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Designing Theatre Lighting for New Works Festival 2020

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Loyola Marymount University
University Honors
Program

Designing Theatre Lighting for New Works Festival 2020

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements of the University Honors Program
of Loyola Marymount University

by

Bridger Caicedo

29 April 2020

Goals:

1. Learn the process of lighting design
2. Pre-production
3. Plotting/VectorWorks
4. Hanging, Circuiting, Focusing
5. The Board
6. Designing (turning ideas into reality)
7. Color Archetypes and Mood onstage
8. Creating Cues for 10 shows
9. Post-Production
10. Paperwork/Portfolio Needs

Goals Met:

I was not able to meet most of these goals due to the intense outbreak of the novel COVID-19 virus. This was extremely disappointing as it did not allow me to put up to 12 shows on my resume going forward into the professional world of theatre. However, I was able to accomplish a few of my goals, not to the extent I would have liked, but close enough to be considered executed.

I learned quite a bit about pre-production, attending meetings with directors, writers, and cast to begin to assemble ideas for the design in my head. Directors and writers come in different categories. Some are extremely laissez-faire, seemingly letting the design components come together on their own, with little directorial input. On the other side of the spectrum, there are directors who are incredibly invested in their productions and are rather rigid when it comes to the design components, with extensive inspiration and pre-planning involved. I would have

liked to work with all of the different types of directors involved in the New Works Festival (NWF) to experience who was enjoyable to work for.

In terms of plotting, I was able to garner some experience with this. I planned to work on a fellow student's senior thesis as a lighting designer, but this was also terminated due to the virus. I was able to plot an entire show and begin to design different scenes in that show, and discover how to light different playing spaces on stage. I had a hand drawn plot that I was going to input into VectorWorks at some point to get practice before NWF.

In terms of the technical, hands-on aspect of lighting design, I was able to hang the plot mentioned above and circuit the entire project. After plugging the lights into the board, they all began to fill the room with colorful lights, showing that all of them worked and I could begin designing. Right after this I left the theatre because it was almost midnight and the next day, I was not allowed back on campus.

I have been working with my mentor, Rob Hilig, for several years, shadowing him during designs and running different shows that he designed. I then took what I learned from him and applied it in a professional setting in *Marvels of Magic*, a magic show that featured a inspiring story about a young boy participating in and winning a nationwide magic competition. I designed sound and projections for that show. I learned so much about how to design a show, and how to organize cues. Rob also has been teaching me about fixtures and circuiting for two years as I worked on many different shows with him. During these shows, he taught me how to use different lighting boards while I was "board-monkeying" for him. This term basically means that he tells me which buttons to press and then I can use that information to extrapolate how to use it to design. I would have liked to learn it more in depth, but I am grateful for what I have learned.

I was not able to design any of the shows that I had planned on from the end of this spring semester through the summer. However, what I was able to do is plan out different looks and washes on each script for NWF (See Box Drive). I created a look in my mind and then described it in some detail for every cue for all ten shows I was going to design. A small consolation for the accomplishment I could have completed.

The rest of the goals I was not able to accomplish at all, as COVID-19 swept the world extremely quickly. As disappointing as this is, I hope that we are doing enough as a society to quell this terrible disaster.

Journal:

March 4th:

Today, I saw read-throughs for *An Elegy for Mrs. Balloony*, and *Blackberries*. Both had amazing potential for lighting design and am very excited to get started!

The *Elegy* felt dimly lit, portraying how late it was in the evening and the attempt for quietness by the father. It feels natural, only lit by lamps around the room, not central lighting like a hospital or an outdoor setting. See markup for more detail.

Blackberries was much different. It all takes place outside yet I felt that isolating the three women would lead to a more striking performance. Having most of the stage be dark and only part of the stage lit would really emphasize the message without taking away from the stories themselves. Excited to design further!

March 5th:

Watched a read through for *Sideliners*. Simple outdoor lighting, nothing too fancy. No change in setting so a one cue show. Loved the chemistry between the two actresses.

March 6th:

Watched the read through for *Summer '17*. What an intense and wild ride! Can't wait to play with the surprise of the villains with the lights on stage. Maybe an intense red wash would really punctuate the entrance of both Jason and the bear. Funny and heart-wrenchingly real at the same time. Can't wait to see this on stage!

Research and Images for Inspiration:

See separate image folder.