

Planning A Reproduction Outfit

By Anne Neely-Beck

In this article I will talk about how to prepare a reproduction outfit to be judged but with a “twist.” The “twist” being, I entered fashion judging at the MARC National Meet last June in Williamsburg, VA. I thought if MARC was going to be judged by MAFCA guidelines at the World Meet in Dallas this year, then I should be able to prepare myself to be judged by MARC guidelines. Living in the Southeast, most of us are members of both MAFCA and MARC.

The Plan

I studied the *MARC-Model A Fashion Standards* from front to back several times. I took it with me if I was going shopping.

Major Garment



My major garment was to be an evening gown made from a 1931 reproduction Vogue pattern. I had this dress made for me when I was a few pounds lighter, and I loved it, so I decided to have it made again.

I found some beautiful dull satin on sale at Hancock Fabrics, I bought an extra yard and a half, which turned out to be a good idea.

If you can't sew the item yourself, you have to trust your seamstress. Show her the pictures of what a reproduction seam and other construction details should look like.

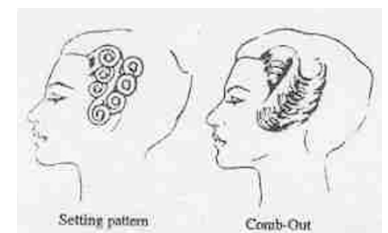
These specifics can be found in both the *MAFCA Fashion Guidelines* and *MARC Model A Fashion Standards*.

The Fitting

My seamstress, Sara Key, made a mock pattern of the top of the dress as I am larger than normal through the bust. Unfortunately she didn't take into account that my mid-section and waist are much smaller than my bust. The first fitting was a disaster. She altered the mock pattern and made it out of the satin. The second fitting didn't go well, either. Mrs. Sara had to go back to the “drawing board” and make more alterations. Thank goodness I had bought extra fabric as the top part of the dress had to be made twice. The moral of the story is always buy extra fabric if available.

Headgear/Hairdo

With an evening gown, a hat is not required, but the proper hairdo is. I wanted finger waves. I decided to follow the directions for making them in the *MAFCA, A Book of Fashion Facts*, (Pages 233 and 234). Let's say I was less than successful in that attempt. The next step was to find a beauty salon in Williamsburg who would do finger waves. I got online and went to the Yahoo yellow pages and called around without much success. As it turned out, I was also looking for a florist. The florist hooked me up with the beauty salon.



Makeup

Makeup was easy. I studied MAFCA's *A Book of Fashion Facts*, (page 382.) Then I practiced so I would be able to do my own makeup the day of the fashion judging.

Coordinated Apparel

Outer garments

This part of fashion judging was the easiest to me. I decided on a shawl made out of the same fabric used during the Model A era. I found a pure silk shawl with rolled seams on the Internet and black cotton gloves with gores that were a tad too short. The gloves were the best I could do at the time. I planned to keep looking.

Undergarments

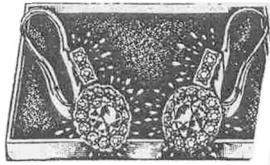
I found some beautiful silk tap pants circa 1939 on the Internet. For my bandeau, I decided to wrap my breasts as they needed to have a flatter appearance to look like the Model A era.

Accessories

This area was easy for me also. I used the pearls my husband gave me when we were married. The necklace closure is a clasp like that of the era. The clasp is called “pierced case fish hook clasp” and is found on page A-19 in the *MARC-Model A Era Fashion Standards*.



Above: pierced case fish hook clasps. Note different designs on cases. Jewelers typically call this a fish hook clasp, but in magazines it was called a safety clasp as others also were. This is also called a marquise filigree. Note fish hook look to the clasp.



German back wires, ridge and wire back, hinges in back. 14K yellow gold, set with imitation diamonds and ruby red stones. Sears, 1931 Summer

My earrings were bought at a “home” jewelry party and were pearls with “German back wires” as found on page A-26 *MARC-Model A Era Fashion Standards*.

I wore a wedding band with ten small diamonds similar to one shown on page A-24 of the *MARC-Model A Era Fashion Standards*. I had several purses to choose from that I had collected over the years.



In May I found the perfect purse at an antique mall. It was constructed with seeded pearls and made in Czechoslovakia and looked similar to the one on page A-10 in the *MARC-Model A Era Fashion Standards*.

Footgear-Shoes

I decided to wear black pumps with leather soles. I had read in the *MARC-Model A Era Fashion Standards* (page F-18) that bows were often added to shoes for evening to dress them up. I decided to add black velvet bows.

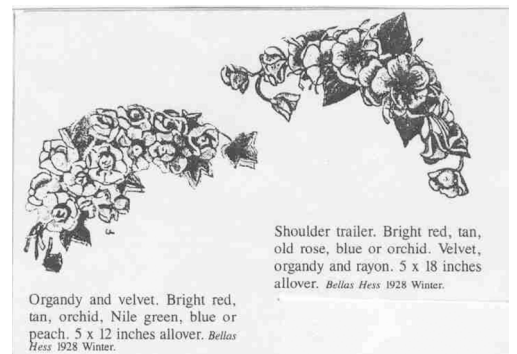
Stockings-Socks

I had a pair of NOS stockings that ran as soon as I put them on. I bought reproduction seamed stockings from the Internet along with some rolled garters I found on Ebay.

Additional

My additional items included a corsage I had made in Williamsburg. I found the florist via the Yahoo yellow pages. The florist hooked me up with the hair salon.

I faxed a picture of a “shoulder trailer” pictured on page A-17 of the *MARC-Model A Era Fashion Standards*. I asked them to duplicate the corsage with real flowers that would have been used during the era. The corsage was beautiful but too big. I also had a pure cotton hankie in my evening bag along with a key that would have been used in a front door during the era.



Organdy and velvet. Bright red, tan, orchid, Nile green, blue or peach. 5 x 12 inches allover. Bellas Hess 1928 Winter.

Shoulder trailer. Bright red, tan, old rose, blue or orchid. Velvet, organdy and rayon. 5 x 18 inches allover. Bellas Hess 1928 Winter.

The Trip

The whole trip to Williamsburg was going to be an experience as we were driving our Model A Roadster, which I fondly call, "The Mistress." She is called that because "she" took a lot of money to be restored and "she" continues to take a lot of money to be maintained. The trip was to take us up the coast of North Carolina and through the Outer Banks. Carrying my formal dress was my biggest concern. We removed the rumble seat and use the space the best we could by securing objects with bungee cords so they would not slide. When we met our group 120 miles into the trip, I planned to transfer the dress to the backseat of our friend's Tudor Sedan.

Well-laid plans don't always work. It was impossible to get the dress out at that point because of all the shifting that wasn't suppose to happen. It would have to wait until we stopped for the night in North Myrtle Beach, SC. The dress was transferred to Abbie and Brenda's car successfully. The trip was great and very scenic. I kept a diary along the way expressing my feeling of nervousness. We left on Wednesday and arrived in Williamsburg on Saturday night. On Monday we did a trial run to the beauty salon and then on to the convention center. On Tuesday I am sure my anxiety was getting on everybody nerves. I tried on my outfit in the hotel to see how it all came together and how long it took me to dress.

Judgment Day

I woke up nervous as could be and tried to eat and get ready to go to beauty salon. It was raining; the only day it had rained the whole trip. Was this a "sign" of things to come for the rest of the day? The hairdresser was a sweetheart and went right to work on my hair. My hair is fine and straight but I have lots of it, which turned out to be a problem with the rain and humidity. My hair would not dry! Finally after two hours it dried and just in time because we just had enough time to get to the convention center and get dressed before I was scheduled to be judged. The corsage had been delivered to the beauty salon and wow, was it bigger than I thought it should be.

We arrived at the convention center and my friend Sam (Samantha) was there to help me get dressed. She pressed the dress for me and helped me get into the dress. Boy was I nervous, so nervous that when I had to get my picture taken I forgot to take off my modern glasses. It was now time for my entrance.

The Judgment Room

I was very uneasy, being that I am a MAFCA EFC member, entering a room full of MARC judges who are going to form an opinion of my ensemble. The judges were very nice and tried to make me feel at ease, right away. They asked questions and I answered them. I had documentation of my dress pattern but had failed to put the end of the bolt of fabric with the fabric content in my suitcase. I had noted the pages in the *MARC-Model A Era Fashion Standards* for my jewelry, purse, and trailer corsage. I had no idea what my score would be, but I knew I should have brought the fabric content of the dress.

The Fashion Show and Award Presentation

The fashion show was held at William and Mary College. I am back into the dress again. My name was called and I went to the stage. My too heavy corsage started to pull the shoulder strap of my dress down. My husband said as I walked across the stage I flipped that corsage back to my shoulder and he cracked up! Good thing I couldn't hear or see him. Of course I don't even remember doing it. The award I won was the MARC Award of Achievement which requires 130-139 points out of 150. My score was 138.6. I was excited to have won an award.

As it turned out after getting my score sheet back and reviewing it, I should have not added the bows to the shoes. The judges did notice my gloves were too short. Also, my bust had not been wrapped tight enough to make the dress blouse as it should. Of course the judges thought the trailer corsage was too big, but I already knew that. They thought there was too much of a contrast between my black accessories and my pink dress.

Conclusion

When writing this article and looking back on the experience, I think of it as a great learning experience, and one that I would do again. I will be honest and say it is easier to judge than to be judged. I hope at the World Meet in Dallas later this year, we will have many MARC and MAFCA entrants. We will be following the *MAFCA Fashion Guidelines* with one MARC judge and two MAFCA judges for each area judged. We will have the exciting new category Model A Era Image that was introduced in Oregon last summer and seems to be a big hit. I hope this new category will encourage more people to enter, now that they can combine original, reproduction, and “off the rack” fashions for the Model A Era Image.



Moral of the Story

Do your research, and have documentation for any variances from the printed standards for your outfit, whenever possible, whether it is Original, Reproduction, or Model A Era Image. Be prepared, and you will have a successful judging and learning experience.

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