

Oliver Messel Schools' Resources

Oliver Messel's
Professional
Practice

Suitable for
Key Stages
3, 4 and 5



Oliver Messel's Professional Practice

The following document has been designed for use by teachers and students alongside the Oliver Messel Schools' Resources. It includes dates and information relating to Oliver Messel's professional career.

Scenography

1925: *Zéphyr et Flore*, ballet (masks).

1926 - 1931: Various revues including *This Year of Grace!* and *Wake Up and Dream!* (masks and costumes).

1932: *Helen!*, play (costume and sets) and *The Miracle*, play (costumes).

1933: *Mother of Pearl*, musical (sets) and *Revels in Rhythm*, revue (masks).

1935: *Glamorous Night*, musical (sets and costumes).

1936: *The Country Wife*, play (costumes and sets).

1937: *Francesca da Rimini*, ballet, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, play (both - costumes and sets).

1940: *The Infernal Machine*, play, and *The Tempest*, play (both - costumes and sets).

1942: *Comus*, ballet (costumes and sets), and *Big Top*, revue (costumes).

1945: *The Rivals*, play (sets and costumes).

1946: *The Sleeping Beauty*, ballet (costumes and sets).

1947: *Die Zauberflöte*, opera (costumes and sets).

1949: *The Lady's Not for Burning*, play and *Tough at the Top*, musical (both - sets and costumes).

1950: *Ring Round the Moon*, play, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, opera, *The Little Hut*, play, and *The Queen of Spades*, opera (all - costumes and sets).

1951: *Romeo and Juliet*, play, and *Indomeneo*, opera (both - costumes and sets).



1952: *Under the Sycamore Tree*, play, *La Cenerentola*, opera and *Letter from Paris*, play (all - costumes and sets).

1953: *Homage to the Queen*, ballet (costumes and sets).

1954: *The Dark is Light Enough*, play, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, opera, *Le Comte Ory*, opera, and *House of Flowers*, musical (all - costumes and sets).

1955: *Zémire et Azor*, opera, and *Le Nozze di Figaro*, opera (both - costumes and sets).

1956: *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, opera, and *Die Zauberflöte*, opera (both - costumes and sets).

1958: *Breath of Spring*, play, *Samson*, opera, and *The School for Scandal*, play (all - costumes and sets).

1959: *Rashomon*, play, *Der Rosenkavalier*, opera, and *Le Nozze di Figaro*, opera (all - costumes and sets).

1962: *Ariadne auf Naxos*, opera (costumes and sets).

1964: *Traveller without Luggage*, play (costumes and sets).

1965: *Twang!!*, musical (costumes and sets).

1973: *Gigi*, musical (costumes).

1976: *The Sleeping Beauty*, ballet (costumes and sets reworked).

Above: Coloured reproduction of Oliver Messel's set design for Theseus' palace for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1937, OHM/1/1/5/13

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Filmography

1934: *Private Life of Don Juan*, Dir. Alexander Korda (costumes).

1934: *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, Dir. Harold Young (costumes).

1936: *Romeo and Juliet*, Dir. George Cukor (co-designed costumes and sets).

1940: *The Thief of Baghdad*, Dir. Michael Powell, Ludwig Berger and Tim Whelan (co-designed costumes).

1945: *Caesar and Cleopatra*, Dir. Gabriel Pascal (costumes, props and art direction).

1946: *Carnival*, Dir. Stanley Haynes (costumes for ballet sequence).

1949: *Queen of Spades*, Dir. Thorold Dickinson (set and costumes).

1959: *Suddenly, Last Summer*, Dir. Joseph L. Mankiewicz (set and costumes).

Design Commissions

1952: Silk scarf for Cresta Silks Ltd. commemorating the Queen's coronation in 1953.

1953: The Coronation Collection of silk brocade patterns for Sekers Fabrics Ltd. and programme cover for Glyndebourne Festival.

1956: Doll's house for International Paints Ltd. advertising campaign in *House and Garden*, May issue.

1957: Chapter illustrations for *Delightful Food*, by Adrienne Allen and Marjorie Salter, published by Sidgwick and Jackson, London.

1963: Designs for Donegal Carpets, Ireland, and cutlery designs (not executed).

Right: Colour reproduction of an illustration by Oliver Messel from the book *Delightful Food* for the chapter on soups and sauces, 1937, OHM/1/8/4/3 and black and white photograph of a costume sketch by Oliver Messel for Cleopatra in a formal robe and headdress from the film *Caesar and Cleopatra*, c.1943-46, OHM/1/4/2/8/8



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Interiors and Architecture

1920s - 1960s: Various murals (including San Marco Restaurant, London, and Wright Ludington's villa Val Verde, Santa Barbara), party decorations (The Georgian Society Ball, Osterley Park, London) and small-scale interiors.

1942 - 44: Restoration and redecoration of Assembly Rooms, Norwich.

1946: Designs for new proscenium arch and curtains for Glyndebourne Opera House, Sussex.

1950: Decorations for auditorium and the Royal Box, Royal Opera House, London.

1953: Interiors for suite of rooms at the Dorchester Hotel, London, decoration of the Royal Box, Royal Opera House, London and façade of the Dorchester Hotel in honour of the Queen's coronation.

1954: Interiors and window displays for Justerini & Brooks wine merchants, London, wedding suite at the Dorchester Hotel, London, and decorations for the Royal Box, Royal Opera House, London for state visit of King of Sweden.

1956: Interior for the Pavilion Room at the Dorchester Hotel, London.

1957: Designs for reconstruction of Reader's Digest Office, Paris.

1959: Interiors for Rosehill Theatre, Whitehaven and Billy Rose Theatre, New York.

1959: Interior and exterior of Rayne shoe shop, London.

1960 - 63: Interior for Flaxley Abbey, Gloucestershire.

1961 - 63: Interior for Assembly Rooms, Bath.

1963 - 78: Interior and exterior designs for over 35 houses in the Caribbean including Les Jolies Eaux for HRH Princess Margaret in Mustique, Queen's Park Theatre Complex, Barbados, and the Cotton House Hotel and series of properties on Mustique for Colin Tennant.



Above: Coloured transparency of the interior of Rayne shoe shop, photographer unknown, c.1959, OHM/1/10/5/29/6 and brown ink, wash, gouache and pencil on board, concept sketch for Queen's Park Piazza, by Oliver Messel, c.1965-79 © Theatre Collection, OHM/1/14/37/83-A

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Exhibitions (portraiture and theatre designs)

1925: *Masks* (group exhibition), Claridge Galleries, London.

1933: *Designs and Maquettes*, LeFevre Gallery, London.

1936: *Designs for Romeo and Juliet*, Leicester Galleries, London.

1938: *Paintings by Oliver Messel (Portraits)*, Leicester Galleries, London, *Designs for The Theatre*, Redfern Gallery, London, and *Paintings and Designs by Oliver Messel*, Carstairs Gallery, New York.

1947: *Designs for Die Zauberflöte*, Royal Opera House, London.

1948: *Designs for the Film of Pushkin's The Queen of Spades*, Leicester Galleries, London.

1951: *Designs for a Cochran Production*, Redfern Gallery, London.

1957: *Designs for A Midsummer Night's Dream and Designs for Homage to the Queen*, Brussels.

1959: *Paintings for Fabric Design* (with Cecil Beaton and Graham Sutherland), Bruton Street, London, and *Paintings and Designs for the Theatre*, Sagittarius Gallery, New York.



1962: *Oliver Messel, Paintings*, Ohana Gallery, London.

1966: *Theatre Designs by Oliver Messel*, Wright Hepburn Gallery, London.

1983: *Oliver Messel*, V&A, London (note after Oliver's death in 1978).

The Oliver Messel: Wake Up and Dream
Schools' Resources have been supported by
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Above: Black and white photograph of Oliver Messel and HRH Princess Margaret observing a window display with one of Messel's Seker's monkeys and set models, photographer unknown, October 1966, OHM/1/7/7/67

Front cover: Black and white photograph of dancer wearing a Papier-mâché mask made by Oliver Messel from an album labelled 'Paintings and Masks 1926-1935', photographer unknown, c.1926-35, OHM/1/7/3/1/13



Theatre Collection



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