Angel Gowns – Gathered Organza skirt overlay

By Dani Castley

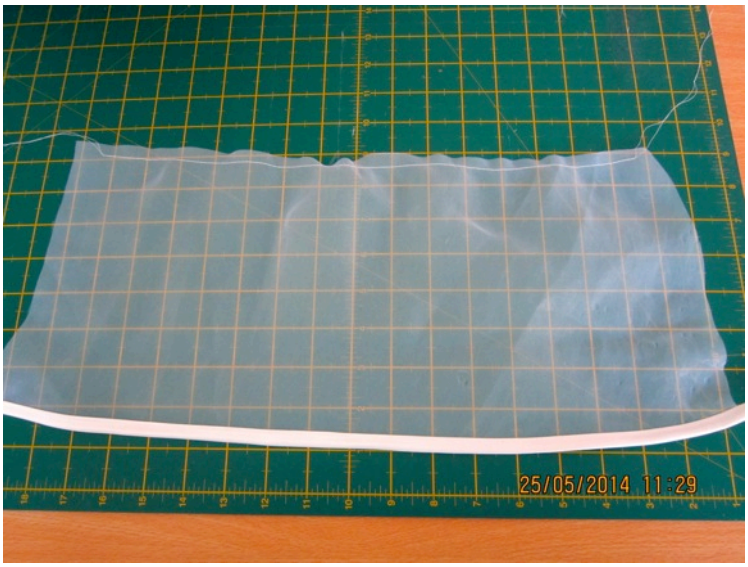
I want to start by saying that I am not an expert dressmaker, and I don't profess to be perfect at these things. This tutorial is just to inspire you, and give you a few steps to start you off. I fully expect that you will take these simple steps, and move onto bigger, and more creative things.

To start with, you are going to need a base gown. Complete the gown with all steps, leaving out the waist ties for the moment.

Depending on your design, you may find its better to put the waist ties at the centre back or on top of the overskirt.

Cut your organza overlay panel. You are going to be gathering this panel, so make sure it is wider than the full width of the gown. A small amount will give a soft gather, twice the width of the gown, will give you a fluffy, tutu-like effect. Length should be the same as a measurement from on the bodice (I choose in line with just under the arms) to the hemline. Slightly longer is not a problem.

NOTE: Its important to have this panel "on grain" or having the threads in the fabric running vertical and horizontal. Being off grain will cause bias stretch, and this will impact on the finished result. (my fabric was the last bit I had, and so was slightly off grain).



Finish the bottom edge of the organza. This is where creativity, available options and personal preference come in. I have used 25mm satin bias binding, and folded it around the edge, stitching down with the machine. Other options are grosgrain ribbon, rickrack or lace. Roll-edge hemming on an overlocker is also an option.

While you are at the sewing machine, put a row of gathering stitches, along the top edge.

Find the centre front of the gown and mark with a pin.

Do the same with the gathered organza

Lay the organza over the gown, matching the centre fronts, and then pin the organza to the gown, at that point.

Using the bobbin thread on the gathering stitch, pull up the organza, distributing the gathers evenly. If you gather up the organza from each side into the middle, it helps to keep the gathers even and well spaced.
Make sure the front is level, and that the back edges match.

NOTE: While you want the gathers to be even, often its good to have slightly more at the front, as this is the area "on show".

Really hard to see photo alert !

Yep, you can't see it too well, but machine stitch the overlay to the gown, using a narrow zig zag.

Make sure you leave extra at the centre back edges, to fold in for the hems.

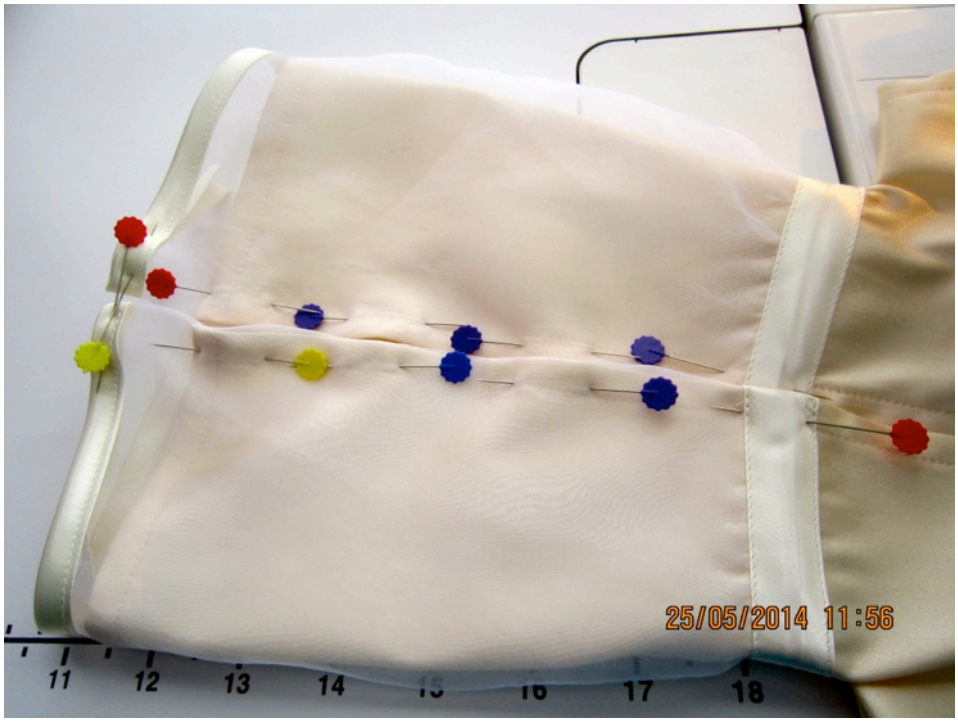
NOTE: If you are planning to hand attach beaded lace or other embellishment from the wedding dress, please skip the next step.

Next you will be covering the raw edge of the gathered panel. This is a matter of preference: I am using 25mm bias binding, but satin or grosgrain ribbon, rickrack or any other embellishment that can be machine sewn will do fine.

Pin the bias over the top of the raw edge of the organza. Ensure that the binding is level across the front, and is even where the back meets. Make sure there is overhang enough to be folded over the centre back edges for hemming.

Use the machine to stitch first one, and then the other side of the binding, using a slightly longer than normal stitch.

Those decorative stitches on our sewing machines, that we never use, would be a nice touch here.



Fold the organza (and binding if you are using it) around the already hemmed centre back edge.

(note: we do this separately, because these fabrics are slippery little suckers, and its easier to do one layer at a time)

Check that the bottom edges are lined up.

Sew with a straight stitch along both sides of the centre back.

<u>If you are using embellished lace from the wedding dress</u>:

Pin the lace in place, over the raw edge of the organza, and then carefully hand stitch into place.

Attach the ribbons, at the neck, and either at the side seam or centre back, depending on the design you have created.

And now you are done.

Congrats!