



USE, CARE AND CLEANING OF STAGE DRAPERIES

Properly cared for, a set of stage draperies can last for many years. Misused, they can be unsightly matters in a few years. Your drapery setting represents an investment of many thousands of dollars and in future years replacement costs may be even greater. Anything you can do in establishing good housekeeping practices to extend the life of your drapery will be time and money well spent.

CLEANLINESS

Dust is the greatest enemy of cotton velour. It will discolor the nap and weaken the threads of the fabric. The equipment needed to clean will be a good broom, dust mop, and a vacuum cleaner, this equipment should only be used for the stage curtains.

When not in use, make it a practice to fly your drapes. This will keep hand stains and excessive wear off the curtain.

FLAMEPROOFING

By law, all stage drapery fabrics must be treated for fire retardancy. This does not mean fireproof but rather that the treated fabric will char under continuous flame or heat but not flame or smolder by and of itself. Great care should be taken to insure that the drapes do not come into direct contact with lighting instruments or interrupt the light stream in close proximity to an instrument. Unsightly discoloration, charred spots or holes could result.

Curtains fabricated of the flameproofed cotton have a slight tendency to draw moisture from the air. This normally poses no problem as air circulation protects the curtain from concentrations of moisture. Try not to leave traveler curtains open to stashed condition for long periods of time.

If moisture concentrates, or if water is spilled on the curtain, the flameproofing will be leached to the surface and give the fabric a blotchy appearance. If efflorescence occurs, the curtain may be cleaned in the following manner:

Obtain several vegetable sponges (dime store or supermarket variety). Moisten the sponges and wring out as dry as possible. Brush the spots lightly. Because the deposits transfer to the sponges, they should be rinsed and wrung out frequently. Brushing should be first against the nap, then with the nap to restore texture.

TEARS AND SNAGS

The nap of the velour fabrics is not tightly locked into the mesh of the backing. When a tear or snag occurs, the nap will loosen and fall out at that point. For that reason, it is wise to repair tears immediately. Repair permanently with iron-on tape of approximate color and sew edges of the tear using an overcast stitch with matching thread.

REMOVAL, PACKING AND STORAGE

In a working house, it is sometimes necessary to remove and store curtain drapery to accommodate the hangings of touring productions. In the case of velour masking pieces, borders, legs, black-outs, etc., proceed in the following manner:

First, sweep the stage. Lower the batten, being sure that the bottom of the velour being lowered is pulled downstage (towards the audience) enough to insure that the face fabric does not touch the floor.

Lock off the batten and unload the counterweight arbor as the curtain is untied.. Untie the curtain and lay it on its back, fully spread out the fold curtain face-to-face, hem-to-crown. Repeat until you have a workable fold (about three feet). Then fold each end into center. Repeat until you have a workable bundle. Storage hampers should be provided and labeled for each curtain, Store curtains in a dry place.

NOTE: Use extreme caution when adding or removing loads. If batten and counterweights are not within 50-100 pounds of each other, a "run-away" batten situation can occur. Do not rely on rope locks to hold more than 50-100 pounds of unequal tension.