, mean that the actors' mouths would remain fully concealed throughout the performance, which was rather more problematic, seeing as lipstick was also particularly prominent at the time. Though I no longer anticipated the entirety of the

actors' faces to be on show, I decided to design a "full face" of makeup regardless, as that approach felt more holistic and would allow my future renderings to appear finished.

Another decision I made early on defined the overall look of hairstyles in the show. After receiving the performers' headshots for inclusion in my research package, I juxtaposed them against my primary photographs from the period; as most of the actors had hair styles and textures that markedly differed from those common in the 1920s, I thought it would be wise to confer with them before I began designing their looks. I scheduled virtual consultations with select performers the week of September 20th. We discussed the peculiarities of each individual's hair texture, their everyday styling routine, any products that they favored, and their personal hairstyle preferences. I took copious notes at each consultation and maintained regular correspondence with the actors throughout my design process and through rehearsals. From these conversations, I found that many of the actors had reservations concerning their hair length.

For instance, two of my male actors, Cody Elsensohn and Carter Lishen, were not comfortable with the close-cropped cuts typical of men in the '20s. Moreover, both of these performers happened to possess an extremely curly hair texture with a tendency to resist heavy styling and product, which would have made significant alterations difficult. I also needed to accommodate the styling needs of Rakaela Thompson, a performer of color. This was challenging from the outset, as documentation of black artists associated with either vaudeville or Hollywood proved sparse, making it hard to find adequate primary POC references. In addition, Rakaela informed me that her hair was of a natural texture that could not be permed or straightened as per period norms.

After these concerns were expressed to me, I decided to adopt a more relaxed period style for my hair and makeup designs. I felt that this decision both benefitted performers who wanted to keep their natural hair texture and visually contributed to the originality of our production as a whole. This design approach not only supplemented the personalities of the characters, but also supported their motivations. Cody and Carter were both playing New York characters —Jerry Hyland and Lawrence Vail, respectively. Since New York and, especially, vaudeville are culturally and geographically removed from Hollywood, they foster a much simpler living and working environment, unaffected by the exclusive social mores of LA. It follows, then, that Jerry and Vail would not be as concerned with following the latest fashions in clothing or hair as members of the West Coast community, such as Rakaela's character, Helen Hobart.

Each character's individual circumstances also support this assertion. For example, it is made apparent that Jerry's vaudeville act has been struggling to secure bookings at the very beginning of the play. As is revealed in a conversation between May and George, who make up the rest of Jerry's troupe, the trio is down to just one hundred and twenty-eight dollars among them (Kaufman and Hart 9). This modest number would simply render it financially impossible for Jerry to keep up with the latest fashions — even if he expressed interest in doing so in the first place. Vail, on the other hand, is reasonably well-off, but is uninterested in such superficial matters as appearance. Instead, Vail values authenticity, and instinctively loathes Hollywood for its meaningless excesses, as he openly shares with George: "I think Hollywood… is the most God-awful thing I've ever run into. Everybody behaving in the most fantastic fashion –nobody acting like a human being […] Why must everything be dressed up in this hokum" (77).

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Statements like these make it plain that Vail, too, would refrain from meticulous grooming.

Based on this information, I agreed to allow both male performers to maintain longer hair. Both actors got haircuts corresponding to their preferred length (hair down to ears; longer on top, shorter in the back) and then used pomade for styling. The result was a somewhat overgrown but nonetheless recognizable version of a typical 1920s men's cut. I was happy with the end product. Instead of having their hair plastered to their head, the actors could proudly display their thick, curly natural texture without appearing blatantly anachronistic. Moreover, the wayward curls seemed to reflect both characters' artistic natures and occupations, as well as heighten their visual contrast with the LA inhabitants.

I discussed several possible options with Rakaela before we settled on a wig. This seemed like the best solution because it allowed Rakaela to retain her natural hair under the wig cap while simultaneously portraying Helen Hobart's glamorous nature. I spent a great deal of time trying to find adequate primary sources to assist me in choosing the wig and was eventually able to utilize digital archives to source photos of black women from the 1920s. I also referenced several famous black performers from the period, including Ethel Waters and Sissieretta Jones, along with stills from Keen Company's production of *Blues for an Alabama Sky*. In the end, the short finger wave wig I selected looked both fashionable and businesslike —perfect for a renowned Hollywood reporter like Helen. An added bonus of purchasing a synthetic wig online was that it came pre-styled, saving a lot of time and energy.

The consultation process allowed my design concept to become more defined. I had a sense of the general style of the production, and knew I wanted to focus on depicting contrasts between characters from different "worlds." The New Yorkers and the In-Betweeners, for instance, would have simpler and more minimalistic hair and makeup designs as opposed to the Hollywood natives, whose appearance would be flamboyant and artificial. The non-Hollywood roles would also utilize their natural hair, while Helen Hobart and the two film star characters, Phyllis and Florabel, would wear synthetic wigs to accentuate their shallow personalities. By September 30th, I had compiled my hair and makeup Design Statement for *Once in a Lifetime*, which reads as follows:

> *Once in a Lifetime* is a play about a former vaudeville troupe seeking success in Hollywood at the advent of the era of sound. With "talking pictures" rapidly becoming the most popular form of entertainment, the group scrambles to find a place for itself in the lucrative but turbulent film industry. Though this is a period play, our creative team decided to refrain from meticulous historical accuracy in favor of emphasizing the performers' individualized approach to their characters. Prior to creating my designs, I held one-on-one consultations with several performers to discuss the hair quality and personal styling practices and preferences of each. My final hair and makeup renderings for those actors reflect their natural hair texture and show a unique interpretation of the original 1920s characters. This decision allowed the vaudeville/NY characters to contrast with the stars of Los Angeles, who were made to appear much more artificial. In addition, my designs supported the director's vision of the Hollywood trek as a

"reach for happiness," and underlined my own observation that, although success

is transient, happiness doesn't have to be.

After the statement was approved by my advisor, J. Theresa Bush, I met with director

Lou Rackoff to discuss my ideas. Rackoff had positive feedback after reviewing my DS

and research presentation. He completely supported a relaxed approach to period style

and was pleased by the minimal look I had assigned to the non-Hollywood characters.

Rackoff also recommended incorporating light age makeup for two of the older

characters, Mr. Glogauer and Mrs. Walker, which I subsequently added to my research.

With my research and preparation finally completed, I was ready to begin executing my

design.

CHAPTER VI: DESIGN EXECUTION

Procurement

Now that I had a sense of what all of my characters would look like, it was time to assess my supply needs. Normally, I would use my research to list out the hair and makeup supplies necessary for each actor in a document called the Pieces List. I would then take inventory and figure out what items still needed to be constructed and/or purchased. The timeline for this production, however, made it more convenient to switch the order of these steps around, so I opted to take stock first and base my Pieces List directly off of what I found. Fortunately, this task proved quite simple as USM Theatre's extensive inventory provided me with most of my hair and makeup essentials. Having sorted through all of the supplies, I divided them up by character, packed them into plastic bags, and labeled each bag with the corresponding actor's name. I left these sitting in a designated corner of the makeup studio until pick-ups could be scheduled. I then went back to my apartment and converted my stock notes into a detailed Excel spreadsheet; this updated Pieces List recorded all the items I had pulled, along with those that remained to be purchased for each actor/character. I completed my stock pull on October 8th (ahead of schedule) and sent out my Pieces List on October 12th. Products indicated for online purchase were subsequently ordered by the Costume Shop Supervisor and were slated to arrive within the next two weeks.

Rendering Process

It was now time to create my design renderings. These are drawings meant to represent how the makeup and hair designs will look on the face of a specific actor. Though they can be completed in a variety of mediums including digital, I personally

favor the traditional pencil approach. To begin the rendering process, I first obtained

headshots of the actors. I used these for lightly tracing the general shape of a given

actor's face and features onto a thin sheet of paper, thus creating a sketch or "croquis."

Next, I manually filled in details with a graphite pencil until a satisfactory likeness of the

actor emerged. I then began to incorporate my designs into the drawing, working directly

from my research to add hair and makeup details onto the actor's portrait. Finally, I

added color, using colored pencils to achieve realistic, blended skin tones and a variety of

pens for contouring and emphasis. In the end, I had twelve full-color renderings of the

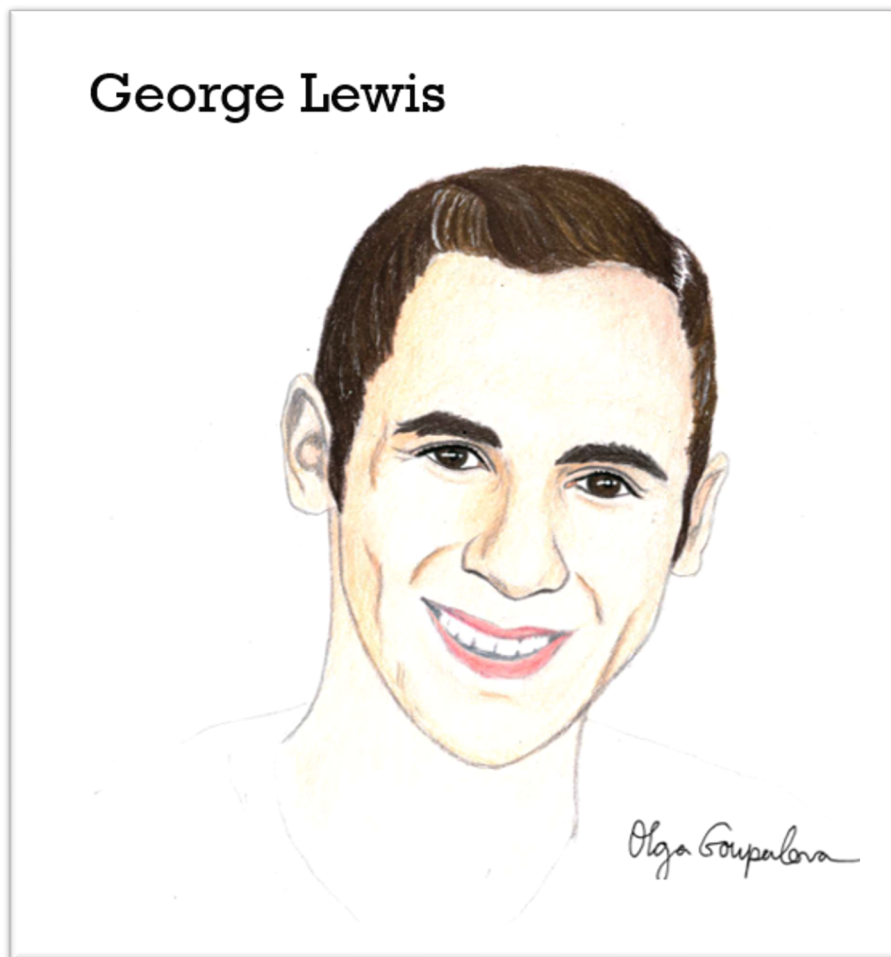members of *Once in a Lifetime*'s main cast.

Illustration 1. Mark Swift as George Lewis.

George Lewis, played by Mark Swift, is a happy-go-lucky, carelessly handsome young vaudeville actor. He is energetic and naturally charismatic, as well as a bit slow on the uptake, and provides much of the comic relief within his friend group and the production itself. George's hair is parted on one side and gelled back flat in accordance with 1920s style norms. His disarming smile and bright eyes are accentuated with a moderate amount of corrective makeup.
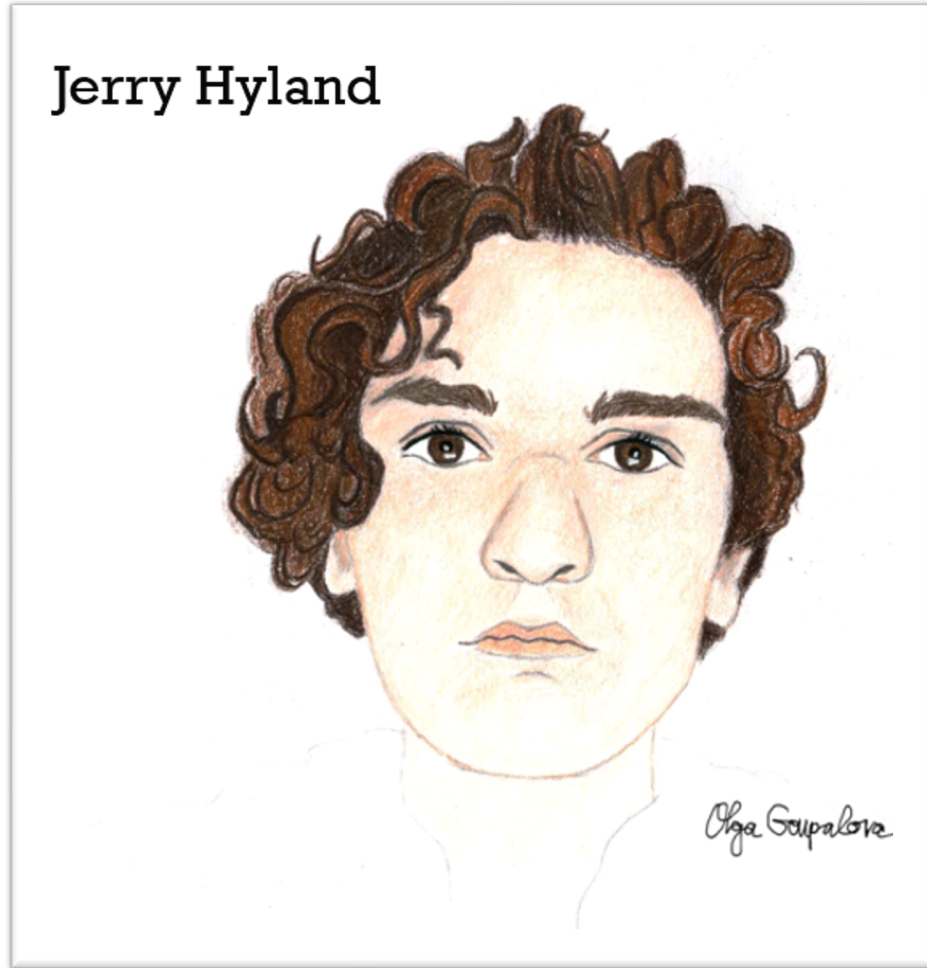
Illustration 2. Cody Elsensohn as Jerry Hyland.

Jerry Hyland, played by Cody Elsensohn, is the enterprising leader of the vaudeville trio. Ever driven by impulse, Jerry instigates the group's relocation to Hollywood when he sells their stage act after seeing premiere of the first "talking" movie. As the head of the trio, Jerry is both confident and persuasive, routinely making decisions on behalf of his two friends and successfully winning them over afterwards. To reflect Jerry's forceful personality as well as his background as a New York artist, Jerry's hair was designed to retain the actor's wild, curly texture. The hair was also cut to medium length with the top styled back with pomade to fit the general aesthetic of the period.

May Daniels

Illustration 3. Tessa Anderson as May Daniels.

May Daniels, played by Tessa Anderson, is the third member of the vaudeville trio and serves as their "voice of reason." Though the youngest of the group, May displays a level of maturity and common sense that make her seem much older. This quality is reflected in the slight frown lines on either side of her mouth, which visually communicate her restless nature. May wears mascara to emphasize her eyes, a trend of the 1920s. She also wears lipstick in a flattering but unobtrusive shade of medium rose-red. Her makeup is fashionable but not overdone, subtly emphasizing her features as needed. In the final stage version of May's design her hair was pulled back in a half-updo and secured in a hairnet, making her appear even more mature and authoritative.
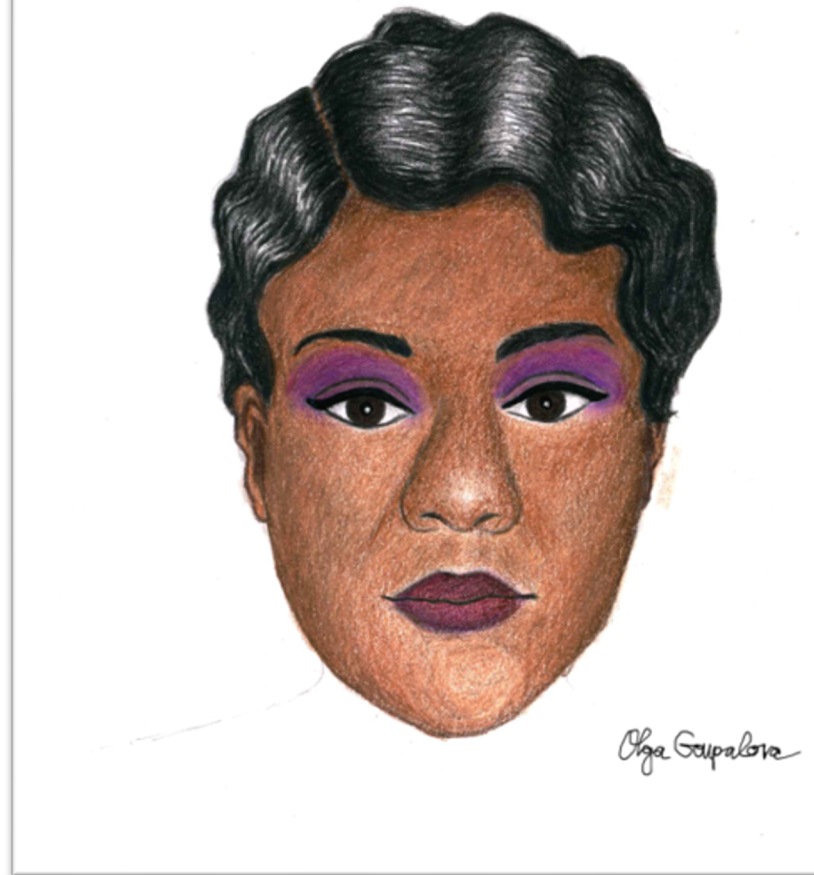
Illustration 4. Rakaela Thompson as Helen Hobart.

Helen Hobart, played by Rakaela Thompson, is the flashy, overbearing, and highly successful Hollywood movie critic that first introduces the New York trio to the world of Hollywood. Helen is vigorous and self-assured in the extreme, a force to be reckoned with. She is also very fickle, as eager to invest in a new enterprise as she is to drop it the moment it starts to go south. Helen's capricious loyalties and superficial persona are reflected in her conspicuous yet tasteful makeup, with bright orchid eyeshadow, plum lipstick, and thick eyeliner. Her hair —a wig in the production— displays the smooth and carefully crafted curls of the latest finger wave hairstyle.
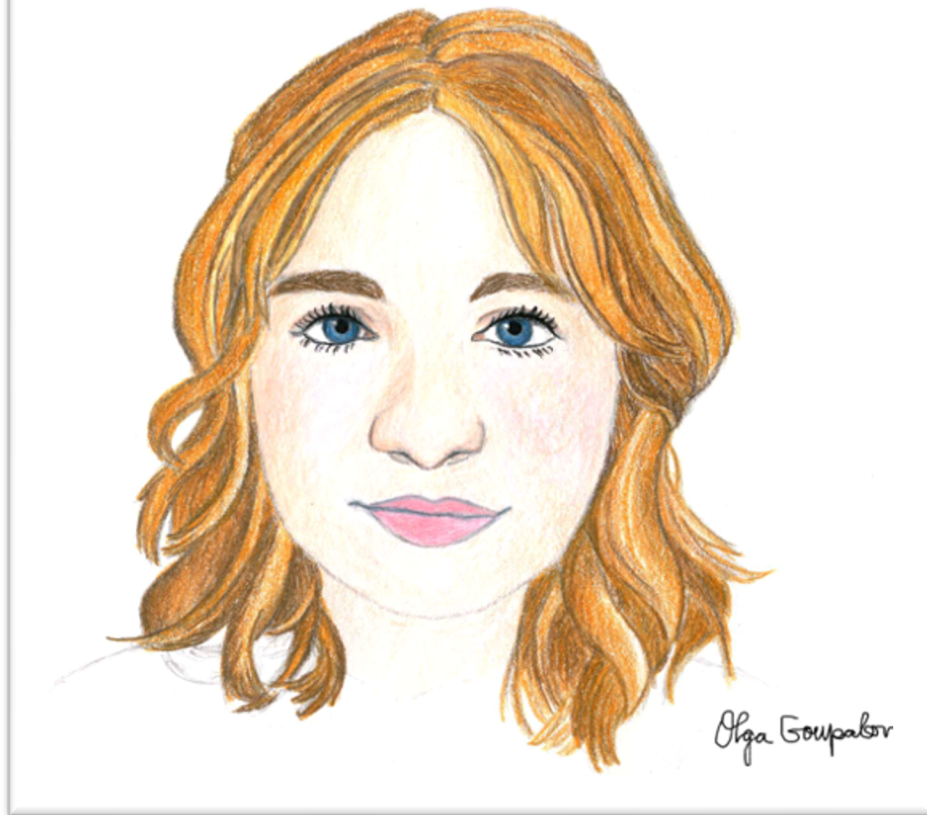
Illustration 5. Katherine Borum as Susan Walker.

Susan Walker, played by Katherine Borum, is the stereotypical wide-eyed, small-town girl looking for her big break in the city. Susan is a very naïve character, innocently unaware of the complexity and corruption of the Hollywood machine, yet doggedly determined in "making it" as a film actress. Susan's makeup reflects her personality and her modest background by remaining simple and minimalistic. Her eyes are only slightly emphasized with mascara, and her lipstick is a natural, pale pink color. She also wears blush, which makes her look younger and more child-like. Susan's hair is styled in an unassuming half-updo; her side bangs and hanging, shoulder-length curls support the image of a youthful, eager country girl.

Illustration 6. Grace Brauner as Mrs. Walker.

Mrs. Walker is Susan's mother. Utterly clueless about the movie industry, she nevertheless has great ambitions for her daughter, and wholeheartedly supports her endeavors throughout the play. Mrs. Walker is middle-aged and habitually flustered; slight wrinkles at the corners of her mouth and crow's feet around her eyes reflect her years without unduly aging her. A mature woman, Mrs. Walker is well-dressed and elegant, sporting a tasteful amount of eyeliner, mascara, and blush, as well as darker pink lipstick. Her hair is styled into two symmetrical Victory Rolls, making her appear fashionable while still looking appropriate for her age.

Illustration 7. Camille Colley as Florabel Leigh.

Florabel Leigh, played by Camille Colley, is a typical Hollywood movie star of the Roaring Twenties. As befits her status, Florabel is entitled and arrogant, accustomed to receiving flattery and attention wherever she goes —at least, for the time being. Being a film star, Florabel's makeup is more theatrical than conventional period norms. She wears not only thick eyeliner and mascara, but also prominent eyeshadow and lipstick. The colors for the latter are warm shades of gold and bronze; the shiny lipstick and metallic eyeshadow both glitter in the light, evoking extra glamour. Florabel's color palette was intended to contrast with that of her co-star, Phyllis. She also sports a glossy and obvious wig in the finger wave style.

Illustration 8. Natalie Davis as Phyllis Fontaine.

Phyllis Fontaine, played by Natalie Davis, is another Hollywood star of the silver screen employed by Glogauer Studios. A co-star to Florabel, Phyllis is similarly privileged and self-important. Phyllis wears eyeliner and mascara, as well as vivid eyeshadow and lipstick. Phyllis's color palette is cool and contrasts with the warm tones of Florabel's. Her signature eyeshadow is a bright blue-green color, the kind usually worn to evening occasions only by the more daring woman (and even then, infrequently). Phyllis's lipstick is a bright, cooler shade of fuchsia pink. She wears a curled, platinum-blond wig inspired by Mae West and styled in finger waves; the wig looks intentionally fake and highlights the artificial nature of both Phyllis herself and her career.
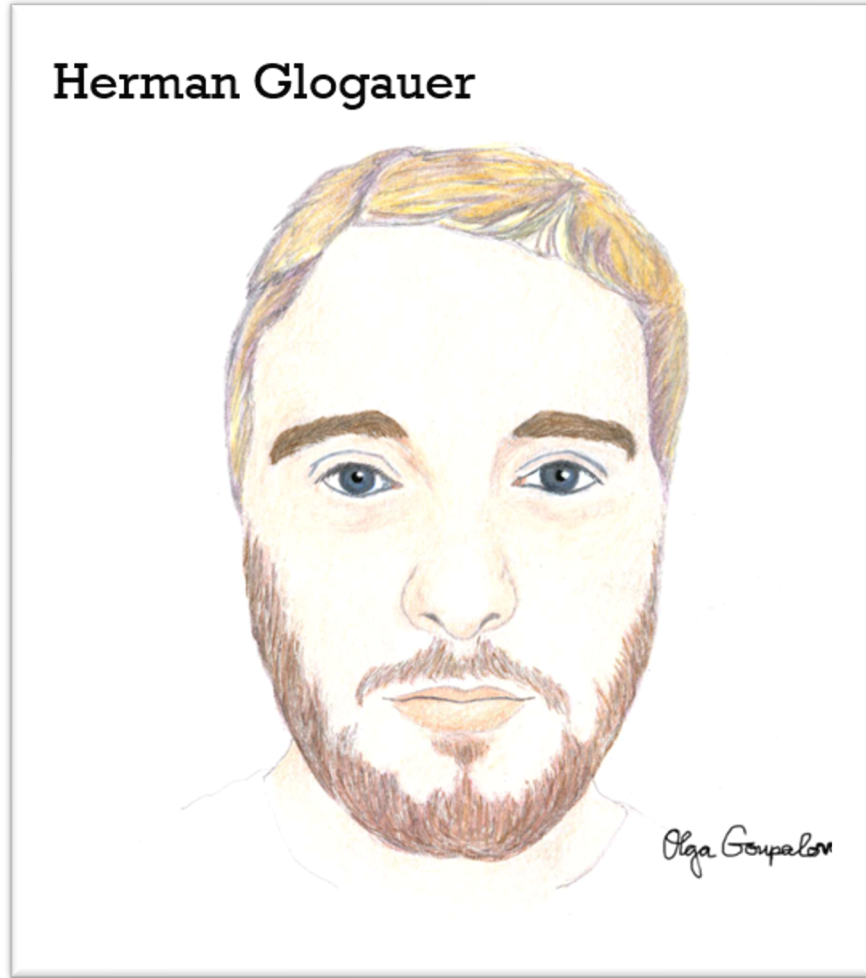
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Illustration 9. Matthew Hogan as Herman Glogauer

Herman Glogauer, played by Matthew Hogan, is a Jewish picture magnate and owner of Glogauer Studios. He is one of the most important people in the Hollywood movie industry, and he knows it. Constantly pursued by an army of businessmen and admirers, Glogauer is always in a hurry. Glogauer's chaotic lifestyle in combination with his middle age manifest in forehead and eyebrow wrinkles, as well as eye bags. Though clearly present, these features pale in the face of Glogauer's enormous energy; he looks very well at his age. Glogauer also sports a carefully maintained beard and mustache of moderate length, as well as gelled-back hair with a side part.

Illustration 10. Camila Salas as Miss Leighton.

Miss Leighton, played by Camila Salas, is a secretary at Glogauer Studios. Her life and personality are centered around her extremely fast-paced but highly uninspiring job. As a front-desk employee at a major movie studio, Miss Leighton is adorned in the latest fashion. She wears both eyeliner and mascara, and her eyeshadow creates a "smoky-eye" look. Her wine-colored lipstick is dark and arresting, while her cascading hair is pulled back in silky waves.
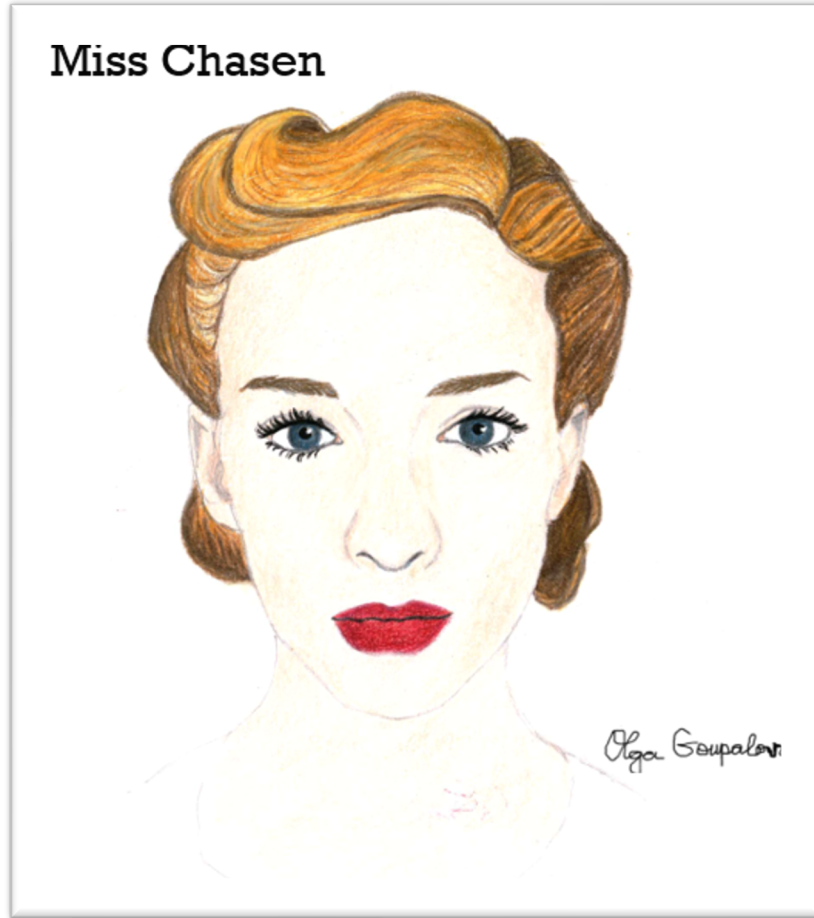
Illustration 11. Gracyn Taylor as Miss Chasen.

Miss Chasen, played by Gracyn Taylor, is a Hollywood executive and Glogauer's second-in-command. Fashionable but practical, she wears thick mascara, and her full mouth is outlined in bright red lipstick. Miss Chasen wears her hair pulled back in a stylish bun with sculpted waves adorning the top of her head.
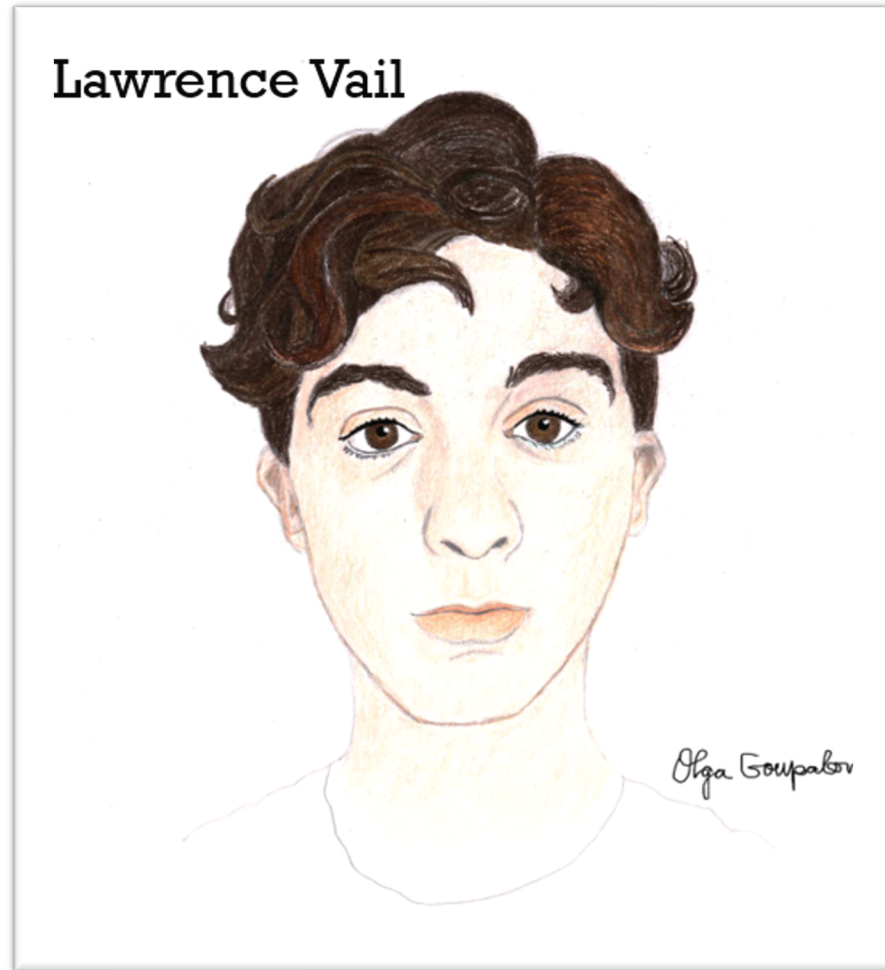
Illustration 12. Carter Lishen as Lawrence Vail.

Lawrence Vail, played by Carter Lishen, is a young writer from New York. Hounded by Hollywood recruiters, Vail reluctantly agrees to come work for Glogauer's Studio, spending six soul-sucking months in an isolated office only discover that the movie industry is really a giant scam. Though Vail is young, his time at the studio has aged him; large bags under his eyes reflect his exhaustion and disillusionment with the movie industry. Vail's free artistic nature and resolute faithfulness to his native New York are evident in his personal appearance, particularly his wild, curly hair that remains untamed either by product or Hollywood ideals.

The renderings were reviewed by both my advisor and director Rackoff on October 18th. Both parties returned overwhelmingly positive feedback and expressed admiration of the quality I was able to achieve through the medium. I sent the renderings out to the rest of the design team immediately afterwards and showcased them at the Design Presentation the following day. The virtual Design Presentation was held in conjunction with the costume designer, Madison Queen, and displayed our collective work for the benefit of the entire cast and crew. The Final Design Package I presented included mood and color images, period research, character research, and the finalized color renderings. The overall reception from the team was, once again, very positive. I received praise for my work, and no changes to my designs were requested. With this seal of approval, I was ready to move into fittings.

Fittings and Dress Rehearsals

With online orders expected to arrive shortly, I scheduled a supply pick-up with the actors for the week of October 25th. Most of the items did ship in time for this date, and the actors were able to collect the bulk of their hair and makeup articles then. The three wigs used in the production, however, did not come in until the early digits of November, forcing me to delay fittings until then. I was finally able to schedule fittings between November 3rd-5th, as well as over the following week. These fittings were mostly intended for those wearing wigs in the show, but also included a few people who requested help with makeup or more advanced hairstyles. The three wig fittings each took up about an hour and all went according to plan; because the wigs were synthetic and pre-styled with finger waves, the actors simply had to learn to put on and adjust them correctly without worrying about styling. All three wigs proved satisfactory on the actors

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and, after a bit of brushing and spraying, were ready to be used in the show. I also assisted the actress portraying Mrs. Walker with styling her own hair into "victory rolls," as this look was complicated and required a lot of explanation and practice.

The remaining fittings I conducted involved helping actors to correctly select and apply eyeshadow, eyeliner, and lipstick. I was very particular about different shades and wanted to match the colors in my renderings as closely as possible. I also wanted to ensure that the eyes of the Hollywood characters were especially well-emphasized, particularly for Helen Hobart, Phyllis, and Florabel, who were all assigned distinctive eyeshadow hues. The other women of Glogauer's studio were given glamorous touches as well, examples being Ms. Leighton's smoky-eye and Ms. Chasen's bright-red lipstick.

With everyone successfully fitted, the actors were set begin final rehearsals. I attended all three dress rehearsals of *Once in a Lifetime* from November 14th –November 17th, excluding Monday the 15th, which was designated Designer Fix Day. I took abundant notes during rehearsals but had mostly minor fixes. My one significant change was the hair design for May Daniels' character. Her loose hair was distracting and partially obscured her face during performance; she needed a different style. My advisor suggested utilizing a hairnet and, after some brief research, I came up with a curled semi-updo that incorporated one. I practiced the hairstyle on a wig first, then sent the performer a detailed step-by-step description of the style with accompanying reference photos. She was able to learn the styling very quickly and displayed the new hairdo at the very next rehearsal —it looked great onstage, and I was very happy with it. The only other notable changes I implemented involved increasing the vibrancy of eye makeup, mainly for the Hollywood characters, in order for it to remain visible under stage lights.

Once in a Lifetime ran at USM's Tatum Theater for a total of four performances from November 18th –November 21st. Due to the last-minute cancellation of the university mask mandate during our last dress rehearsal, the actors were mask-less during all of the performances. Because of this, performers were able to wear lipstick and other makeup on the lower half of the face, and I was able to see my designs fully realized.

Reflection

I view my hair and makeup work for *Once in a Lifetime* as a success. The design team, director, and actors all seemed to think that my designs supported the overall style and themes of the show, as well as the intentions of individual characters. Additionally, I feel that the designs complemented the costumes and visually held up onstage. Designing in the highly unpredictable environment produced by the COVID-19 pandemic was challenging; I was unsure whether the entirety of my designs would be fully visible during performance, or how masks would potentially interact with the makeup. Social distancing guidelines made it difficult to effectively instruct actors in wig and makeup application, as I was not allowed to help them manually. In addition, the shipping delays resulting from COVID-related supply chain disruptions meant significantly longer shipping times for wigs and makeup supplies, a daunting obstacle for any production timeline. Moreover, I had to subsist on a drastically reduced amount of feedback from my advisor, as she was working for Broadway in New York and was physically absent for the bulk of my design process.

I received favorable feedback when a respondent from the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF) viewed one of USM's performances; she was interested in my work and nominated me to compete in the spring Festival. I entered

my designs for *Once in a Lifetime* in the Allied Arts category of the 2022 KCACTF

Design Competition and, though I did not end up placing, was able to get my work

reviewed by professional designers in the industry. With encouragement from my

advisor, Theresa Bush, I also entered the same show into the Design Competition for the

73rd Southeastern Theatre Conference (SETC). I compiled a detailed poster board and

binder showcasing my design process, and presented them at the Conference in

Nashville, TN in March 2022. My designs for *Once in a Lifetime* took second place in the
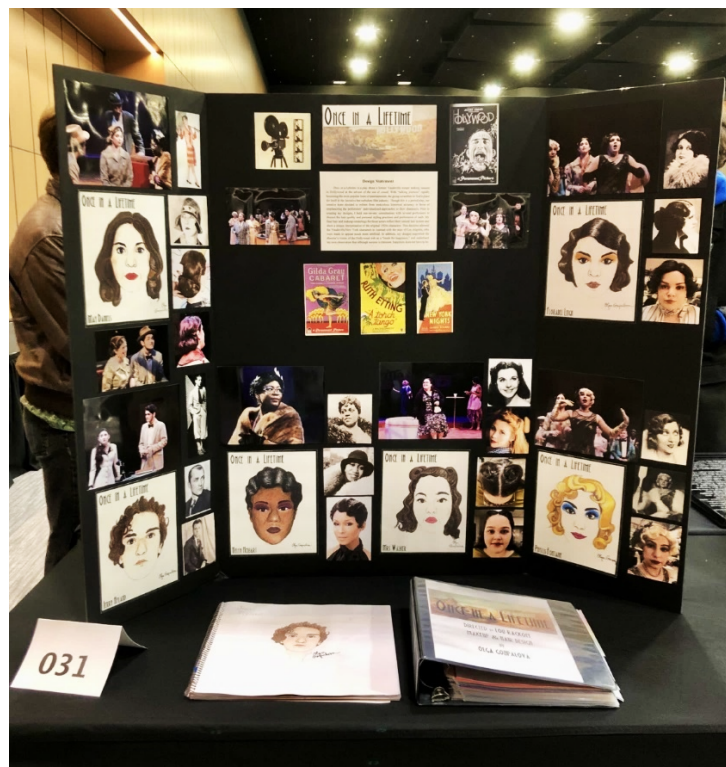
Hair and Makeup category at SETC.

Figure 3. Designer's table at SETC Design Competition.

APPENDIX A: PRODUCTION CREDITS

Artistic Production Team

Director	Louis Rackoff	Director
Scenic Designer	Bryan Moses	Faculty
Costume Designer	Madison Queen	Graduate Student
Hair/Makeup Designer	Olga Goupalova	Undergraduate Student
Lighting/Sound Designer	Craig Dettman	Faculty
Dramaturg	David Coley	Faculty
Stage Manager	Jameson Tisdale	Undergraduate Student
Asst. Director	Mia Taylor	Undergraduate Student
Asst. Costume Designer	Hagan Harkins	Undergraduate Student
Asst. Costume Designer	Lydia Hare	Graduate Student
Asst. Sound/Light. Designer	Shelby Ashley	Graduate Student
Asst. Stage Manager	Georgia Leming	Undergraduate Student
Asst. Stage Manager	Emmanuel Johnson	Undergraduate Student

Wardrobe/Costume Maintenance Crew

Wardrobe Supervisor	Raegan Cantrelle	Undergraduate Student
Wardrobe Crew	Jaydan Cryer	Undergraduate Student
Wardrobe Crew	Erica Dickens	Undergraduate Student
Costume Maintenance	Renee LaCourse	Undergraduate Student

George Lewis	Mark Swift	Undergraduate Student
May Daniels	Tessa Anderson	Undergraduate Student
Jerry Hyland	Cody Elsensohn	Undergraduate Student
Helen Hobart	Rakaela Thompson	Undergraduate Student
Susan Walker	Katherine Borum	Undergraduate Student
Mrs. Walker	Grace Brauner	Undergraduate Student
Herman Glogauer	Matt Hogan	Undergraduate Student
Weisskopf	Michael Harrison	Undergraduate Student
Meterstein	Jaylon Gooden	Undergraduate Student
Phyllis Fontaine, Bridesmaid	Natalie Davis	Undergraduate Student
Florabel Leigh, Bridesmaid	Camille Colley	Undergraduate Student
Miss Chasen	Gracyn Taylor	Undergraduate Student
Miss Leighton	Camila Salas	Undergraduate Student
Lawrence Vail	Carter Lishen	Undergraduate Student
Rudolph Kammerling	Kaleb Teeters	Undergraduate Student

Ensemble

Bell/Script Girl, Page #2	Clare Miceli	Undergraduate Student
Waitress, Actress, Secretary	Ryan Tinnon	Undergraduate Student
Sullivan, Reporter	Danielle Daye	Undergraduate Student
Ernest, Fulton, Groom, Biographer	Rajan Chaudhary	Undergraduate Student

Bellboy, Page #1	Baxter Evans	Undergraduate Student
Porter, Security Guard,	Devin Stevenson	Undergraduate Student
Mr. Flick, Bishop, Portraitist		

<u>"Film Crew on Set"</u>

Camera People	Emma Goodgion,	Undergraduate Student
	Chris Russell	
Sound Person	Chance Beck	Undergraduate Student
Hair/Makeup Artist	Rachel Boudreaux	Undergraduate Student
Wardrobe	Georgia Evans	Undergraduate Student
Stage Manager	Evan Cochran	Undergraduate Student

APPENDIX B: Images Cited

Fig. 1. "Women's 1920s Makeup: An Overview." *Hair & Makeup Artist Handbook,* hair-and-makeup-artist.com/womens-1920s-makeup/. Accessed 29 Apr. 2022.

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Fig. 2. "Women's 1920s Makeup: An Overview." *Hair & Makeup Artist Handbook,* hair-and-makeup-artist.com/womens-1920s-makeup/. Accessed 29 Apr. 2022.

Fig. 3. Goupalova, Olga. SETC 2022 Design Competition Submission. 11 Mar. 2022. Author's personal collection.

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