

Costumers: Romance, horror themes are popular for Halloween this year

NEW YORK (AP) — Romance and horror, not necessarily combined, are the hot themes for adults dressing up this Halloween, partly because "people want to get their mind off the stock market," a leading costumer said Thursday.

Mark Beige, president of Rubie's Costume Co. in Queens, which also outfits off-Broadway and television shows, said, "There's a degree of escapism."

Jeanette Centrowitz, co-owner of Universal Costumes in Manhattan's theater district, agreed, "Everything in the Romantic period is going like hotcakes."

"We have ballgowns going out the door one after the other. The men are very much into musketeer outfits and Amadeus."

In previous years, said Centrowitz, "I had women walking around wearing Michael Jackson jackets and men's pirate costumes."

Beige said many of his female customers will be dressing as harem girls, French maids, sorceresses or "she-devils." The men want to be Dracula, a gorilla or one of the Three Musketeers.

A costume that leaves little to the imagination was modeled Thursday by Elvira, the Los Angeles television personality who presides over a "creature feature" show.

During a visit to Rockefeller Center, she drew stares in her signature attire: garish makeup, a clingy black dress with a slit to the hips and a dangerously low neckline, a dagger belt buckle and black nail polish.

Beige said horror-movie monsters are a heavy influence this Halloween, especially Jason from "Friday the 13th" and Freddie Krueger from "Nightmare on Elm Street."

Mike Burke, owner of ABC Costume Corp. in Brooklyn, which stocked 3,000 fantasies for the season, said his biggest themes are pirates, French maids, Dracula and horror-movie monsters.

Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker masks were doing "pretty fair." But there was no Oliver North, because Halloween masks were manufactured too early in the year to take advantage of that potential trend, he said.

Big band leader dies at 74 after 50-year music career

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Big band leader Woody Herman, whose 50-year career took him from smart ballrooms to African villages and from blues to rock 'n' roll, died Thursday. He was 74.

Herman, who was suffering from congestive heart failure, emphysema and pneumonia, died of cardiopulmonary arrest at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, a hospital spokesman said.

Through a series of bands, more or less dubbed "The Thundering Herd" for their fierce energy, Herman kept pace

with a dizzying variety of changes: blues to bebop and rock-influenced jazz.

The clarinet-wielding pianist was never content to stick with old standbys, such as "Honey," "Northwest Passage" and "Galdonia."

In the 1960s, he played with the likes of Stan Getz and Neal Hefti shared the

stage with Herbie Hancock, who played arrangements for "Light My Fire," and had a gold record, "Light My Fire," and his own show.

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