

Actress grows old for role in 'The Shadow Box'



Joyce Feurring arrives at the Attic Theatre.

Applying base is one of the first steps in make-up.

By straining tendons, Ms. Feurring fills in shadowed areas of neck.

The transformation: Aging - 30 years.

Performer uses skill in make-up

By ETHEL SIMMONS

Actress Joyce Feurring of Franklin ages 30 years, in make-up, for her role in "The Shadow Box" at the Attic Theatre in Detroit's Greektown. Ms. Feurring, a professional stage and TV actress, is appearing as guest artist in the Attic Theatre production, which opened in August and runs through September. The play by Michael Cristofer received the 1977 Pulitzer Prize and the Tony Award. The Attic Theatre, which was launched two years ago, has received national publicity and acclaim, especially for last year's drama "Streamers." Reviews for "The Shadow Box" have been laudatory, and one of the reviews went out over the Associated Press Wire, Ms. Feurring said.

HOW AN ACTOR makes up, as part of his art, is a special interest held by Ms. Feurring. In "The Shadow Box," which is about three terminally-ill patients in a hospice, she plays one of them, named Felicity.

Davina Cook, a founding member of the Attic Theatre, plays her daughter Agnes. Ms. Cook's husband Don, who is a vice-president of Roadside Attractions Attic Theatre, photographed Ms. Feurring in before, during and after stages of her make-up, for the pictures that accompany this article.

Steps in make-up, said Ms. Feurring, begin by applying cold cream to remove street make-up. This is tissued off but still leaves protection for the skin.

Then, base is applied. The aging process begins by applying low lights or shadows, to make features recede, on the hollows of the cheeks, temples, eye sockets and areas of the neck.

Highlights bring features out, or forward. Ms. Feurring applies white make-up to bring forward tendons on the neck and the cheeks and nose. She accentuates all the hollowed-out areas by hitting protruding areas with the white base stick.

SHE USES a brown pencil, thin and light, where wrinkles and lines will develop. You scrunch up your face to find them.

After you line in brown, you highlight with white. The make-up is blended by wiping through, to soften the edges just a little.

Stippling the whole make-up with a reddish-brown color gives a more natural depth and skin tone to her appearance, Ms. Feurring finds.

Powdering heavily with translucent powder absorbs grease from the make-up, leaving only color, and she is ready to go onstage without fear that her make-up will run or smear. "I usually start my make-up at the theater at 6:15 p.m., for an 8 o'clock curtain," Ms. Feurring said. One afternoon I did my make-up at home, at 3:30 p.m., because I wanted to stay later and prepare dinner for my family. At the table, my husband said, 'Look the other way!' and my daughter said, 'Is this the way you're going to look when you're old?'"

MS. FEURRING said, "You find where the lines are going to come," when you apply stage make-up for aging, but she thinks one would be lucky to achieve real-life longevity, so she isn't disturbed.

Her stage daughter, Davina Cook, said, "The Shadow Box" is not a story about people waiting to die. The theme of the play is a reaffirmation of life.

"Many people in their lives have a dying parent. They can relate to it."

Performances of the drama are offered Thursday-Sunday at the Attic, in Trappers Alley, in a 100-year-old structure originally used by fur traders.

Late this fall the Attic Theatre hopes to move from its present theater seating 140 persons to its own building, around the corner at 525 Lafayette.

TWO HUNDRED theater-goers will be able to see performances there. The Attic is renovating an old building and seeks help (both supplies and peoplepower).

"The play has been well reviewed and we've had marvelous houses," Ms. Feurring said of "The Shadow Box."

She said many of the playgoers are from suburban Detroit, particularly the Birmingham area.

"There really is a renaissance spirit," Ms. Cook said. "We happened to choose Greektown just when that spirit took hold. There's no reason we can't support our artists in this community."



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