


# Chapter 64

## Scenic costume: the development of a costume design for the Opera Antiochus by Francesco Gasparini edition of 1712

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**Rosimeiri Naomi Nagamatsu**

**Debora Mizubuti Brito**

**Livia Laura Matté**

**Josiany Oening**

**Marcelo Capre Dias**

**Marcio Roberto Ghizzo**

**Elimar Plinio Machado**

### ABSTRACT

The objective of this project is to present the results of the development of a scenic costume built for the 1712 edition of Opera Antiochus by Francesco Gasparini, through a partnership between two higher education institutions: the Federal Technological University of Paraná and the State University of Londrina.

Therefore, as a methodology, action research, a bibliographic and iconographic survey of the European Baroque, zero waste modeling techniques, and modern tailoring and hand sewing were adapted for the reproduction of the scenic costume. In addition, the method described by Sobrinho for costume development was adapted for the creation of the scenic costume. The baroque costume consists of a shirt, shorts, jacket, and juxta corps. These costumes were reproduced to be used during the presentation of Italian Baroque Music & Grounds Arias from the Antiochus Opera by Francesco Gasparini in the 1712 edition. its reproduction through the adaptation of modern modeling methods as well as the conscientious use of resources.

**Keywords:** Fashion design, Scenic Costume, Zero waste.

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Opera emerged in Italy in the 16th century, when several amateur poets, artists, and musicians began an investigation of Greek Dramas in an attempt to produce works they believed to be the spirit of drama's origin. Music was initially fostered by the Church and naturally adapted to the needs of the Church. However, the Italians broke with the ways of the Church and gave solo actors to sing with the support of an orchestra, which resulted in a kind of song: Arias. They realized, then, the importance of the chorus in Greek plays and that music and dance served to increase the dramatic effect (ANDERSON, 1914).

Francesco Gasparini's 1705 opera Antiochus is divided into three acts and tells the story of Antiochus I Soter (325 BC – 261 BC), son of Seleucus I Nicator, one of Alexander the Great's generals and founder of the Seleucid dynasty. Antiochus has secretly fallen in love with his father's new wife, Stratonice, who is the daughter of the Macedonian king Demetrius I. The blaming passion gnaws at him and makes him sick. Antiochus is dying and Seleucus I is placed near the bed where his son is. But the doctor Erasistratus discovers the cause of the illness: Antiochus becomes agitated and his heart races when

Stratonice enters the room (Figure 1). Finally, the father recognizes the deep love and releases his wife so that the son can have the happiness he deserves. (WALSH, 1712, translation by Elimar Plinio Machado)

In Figure 1, the painting entitled "O mal de Antíoco" illustrated by Igres (1840), portrays Ancient Greece with the reproduction of architectural elements and their costumes, however, as mentioned by Anderson earlier, in operas, music and dancing served to heighten the dramatic effect. Therefore, it is clear then that in the first opera arias, there was no concern to portray the scenic costumes of the time, in this way, the singers wore everyday costumes to perform the Arias.

Starting from the fact that there was no concern in the portrayal of scenic costumes in operas, this work proposes to present the results of the development of a scenic costume built for the 1712 edition of Opera Antiochus by Francesco Gasparini. the Fashion Design Course at the Federal Technological University of Paraná – UTFPR and the Music Division of the Casa de Cultura of the State University of Londrina – UEL.

Figure 1 – The evil of Antiochus by Jean Auguste Dominique Igres 1840



Source: Musée Conde em Chantilly

## 2 SCENIC COSTUME

In addition to the dramatic effect of music, chorus, and dance described by Anderson (1914), stage costume also contributes to dramaturgy. To define the extension of dramaturgy, one can consider all the elements that compose it, starting from the principle that they are codes of dramatic communication, such as the text, the actor, the lighting, the scenarios, the music, the sounds, makeup, hairstyle, props, and costumes. The synchrony between all these elements contributes to the understanding of dramaturgy as a whole (Vasconcelos, 2019).

The theatrical costume or scenic costume is an element capable of guiding the spectator about the character in terms of gender, age, profession, hierarchical position, social class, religion, and nationality,

and is also a means of indicating the time and space of the action. The costumes help not only in building the character itself but contribute to the general understanding of the show, permeating the dramaturgy. (Macieira and Andrade, 2010) that is, the spectator can identify the individual characteristics of each character such as age, status, and temporality of the show. In addition, it is also capable of taking the spectator into the universe in which it is being staged, since each outfit is full of aesthetic elements that dialogue with the scene (CASTRO; COSTA 2010).

When the costume designer creates/proposes a theatrical costume, in addition to the text, several stories permeate his imagination, so that other possibilities for reading the characters are created. The construction of the character, therefore, is always walking between subjective and objective terrains, to delineate the contours of this new being. [...] In this way, it is possible to develop it so that it has a sculptural spectrum, that is, that shape, color, materials, and appearance are the foundations of its construction, the spectator has more reading possibilities, to emphasize the visuality of the scene, in addition to seeking the representation of reality (Almeida, 2010).

An example of the sculptural spectrum is the scenic costume of the musical: *O Banquete*, developed by Nagamatsu and Kuellar (2002) for the group Neuma University Ensemble of Ancient Music of the Music Division of the State University of Londrina - UEL. In this show, images of paintings from the time were observed and costumes were reproduced adapting materials that translated the scenic images of the 13th century, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 - The Banquet



Costume Designers: NAGAMATSU and CUELLAR (2002)  
Source: acervo NEUMA Ensemble Universitário de Música Antiga

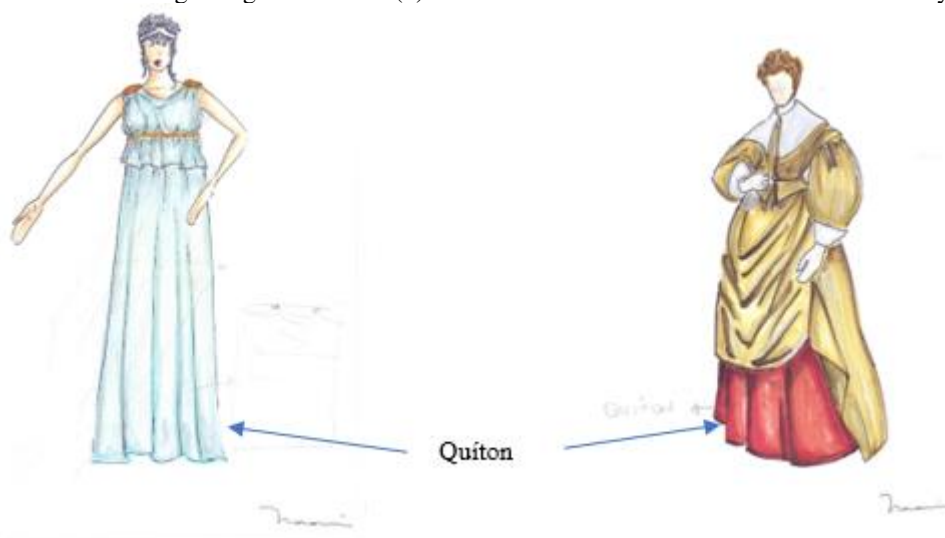
In addition to the sculptural spectrum, other scenic elements must be considered, such as the possible exchange of scenic costumes during the show. These exchanges must be carefully studied to cause the least discomfort to the actor/musician.

One of the examples of changing costumes was applied in the development of the scenic costume construction project for the Opera *La Liberazione di Ruggiero Dall'isola di Alcina*, as illustrated in Figure 3 (Nagamatsu, 2004). The 20 members of the chorus began the opera wearing Greek costumes: the Chiton, and then they dressed in a Baroque-style costume over the Chiton, incorporating the Chiton as an integral part of the Baroque costume. In Figure 3, one of the 20 proposals for scenic costumes of the choir members

is shown, highlighting here the unique development of each of the choir members, emphasizing that the scenic costume of the choir was not uniform, intending to capture more of the viewer's attention.

With the non-uniformity of the choir's costume, by focusing the eye on a single scenic costume, it is displaced from its function in the scenic system to which it represents, such as, for example, no longer representing the choir. And then, he presents a character be himself the elements of the proposition of the artistic experience, capable of generating unconscious projections in the eyes of those looking for an image (Almeida, 2010).

Figure 3: One of the proposals for a scenic costume sketch developed for a choir of 20 musicians.  
(a) Chiton worn at the beginning of the show (b) Renaissance dress worn over the Chiton for easy changing.



Source: Nagamatsu (2004)

In this way, the main elements can be in every detail observed by the costume designer when reading each of the scenic characters. Thus, some methodological proposals are necessary for alignment in the development, creation, and conception of scenic costumes.

### 3 METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The methodology used in this project was based on the understanding achieved through the analysis of research information and on experimental techniques as an improvement process (TRIPP, 2005) for the development of scenic costumes: action research. Thus, the knowledge obtained in practice during the development of a costume when obtained through action research is intended to be shared among research participants, musicians, and fashion designers. An important point to emphasize here is the cultural integration between the students of the Fashion Design Course at UTFPR Campus Apucarana and the musicians of the Music Division at UEL.

To achieve the objectives established in this project, the experimental techniques used for the construction of the scenic costume were the grouping of three methods carried out by Sobrinho (2021). The three methods were grouped into 4 thematic axes:

- Axis 1 – general project guidelines – considering aesthetic options, management style, the visual impact of the work, financial resources, and meetings with management;
- Axis 2 - technical knowledge for materialization - the relationship between the costume and the lighting and scenery, textile research, acquisition of material, relationship with the cast (measurements, photos, rehearsals), assistant labor, other ways of obtaining costumes (survey in thrift stores, collections of other costumes), design drawings, mapping the technical needs of costumes;
- Axis 3 – documentary, bibliographic and iconographic research – study on theoretical research; It is
- Axis 4 – the study of the narrative text – reading the text and its indications, elements of the narrative, decoupage, psychological profile of the characters, and aspects that the costumes can show on stage.

Students from the Fashion Design Course were selected to participate in the project. The students did not know about the development of costumes, since this area of professional activity is not addressed in the course disciplines. Awareness meetings and study of the narrative text were held so that students could understand the methodological process of building a costume.

In a first meeting with the Musical Director of Historically Informed Music, it was discussed which attributes the costume should have given the instruments that the musician could play such as the recorder and the viola da gamba. Regarding the design of the stage costume, it was decided that it would portray the baroque clothes of the beginning of the 18th century when the Arias from the Opera *Antiochus* edition of 1712 was performed.

#### **4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The complete Baroque costume consists of a shirt, shorts, a coat, and *juxta corps*.<sup>1</sup> (Köhler, 1993). Initially, documentary and iconographic research on baroque costumes was carried out to obtain technical knowledge to materialize the baroque costume about shapes, models, manufacturing process, types of fabrics, colors, and finishes used at the time.

The first piece reproduced was a white 100% cotton tricoline shirt. During the iconographic survey of the design and the process of making the baroque shirt, it was verified that it was a model made up of segments of rectangles fitted under the width of the fabric, as shown in Figure 4. When analyzing how the shirts were cut baroque style, the possibility of applying the zero concept waste<sup>2</sup> used in the development

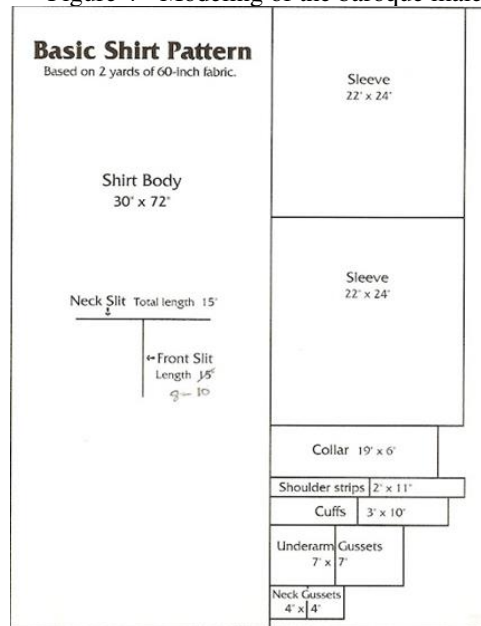
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<sup>1</sup> Long men's coats were worn in the second half of the 17th to 18th centuries. (Köhler, 1993)

<sup>2</sup> Zero waste is when the creative process starts to be carried out together with the steps of modeling and fitting the patterns to cut the fabric. (Italiano et al., 2022, p. 205) in order not to produce textile waste.

of the creation and modeling of clothing. The use of the zero waste concept in the construction of clothing is a way to reduce costs and not produce textile waste in the making of the baroque shirt.

Figure 4 - Modeling of the baroque male shirt



Source: [http://woodrunnersdiary.blogspot.com/2013/01/shirtfrock-pattern\\_7.html](http://woodrunnersdiary.blogspot.com/2013/01/shirtfrock-pattern_7.html)

In this way, the rectangles that would fit in a triline with 160 cm of fabric width and adequate size for the musician were calculated. The total consumption of the fabric was 176 cm in length. The shirt components were traced in rectangle formats in the dimensions: 3 parts of 4 x 176 cm for making the strips that gather the sleeves, 2 parts of 58 x 70 cm for making the sleeves, 1 part of 90 x 176 cm for the body, 1 part 46 x 20 cm the collar, 2 parts 12 x 12 cm form the armhole, two parts 8 x 46 cm are the cuffs and two parts 12 x 12 x 17 cm the shoulder, as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5 – Baroque shirt and its modeling with zero waste concept



Source: the authors

In the reproduction of the baroque costume, the modeling technique used was adapted from modern tailoring to provide comfort and practicality to the musician. A prototype of sleeveless shorts and jacket were developed in 100% polyester satin to test the fit and wearability of the scenic costume, as shown in figure 6.

Figure 6 – Prototype of baroque satin garment (a) shirt (b) coat (c) shorts



Source: the authors

In the first test, it was verified that this fabric does not have the necessary ergonomic characteristics for the musician to feel comfortable when playing the instrument. Satin is a very smooth fabric, which makes it difficult to use the viola da gamba. In this way, fabrics with a rough appearance were researched in the region and among the fabric samples raised for making the costume, the 100% polyester zebeline showed the best performance.

From the developed prototype, the models were improved and cut again in red zebeline. The shorts were made with a 5-button fastening system and an elastic waistband was adapted at the back to provide greater comfort to the musician.

To make the jacket and juxtacorps, the development method of jacket modeling described by Barros (1998) was adapted. Lace was manually applied to the front and cuffs of the juxtacorps sleeves, a very striking feature of European Baroque, as can be seen in figure 7 during the presentation of Historically Informed Music Season: Italian Baroque Music & Grounds Arias from the Antiochus Opera by Francesco Gaparini edition of 1712 at the Teatro Ouro Verde in the city of Londrina, state of Paraná.

Figure 7 – Complete Baroque scenic costume performing Arias from the Opera Antiochus by Francesco Gasparini



Photograph: Daniel Sebrian em 02/07/2022

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this project was to present the results of the development of a scenic costume built for the 1712 edition of Opera Antiochus by Francesco Gasparini, through a partnership between two higher education institutions: the Federal Technological University of Paraná and the State University of Londrina. This partnership promoted cultural integration between the UTFPR Fashion Design Course and the UEL music division with the production of a baroque scenic costume.

This project presented Fashion Design students with a new area of activity in the labor market – since this area, the production and development of scenic costumes for theater, musicals and cinema is not directly explored in any of the disciplines of the course. In addition, students experienced the routine of developing a costume, learned new product development methodologies and had the opportunity to enjoy the performance of a baroque opera, a rare show in this region.

With that, as a final result of this work, there was an appreciation of cultural diversity among the project participants when working with a different group of performing arts, thus contributing to the sustainable development of culture, a way to protect and preserve the historical and cultural heritage.

The project also made it possible to apply knowledge in an interdisciplinary way, through research on historical costumes and their reproduction and adaptation of modern modeling methods, as well as the conscious use of resources through the concepts of zero waste.

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