

War Horse Costume Question

Drama

Albert Narracot (Details on Teams)

Overview/First paragraph

War Horse first performed on 17th October 2007, on the Olivier Stage at the National Theatre, and I saw a live recording of this production. It is a creative adaptation from the children's novel of the same name by Michael Morpurgo, and the script was written by Nick Stafford. It was directed by Marianne Elliot and Tom Morris. *War Horse* follows the story of Albert Narracott and his horse Joey, from their childhood in Devon to their separation during WW1 and their eventual reunion. Although the play is not epic theatre, it is an epic story, spanning six years, from 1912 to 1918, and it uses some epic theatre techniques, such as breaking the action with song and having an episodic structure.

Costume

Johanna Coe designed the costumes for *War Horse*, in conjunction with Rae Smith, the head of design for the whole play. A costume designer's role is to communicate the age, status, and dramatic function of each character through their clothing, while complementing the tone of the play. Coe chose to use period designs for the costumes to ground *War Horse* in its time period, allowing the set design to be representational and minimalistic. All of the civilian, domestic costumes are realistic for the Edwardian Era and the military uniforms are based on the real armies' outfits. The costume design also helps distinguish between the different nationalities in the play – the British wear brown, the French wear blue, and the Germans wear grey. This is useful in a play with such a large cast (about 25), and is also historically accurate, as these were the colours of the nations' military uniforms.

Relate to
key
characters

Friedrich Mueller (see overleaf



★ QUESTION ★

Describe how the costumes were used to create a sense of period and/or location in the production. Analyse and evaluate how successful the costumes were in communicating the period and/or location of the production to the audience. You could make reference to: • fabric, texture, fit and shape • colour and style • a scene or section and/or the production as a whole.

Friedrich Muller

- Beginning of Act 2 – soldier's uniform
- Made of stiffened wool
- Red fabric strap above brim
- Brass fitting at front
- Makeup gives him the appearance of small cuts on face
- Grey jacket
- Made of thick wool
- Long sleeves, cuffs of same material and colour at ends
- Double breasted, 5 dull brass buttons on each side
- Shoulder straps with red and gold Hauptmann insignia on
- Grey scarf, under jacket
- Leather belt, around waist
- Brown
- Silver buckle in centre
- Gun holster attached, on right
- Grey cotton trousers
- Dark grey knee length boots
- Lighter grey mud on jacket, trousers, boots – he's already been on the front
- Based on German army uniform, after unification of German city states
- The 'Feldgrau' uniform
- Later decides to go AWOL and desert by pretending to be a medic
- Takes off his jacket; takes coat off dead man; puts that coat on instead; takes dead medic's hat