

History of Theatre Makeup before 1920-----Tara Maginnis

5th Century BCE Athens – Thespis, in his first tragedies “...anointed his face with white lead, then he shaded his face with lees of wine...” but very shortly after that he introduced the use of masks made of shaped linen, eliminating any need for makeup.

13th-15th Century Europe -Images from Medieval drama seem to indicate masks and perhaps some makeup usage, but while a few medieval masks have survived, the evidence for makeup is quite unclear.

1590s Renaissance England – Works of Shakespeare indicate use of false beards on stage.

1667 Restoration England- Samuel Pepys diary describes visiting the actresses Nell Gwynne and Mrs. Knepp backstage before a performance: *But, Lord! to see how they were both painted would make a man mad, and did make me loath them;... and yet what a shew they make on the stage by candle-light, is very observable.*

Restoration England – John Downes, a prompter in the Restoration theatre writes in his memoirs of the stage, Roscius Anglicanus (1708) that Mr. Johnson, an actor who played at the Lincoln's Inn Theatre “*He's skillful in the art of painting, which is a great adjunct, very promotive to the art of true elocution, which is always requirable in him, that bears the name of an actor...*”

1741 – from A Historical and Critical Account of the Theatres in Europe by Luigi Riccoboni, a notable actor of the Comedie Italienne in Paris. Riccoboni observed on a visit to London in 1727 a young actor in his 20s who portrayed an old man so convincingly, that at first Riccoboni would not believe he was not old. He was shown the actor dressing himself, taking an hour to “*disfigure his face with the assistance of pencils, and painting his eyebrows*” to make an old age makeup convincing at six paces.

1783 - Kerosene Lamp invented, this brighter light begins to replace candles as the main lighting in theatres.

1789 England- Francis Godolphin Waldron, a later editor of Downes work, mentions that Downes reference to Mr. Johnson's “painting” refers specifically to painting lines on the face in India ink to imitate wrinkles. Waldron further states that in former times this was carried to such excess that some actors looked as if they were acting through a mask of wire. However he praises David Garrick's subtlety and ability when aging his face for the role of Lear, and indicates that by the late 18th Century the excessive use of black lines had gone out of fashion.

1791 – Gas in quantity for lighting invented, by William Murdock, but is as yet difficult to control.

1809 – The Arc Light is invented, but not used as a follow spot light till the 1890s.

1816 USA- The Chestnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia is the first to be converted to gas light.

1837- Limelight, invented by Henry Drummond in 1816 - heating a piece of lime with a flame of oxygen and hydrogen making a bright greenish-white tint (for a follow-spot) used as the first spotlight beginning in 1837, and also used for general lighting in large theatres in the 1850s and 1860s.

1845 England – The Drury Lane Theatre is converted to Gaslight.

Stage Makeup items available before 1850:

- White face powder
- India ink for drawing lines
- Rouge (very bright red or pink)
- Misc. artist's pigment base powders, (like Bole Armenia aka "burnt umber" for a reddish brown tone)
- Burnt cork (for dark brown/black)
- Lamp-black (for mascara)
- Burnt paper (for gray shadows)
- Spirit gum
- Wool crepe hair (for both facial hair and false noses)

1850's Germany – Mysterious invention of greasepaint (powdered pigments mixed with lard) by either German actor Carl Baudius, or Carl Herbert.

1864 England – a short book, The Guide to the Stage, Containing Clear and Ample Instructions for Obtaining Theatrical Engagements, by Lemman Thomas Rede includes 2 and ½ pages of vague advice on applying powdered pigment makeup.

1870's USA-Anglo-French actor, Charles Fechter, supposedly spreads the use of greasepaint to the US while on tour.

1873 Germany– Ludwig Leichner commercially produces non toxic ready-made greasepaint sticks. Leichner's company goes on to be the main European theatrical makeup producer for over a century.

1877 England -The Art of "Making-Up" by Haresfoot and Rouge*, published by Samuel French, the first booklet in English on theatre makeup is printed, describing makeup application with powdered pigments. Suggested pigments in this booklet are 3 kinds of white, Dutch pink rouge, carmine red, and ruddy rouge, Mongolian brown, powdered blue, and chrome (yellow), and antimony (a metallic gray-black) used for shadows, which was toxic.

1879 – First practical electric stage lights produced.

1881- The Savoy Theatre, London is the first of many to be built for Electric lighting both on stage and in the house.

1882- German exposition of electric stage lighting dimmers.

1882 England - Theatricals and tableaux vivants for Amateurs by Charles Harrison is published with a long illustrated chapter on greasepaint makeup application.

1888 USA- The Actor's "Make-Up" Book-a Practical and Systematic Treatise on the Art of Making Up for the Stage by N. Helmer is published, a 76 page booklet "With Special Treatment On The Use of Theatrical Wigs and Beards, The Make-Up and Its Requisite Materials, The Different Features and Their Management, Typical Character Maskes, Etc."

The 1890s saw incredible innovations in makeup, most of which are still in use today, including:

- Nose wax (aka "mortician's wax" an item co-opted from the Victorian funeral industry)
- Black tooth wax (aka "cobbler's wax" an item taken from the shoe repair industry)

- Emil Noir (black tooth enamel)
- Cold cream and cocoa butter
- Mascara in multiple colors (a dark, soft makeup stick in a lipstick like holder that was used as both mascara and eyebrow pencil)
- Lipsticks
- Blue eyeliners
- Ladies liquid colors for arms and necks
- Paper Sticks for application of color (Tortillions - artist's blending tools)
- Wig joining paste
- Vaseline

1898 USA- Hageman's Makeup Book,* a witty text-only book on "Greasepaints, their origin, use and application" by playwright Maurice Hageman is published in Chicago by the Dramatic Publishing Company, then a major US supplier of stage makeup. This tiny booklet has a catalog of the makeup products and kits sold by the company printed on the back cover.

c. 1900 USA -The Makeup Book for Professionals* by F.W. Mack, full color pictures-only booklet showing the common types of makeup in use in the US.

c.1901 England – S.J. Adair Fitz-Gerald writes How to "Make-Up"* a longer booklet updating the material of the 1877 Art of "Make-up" booklet with instructions for the current grease paint products and more pictures, published by Samuel French.

1905 USA – James Young's full length B&W photo illustrated makeup book Making Up is sold in great profusion.

1909 England- Photo-illustrated B&W book The Art of Theatrical Makeup* by actor Morton Cavendish goes into detail about his mental process of designing makeup for each of his best known roles.

1914 USA -Max Factor flees Tsarist Russia with his family and ends up in Hollywood where he supplies movie actors with Leichner's greasepaint. After having problems with the heavy look of stage greasepaint sticks on film actors in 1922 (and being unsuccessful with convincing Leichner's to make lighter paints on a buying trip to Germany in the early 20's) he invented liquid greasepaint in tubes which went on more thinly than sticks. Later, in the 1930's he invents "pancake" makeup, cakes of water-based matte makeup, still used today, for giving an un-shiny look on color film. Makeup technical innovations after 1920 all come from the film industry.

1916 USA – The first edition of Dennison's Makeup Guide – a combination makeup how-to pamphlet and product catalog is printed. This work is revised and reprinted multiple times into the middle of the 20th century, complete with photos of blackface, yellowface and redface makeup of the most crude sort. The 1926 edition* of this guide is included in TMDI.

To learn more on the history of lighting go to <http://www.stage-lighting-museum.com>
http://www.castle.ckrumlov.cz/docs/en/zamek_5nadvori_svetla.xml
<http://www.northern.edu/wild/litedes/ldhist.htm>

For more about makeup and costumes, try my site: <http://costumes.org> To learn more about my makeup DVD set, Theatrical Makeup Design Interactive go to <http://theatricalmakeupdesign.com> Books marked with an * are included on TMDI in PDF form.