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lighting design

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White Christmas

Studio Tenn Theatre Company
December 2025

Direction **Patrick Cassidy**

Musical Direction **Scott Brons**

Choreography **Jeremy Benton and Elizabeth McGuire**

Costume Design **Devon Renee Spencer**

Lighting Design **Darren E. Levin**

Scenic Design **Andrew Cohen**

Sound **Danny Northup**

Stage Management **John W. Calder III**





White Christmas is the stage adaptation of the classic movie. The iconic show follows Phil and Bob as they work to produce a Broadway style review for a struggling Ski Resort in Vermont owned by their commanding General from World War II. Packed with intimate scenes, iconic songs, and large production numbers, the show brings to life the film. The production received incredible response, with the entire run sold out.

The concept for the show leans heavily into paintings from the 1940's and early 1950's. These images provide the color inspiration and also textural quality inspiration for the entire production. The concept also relies heavily on artwork depicting locations throughout the state of Vermont, including many of the iconic ski destinations throughout the state. The lighting plot for the show is grounded by systems of LED down light and LED high sides providing sculptural light and great color flexibility to create the extensive times of day and locations dictated by the cinematic writing style.

A great challenge of the show is the extensive scenic shifts throughout the production and differentiating location. The Turner Theatre is a low trim situation with a grid height of only 18'-11" with no fly space dictated a base set rooted in the world of the barn with rolling units to create locations such as the inn. Two full stage traveling curtains were utilized to create the In 1/In 2/In 3 setup that is essential in navigating the transitions. LED Colorsource V fixtures as well as four High End Systems Lonestar Spots created the systems of curtain warmers and portal warmers to ground location and assist in masking transitional moments.

An additional challenge of the production is the dance breaks (often between 5 and 10 minutes long) that are built into the iconic score. The design utilized a system of LED down template as well as two systems of LED low side template to create the sculptural and textural qualities that supported the choreography. Systems of head and shin LED booms also provided additional sculptural angles.





The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night- Time

Nashville Repertory Theatre
March 2023

Direction **Micah-Shane Brewer**
Costume Design **Melissa K. Durmon**
Lighting Design **Darren E. Levin**
Scenic Design/Projection Design **Cody Stockstill**
Sound Design **Gregg Perry**
Stage Management **Wilhelm Peters**



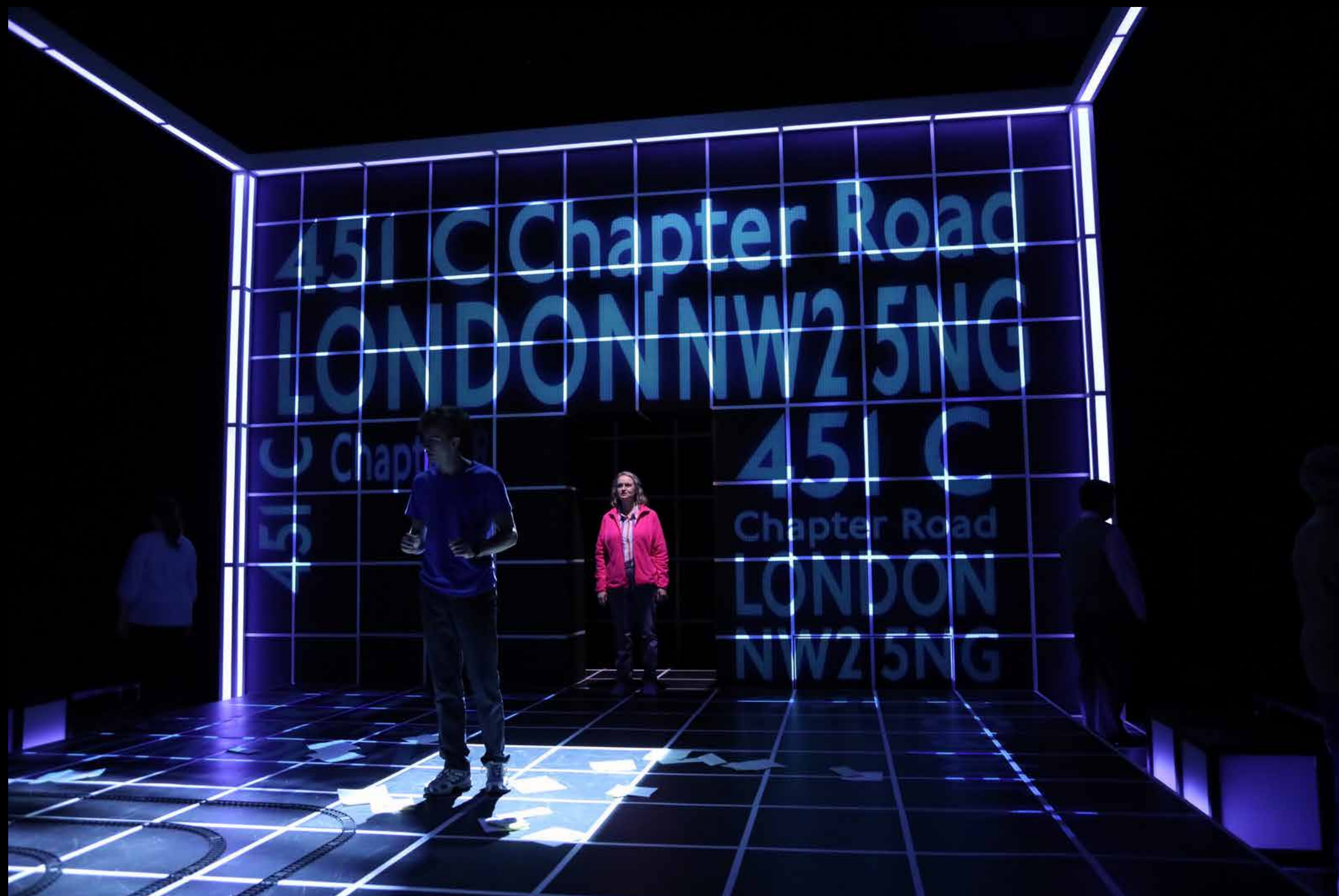


The Curious Incident of the Dog In the Night-Time is the stage adaptation of the novel by Mark Haddon. The show follows the life of Christopher, a neuro-divergent child, as he navigates the world around him. In his quest to solve the mystery of who killed the dog Wellington, Christopher navigates his own investigation taking him throughout the neighborhood and on a quest through the country to London. In doing so, Christopher finds confidence in himself and is affirmed that he can indeed do anything.

The lighting design concept is inspired by multiple exposure photography and artwork from artists that openly share their work as neuro-divergent artists. Each of these sources provide incredible representations of texture which is reflected throughout the lighting design. Color is also heavily inspired by each, with the stark ultra-white warm and cool tones as a key feature. Images also contained intense saturate colors which became a staple of the overwhelming moments for Christophe in the show. Neutral front light provided the anchor for the visibility of the show, with four total systems of diagonal front light/high side light in ultra-white warm and cool tones providing the ability to sculpt and color tone bodies. These careful angle selections were also intentional to allow for maximum visibility of projections.

The show is comprised of 58 scenes which presents the challenge of ensuring quick navigation between scenes and locations. A system of 15 sharp focused unsaturated lavender down light square specials became the backbone of the plot, creating intense isolation allowing the storytelling to flow from one place to another. Sharp focus down template from Source 4 LED Lustr units provided additional flexibility in delineation of space and visual interest.

A great challenge of The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time is the ability to create movement and motion in several moments, as well as the charge to use “all the machines in the theatre” to assist in the math’s appendix. To accomplish this, a system of Ayrton Ghibli profile fixtures provided the ability for intense isolation and also for additional template washes for non-realistic moments. A system of Chauvet Rogue RX2 Wash Fixtures were utilized as secondary support for isolation and also the backbone of saturate color washes.



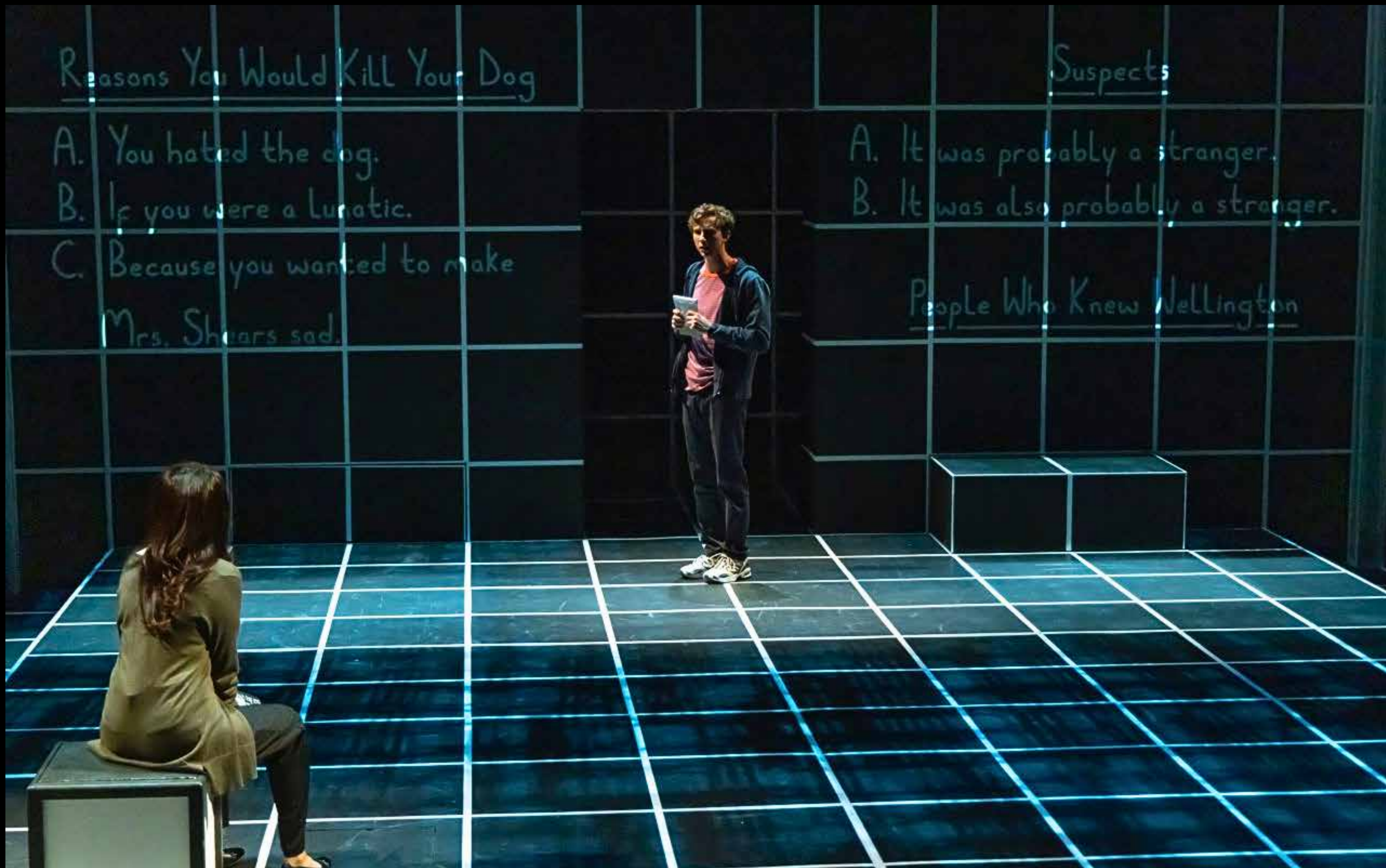
Reasons You Would Kill Your Dog

- A. You hated the dog.
- B. If you were a Lunatic.
- C. Because you wanted to make Mrs. Shears sad.

Suspects

- A. It was probably a stranger.
- B. It was also probably a stranger.

People Who Knew Wellington



POTUS

Nashville Repertory Theatre
May 2024

Direction **Lauren Shouse**
Costume Design **Melissa K. Durmon**
Lighting Design **Darren E. Levin**
Scenic Design **Gary C. Hoff**
Sound Design **Sara Johnson**
Stage Management **Isaac Krispin**





POTUS is a farcical look at the inner operations of the White House under an unnamed and unseen Commander in Chief. The story follows seven women on a crazy day in the west wing as they try to defend, divert attention, and protect POTUS from his latest blunder. Throughout the show, we see the group of women overcome their differences and join together on the precipice of a new dawn in politics and the White House.

The lighting design concept for the show is inspired by modern photography from the West Wing of The White House. These images depict offices, meeting rooms, and corridors where the action of the script takes place. Each of these images provides incredible color inspiration reflected throughout the design. Subtle amber and blue tones were utilized throughout the four systems of high sides creating extensive dimension and isolation throughout the show. These images also provided color reference for the three systems of front light (subtle amber, lavender, and blue tones).

Additional research consisted of artwork depicting the interior and exterior of the White House. These paintings provided inspiration for the scenic texture and subtle coloration that was present on scenic elements enhancing the time of day and visual beauty of the set.

Transitions are of the utmost importance in this production. Significant action overlaps as numerous scene changes must be executed. A great challenge to this production was continuing the story telling in one area of The White House as our focus shifted to additional context in a new location. This was accomplished through tight isolation in the focus of all angles of light allowing the viewer to iris in on the departing action and visually crossfade to the new location. When combined with careful color and intensity choices, this technique allowed for seamless transitions that continually enhance and forwarded the storytelling.





Sunday in the Park with George

Nashville Repertory Theatre
April 2025

Direction **Jason Spelbring**
Costume Design **Melissa K. Durmon**
Lighting Design **Darren E. Levin**
Media Design **Michaela Lochen**
Scenic Design **Gary C. Hoff**
Sound Design **Mark Zuckerman**
Stage Management **Isaac Krispin**





Sunday in the Park with George explores the lives of artists and the challenges of making art that is deemed relevant in society. The show is based on the life of pointillism artist George Seurat and his creation of the masterpiece A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte. The story also explores the legacy of an artists as we see George's grandson creating his new vision of art for modern times.

The lighting design concept for the production for the period moment is fully inspired by the extensive completed paintings and also color studies of George Seurat. These images provide the incredible color and texture inspiration that is represented throughout the design. The plot utilizes a system of down pointillism inspired texture in Source 4 LED units give color flexibility within scenes. These units also provide the backbone of the lighting elements for the chromolume in collaboration with media design.

Sculptural angles are also inspired by Seurat's work. To achieve this, two high side systems utilizing conventional Source 4 Ellipsoidal fixtures in unsaturated amber and cool tones. An additional down light system utilizing Source 4 conventional PAR units was also utilized in a mid-tone amber to create the all important heat of day in the painting moments.

A system of Chauvet R2X fixtures allows for specials throughout the space as well as the more prominent colors needed for the scenes in the second act set in the 1980's. These combined with Six Ayrton Ghibli units which created the geometric texture seen throughout these scenes. toned high side creating a sculptural and period composition.





Violet

Nashville Repertory Theatre
May 2023

Direction **Tracey Copeland-Halter**
Music Direction **Randy Craft**
Costume Design **Lori Gann-Smith**
Lighting Design **Darren E. Levin**
Scenic Design **Gary C. Hoff**
Sound Design **Timothy Grace**
Stage Management **Daniel C Brewer**
Photography **Darren E. Levin**









Violet follows the life of a girl who was struck by a wayward axe blade while her father was chopping wood, leaving her with a visible scar across her face. Now, she is traveling across the south to Tulsa, Oklahoma to visit a Televangelist who she hopes will make her beautiful. While ultimately not healed by the pastor, along the journey she meets people who alter her life by seeing past her physical imperfections.

The lighting design concept for the show is heavily inspired by the music and locations depicted in the show. 1950's and 1960's paintings depict bus stations, busses, as well as the specific locations of Memphis, gas stations, and diners. Paintings by Ernie Barnes, David Hockney and Thomas Heart Benton provide additional grounding for this production. Each of these sources provide incredible color inspiration which is reflected throughout the lighting design. Medium saturation ambers and blue tones are present throughout the high side angles. Front light consists of crisp unsaturated blues, ambers and lavenders, while systems of LED down light provide intense punches of color.

A great challenge of this show is creating isolation in a space with very challenging lighting positions and limited space available. This challenge was solved by utilizing four Ayrton Ghibli profile fixtures as down and backlight specials combined with four Chauvet Rogue RX2 Wash fixtures. This combination allowed for the creation of intense isolation in intimate moments while also allowing characters to be popped out from the full company.

An additional challenge of the show is the co-existence of present and flashback scenes. To systems of low front side texture (similar to a box boom angle) in mid-saturation warm and cool tones provided a fractured light feeling allowing for the communication of flashback moments. Soft focused down template from Source 4 LED Lustr units provided additional flexibility in delineation of space and visual interest.

Camelot

Studio Tenn Theatre Company
May 2022

Direction **Philip Wm. McKinley**
Musical Direction **Stephen Kummer**
Choreography **Everett Tarlton**
Costume Design **Neno Russell and Lauren Roark**
Lighting Design **Darren E. Levin**
Scenic Design **Andrew Cohen**
Sound Design **Ricky Lighthall**
Stage Management **Cecilia Lighthall**





Camelot is the classic show by Lerner and Lowe. This specific production utilized the small cast version featuring an acting company of ten portraying the classic tale of King Arthur, Guenevere, Lancelot and the Knights of the Round Table. The reimagined script pushes quickly through the love and betrayal of the show while preserving the classic songs and original score. Studio Tenn staged the production in the Jamison Theatre at The Factory – Franklin which provided a wonderful and challenging space for lighting. Director Philip Wm. McKinley envisioned a timeless production with modern touches and a nod to the historical period which provides ample challenges for a design team.

The lighting concept for the show draws heavily from HDR photography portraying historical castles throughout England, Wales, and Scotland. These images included stunning coloration across the horizon which provided key inspiration for the backdrop in the production. Additionally, these images provided key time of day support for the scenes taking place exterior to the Castle. Diving into similar images of castle ruins and castle interiors provided the key time of day and color inspiration for the interior scenes. Finally, HDR photograph of the forests and high lands of the United Kingdom ground the work in the surroundings of the castle as well as provide key lighting color and texture support for moments in the forest and on the castle grounds.





To support the concept a system on LED down light provided the key color support for the production. LED down template in with organic pattern and focused quite soft provided additional key angle and color flexibility. These two systems combined with incandescent high sides (in warm and cool tones) as well as an incandescent neutral front light system to create the modern yet historical feel to the production. Additional systems of texture bathed the set in rich color and organic texture fully enveloping the action.

The Jamison Theatre as well as the scenic design provide ample challenges for a lighting designer. The set topped out at nearly seventeen feet with the hanging positions of the space being permanently mounted twenty feet above the stage. This creates considerable challenges to ensure that the lighting qualities are consistent on the performers across the entire space and when they are on elevated surfaces. Careful study of the photometric analysis and precise instrument location allowed for creation of a nearly uniform quality of light possible from each angle in the plot. This combined with six moving lights, also with very deliberate placement, to allow for maximum flexibility in the design while effectively supporting the staging.

Driving Miss Daisy

Studio Tenn Theatre Company
March 2024

Direction **Beki Baker**

Costume Design **Matt Logan**

Lighting Design **Darren E. Levin**

Scenic Design **Andrew Cohen**

Stage Management **Marlee Shelton**





Driving Miss Daisy is the stage adaptation of the classic movie. Following the later years of Daisy Werthan's life, the show explores the compassion, care, and heartbreak that family members (blood relation and chosen) family experience with aging parents. The show also explores the evolution of conversations regarding race and shared experiences of hate and hope in the south from the 1940's through the 1970's.

The concept of the show draws heavily on artwork from the time period, with key focus on the rendering of lighting qualities from the 1940's through the 1970's. Paintings of home interiors and car interiors through the timespan of the show provide the angle, color and isolation inspiration for the production. Additional research of home exteriors and hospital/nursing home interiors add additional clarity to the numerous locations required by the cinematic script.

The isolation of the three primary performance areas is of key importance in the lighting design. Each area was lit with LED down specials and led par down light which provided intense isolation to the action. A similar system of scenic texture allowed for sculptural and isolated light to guide the eye through transition allowing for seamless storytelling.

A great challenge of the production is the complexity of the scenic elements overhead and the restricted area for each playing space. Through careful study of the available angles of light/photometric data, I discovered the need for a much steeper high side angle than is traditional in theatrical applications to maintain the isolation required. This dictated that the front light angle needed to be more shallow than normal to allow for light to reach under the hats that accented the costume design.

The 39 Steps

Theatre West Summer Repertory
June 2021

Direction **James Alexander Bond**
Choreography **Tiffany Tabor Mackrill**
Costume Design **Francesca Mintowt-Czyz**
Lighting Design **Darren E. Levin**
Properties **Brittani Ncole O'Connell**
Scenic Design **Abigail Andrews**
Sound Design **Amanda Gansow-Foote**
Stage Management **Alexandra Brue**
Photography **Mark Reins**





The 39 Steps is the stage version of the 1935 Alfred Hitchcock film. The show follows Hannay through the investigation of the meaning of the 39 steps. The show is full of lightning-fast transitions and minimal scenic pieces to portray the countless locals and times of day specified.

The concept for the show draws from the paintings and artwork of John Atkinson Grimshaw, William Crozier, William Gillies, and Spencer Gore. These images convey the natural coloration and beauty of Britain and Scotland providing strong color inspiration throughout the work. The works also depict the beauty and mystery of the various locations and allow for exploration of revelation of form, but also selective focus as various characters as they appear and recess into the shadows.

A system of LED down light provided the primary color framework for the production. This system allowed for seamless color transitions and the ability to guide the audience through subtle time of day transitions that are essential to the communication of story. Two systems of LED template (one down, one high side) provided immaculate control of texture and color throughout the work. These systems also provided significant support of time of day as well as the incredible texture seen throughout the production. Four systems of high sides (two warm and two cool) provided the framework for composition on the human. These systems allowed for dimensional carving of the actors with nuance and attention to time of day, skin tone, and shape.

A great challenge of this production is the very fast transitions which are dictated by the script and this particular production concept. The use of the aforementioned systems as well as careful attention to timing allowed for a cue sequence that guided the viewer efficiently from moment to moment while fully supporting the pace and flow of the production.

Side Show

Black Hills Playhouse

July 2019

Direction **Bill Russell**

Musical Direction **Merideth Meersman**

Choreography **Andrea Schaefer**

Costume Design **Katie Curry**

Lighting Design **Darren E. Levin**

Scenic Design **Victor E. Shonk**

Sound Design **Christopher George Haug**

Stage Management **Kristal Georgopolous**

Photography **Darren E. Levin**





Side Show is the dramatic musical written by Tony nominated playwright and lyricist Bill Russell. The Black Hills Playhouse production also featured Bill Russell as director. Side Show follows the life and journey of the Hilton Sisters from their humble beginnings as circus freaks to becoming one of the highest paid acts in the vaudeville circuit. Through their story, the show touches on isolated and poignant moments combined with powerful production numbers and a strong storyline.

The lighting design concept is primarily inspired by the artwork of Reginal Marsh and Laura Knight. These works provided the framework for the book scenes of the production illustrating angle and intensity. Four systems of high sides in low saturation ambers and blues provided a strong angle and sculpting of the body throughout the show.

Additional inspiration is drawn from posters of circus/sideshow/carnival/burlesque. These works provided the primary inspiration for the color progression. The unique blend of muted earthy tones and primary colors provided flexibility throughout the production but encouraged a tight color pallet. Systems of LED down light and two systems of LED units for the cyclorama allowed for flexibility in color with minimal instrumentation.

Intense isolation is a key element of many songs throughout the production. Isolation achieved by utilizing a system of down template in a medium lavender. This system allows for easy creation of texture during isolated moments, but also to create strong texture throughout the full stage production numbers. An additional system of side template further allowed for dramatic texture and additional depth to the composition.





It's A Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play

Studio Tenn Theatre Company
December 2021/December 2023

Direction **Patrick Cassidy**
Costume Design **Lauren Terry**
Lighting Design **Darren E. Levin**
Scenic Design **Andrew Cohen**
Stage Management **Cecilia Lighthall**





It's A Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play is the retelling of the classic movie through a radio show format. An ensemble of five actors plus a pianist perform the show following George Bailey and his journey to realize how wonderful life really is. The show is presented in Franklin, Tennessee and the show leaned heavily into the local flair that is Franklin during the holiday season.

The concept for the show draws heavily from a couple of different sources. First and foremost, the look of the show is inspired by Christmas cards, radio station advertisements, and post cards from the 1930's and 1940's. These provided wonderful angle inspiration for the productions, as well as the warm color inspiration that is seen extensively through the cue structure. Additional conceptual research came from photography of Franklin, Tennessee and other small towns during the Christmas season. This further reinforces the color tones chosen and heavily influenced the coloration seen outside the windows and the selection of practical units and Christmas lights.

I utilized a system of down template LED units to allow for subtle color shifts. This system also allowed for intense isolation through many moments of the show. A similar system of scenic texture also allowed for subtle shift of time of day as well as the ability to establish strong color alterations for non-realistic moments of the show. These systems paired with a system of LED down light with zoom which further provided the color framework for the production.

A great challenge of the production is the complexity of the overhead scenic beams and posts in the set design in relation to the available hanging positions. Through careful study of the photometric analysis, I was able to create a nearly uniform system of warm and cool high sides which allowed for the even intensity seen through the performance. This combined with the aforementioned LED systems and a system of four profile moving lights allowed for maximum flexibility in cueing.

Topdog/Underdog

Featuring **Eddie George**

Nashville Repertory Theatre
February 2019

Direction **Jon Royal**
Costume Design **Colleen Garatoni**
Lighting Design **Darren E. Levin**
Scenic Design **Gary C. Hoff**
Sound Design **Ned Singh**
Stage Management **Teresa Driver**
Photography **Darren E. Levin**





Topdog/Underdog follows the challenges and triumphs of the brothers Booth and Lincoln, named after two key figures in American history. Suzan-Lori Parks Pulitzer Prize winning script explores challenging family dynamics and the struggles that often exist between siblings as each search for their respective paths. Their journey highlights the pain of loss, the power of family, the concept of legacy and inheritance, and the harsh realities of human nature. The Nashville Repertory Theatre production featured Broadway/National Tour actor Eddie George.

The lighting design concept for Topdog/Underdog draws heavily from the work of African American painters, especially Steve Huston, Hughie Lee Smith, and Jacob Lawrence. These artists depict African American Culture with great texture, incredible use of color, and simplicity. A great challenge of the production is to navigate six scenes which all travel through variations of evening/night. I utilized a system of diagonals and flat front light to provide the angle flexibility to create multiple times of day.

Angles combined with strong color choice/color theory provided the most obvious connection to the research. I utilized systems of unsaturated amber, lavender, and cyan to anchor the show while providing for the time of day flexibility yet allowing for high contrast moments. Texture also plays a key role in the nuance of the production. I utilized a system of down texture to replicate the texture of the wood grain, which also allows for intense isolation at any location onstage. Additional systems of warm, cool, and neutral texture across the upstage walls adding additional emphasis to the wall paper and paint treatments.

Timing and musicality of the cues is of the utmost importance. The story and script utilize the pace and rhythm of the monte card trick to alter the pace and flow of the show. This also dictated my cue structure: punctuating and emphasizing the speed of throwing cards, juxtaposing the lyrical nature of the scenes depicting everyday life.





How I Learned to Drive

Middle Tennessee State University
October 2017

Direction **Halena Kays**
Costume Design **Tommy Macon**
Lighting Design **Darren E. Levin**
Projection Design **Erin Moore**
Scenic Design **Scott Boyd**
Sound Design **Jon Gill**
Photography **Darren E. Levin**





How I Learned to Drive is a cinematic style script that follows a young woman as she navigates growing into her own body and sexual experiences. The show deals with very challenging subject matter surrounding sexual behaviors, presenting the material in a respectful yet frank manner. As it follows her life, an expansive amount of time (almost 30 years) is covered in the 90-minute show.

The concept of the lighting came from two sources. Angle and intensity were pulled from extant black and white photography from the 1950's – 1970's. The color inspiration is inspired from pin up, murals, and advertisement artwork of the 1950's – 1970's. Systems of unsaturated light in pastel blue, amber, and lavender were utilized as the key light for the production.

The upstage wall became a key focal point in the design. The expanse of color in the renderings on the wall allowed for the show to be a study in color mixing. I utilized a system of LED units with texture to allow the wall to ebb a flow indicating time of day and emotion throughout the show. These units have a seven color LED engine which allow for me to dial in very specific color tones to allow the wall to pop and recede throughout the show.

A great challenge of the production is the restrictions of the theatre. The space is only equipped with 32 dimmers. Therefore, strategic instrument placement and ganging was of the utmost importance. To achieve the isolation present in the show, I utilized a system of back template that emulated the pattern on the upstage wall. I also utilized a system of color scrollers and LED side light that provided the intense saturate coloration motivating the transitions.

Avenue Q

Nashville Repertory Theatre
September 2018

Direction **Lauren Shouse**
Costume Design **June Kingsbury**
Lighting Design **Darren E. Levin**
Scenic Design **Gary C. Hoff**
Sound Design **Ned Singh**
Photography **Darren E. Levin**



AVENUE Q -- End Of The Line

MONSTERSSORT
SCHOOL
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PAVILION

NEW YORK
CITY



Avenue Q creates a world filled by human and puppet characters, exploring very challenging topics in our society. Racism, affordable housing, equality, finding a purpose, and the value of liberal arts majors are made accessible and approachable to audiences as the humans and puppets interact. Avenue Q is set in Alphabet City in New York, however, the lessons experienced strongly speak to the same challenges occurring in metropolitan areas across the country.

The lighting design concept for Avenue Q heavily explores the exploration of light with architecture in the New York City area, as well as the Nashville Metropolitan Area. The interaction of texture of light is fully integrated in the show becoming a driving force in the compositions on stage. Three systems of texture in warm, cool and neutral colors guild the eye of the viewer across the stage from expansive moments to the single character moments.

Creating effective transitions throughout the show is also an essential element. Great attention is placed on creating transitions which integrate seamlessly with the elements moving onstage, but also with the underscoring and playoffs provided. The lighting plot was specifically developed to allow for these kinds of transitions. Careful consideration was placed on the isolation and different locations that would need to be represented. Having very specific control allowed for transitions to guide the eye efficiently from one moment to the next. Two systems of low side template allowed for dramatic transitional moments, and spectacular texture across stage during scenes.

A great challenge of the production is the inability to have followspots in the Johnson Theatre. This provides a great challenge when designing a musical. To counteract this deficiency, I utilized a system of 15 front and 15 back specials in neutral tones which became the backbone of the plot, further allowing for intense isolation seen in musical theatre.





Smart People

Nashville Repertory Theatre
February 2018

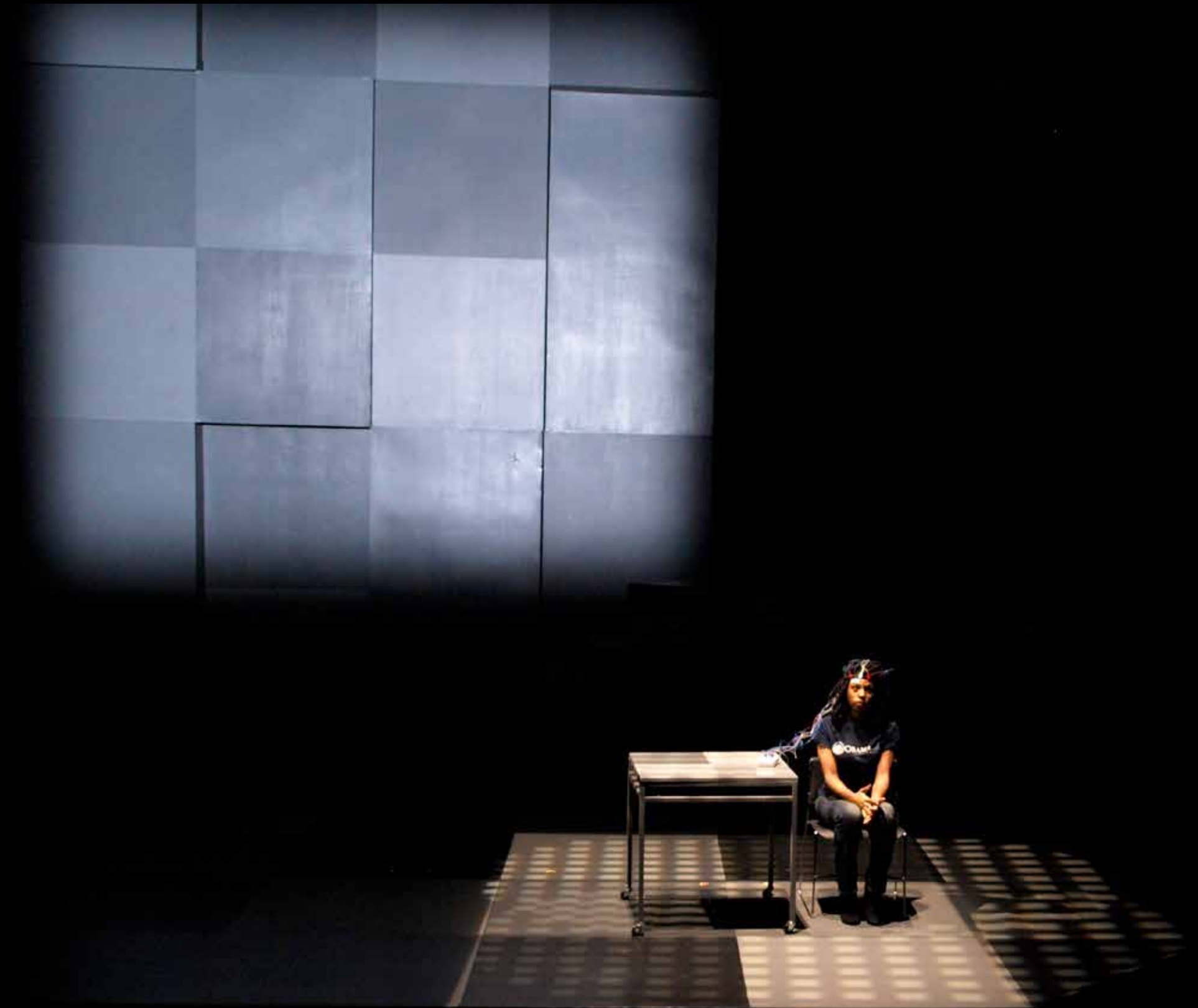
Direction **Jon Royal**
Costume Design **Trish Clark**
Lighting Design **Darren E. Levin**
Projection Design **Colin Peterson**
Scenic Design **Gary C. Hoff**
Sound Design **Kyle Odum**
Photography **Darren E. Levin**





Smart People follows the lives of four intellectuals as they navigate discussions about race and its implication on society and people. The show is set during the campaign, election, and inauguration of President Barack Obama and illustrates the conversations that were present in the American conscious during that period of history. The research for the show stemmed from cubist architecture, interior design and artwork to mirror the cube and grey scale based scenic design. Additional inspiration came from political artwork that was created during the 2008 Presidential Election.

Smart People is comprised of 26 different scenes spanning 15+ different locations which provides a formidable challenge. Effectively transitioning as quickly as possible led me to a concept based on squares. All angles of the plot featured a wash of sharp focused fixtures spanning eleven areas across the stage. A system of 30 sharp focused unsaturated blue down light square specials became the backbone of the plot, creating intense isolation and allow the storytelling to flow from one place to another. Two systems of steep high side templates sharply focused allowed for additional cubist influence into the design.





Pageant

Black Hills Playhouse
July 2016

Direction **Bill Russell**
Musical Direction **Vonnie Houchen**
Choreography **Blair Bybee**
Costume Design **Gene Salgano**
Lighting Design **Darren E. Levin**
Scenic Design **Victor E. Shonk**
Sound Design **Tyler J. Micheel**
Stage Management **Dayne Sundman**
Photography **Darren E. Levin**

South Dakota Premiere Production





Pageant explores the complicated and controversial world of beauty pageants in a light hearted and satirical manner. Written and directed by Broadway librettist and lyricist Bill Russell, the show utilizes six men dressed as women portraying contestants from across the country as they compete in the staple categories of the American beauty pageant. At each performance, Miss Glamouress is chosen by a panel of five judges selected from the audience, hence creating five slightly different endings to the piece. The pageant is sponsored and promoted by the fictional company Glamouress, which implies extensive product promotion, extensive branding, and also places satirical social commentary on the sale of beauty products. This dictated that the design of the production not only reinforces the “beauty” of the pageant, but also address the social and societal statements addressed by the show.

Pinup paintings of the 1950's and 1960's provided the basis for the lighting design of Pageant. The work of Rolf Armstrong provided significance influence into the lighting design through his rendering of light on fabric, use of color, and revelation of the body to the viewer. These principles were utilized throughout the production to create compositions varying from isolated product promotion sequences lit very simply and classically to large production numbers featuring saturate colors, and sculptural composition. This was accomplished through a system of down specials with color scrollers which allowed for easy isolation throughout the piece and provided pops of color when justified.

A system of LED down light and an additional system of incandescent down light with color scrollers further enhanced the color flexibility of the plot. Pageant ran in repertory with Nunsense, creating a large challenge in deigning two deeply contrasting shows. These two systems provided the inherent flexibility in color required for both shows and allowed the changeover to be completed in the specified amount of time (under one hour). Low and medium saturation colors were selected for the three systems of front light, two high side systems, and dance boom systems. These colors created additional flexibility in the plot and worked alongside the scroller colors to create a wide variety of color compositions.

Practicals played a vital role in the visual success of Pageant. The most stunning feature is the mini-stage portal consisting of 189 button lights which were wired in a three circuit chase. This allowed for great movement and pulsing effects to be integrated into the high energy company dance numbers. It also served a very important role in the composition of the cues. Due to the lack of instrument inventory, lighting scenery is often very difficult. Button lights in turn provided additional depth to the design and created another layer of separation between performer and scenic element. Chasing lights were added around the mini-portal, stair unit, and runway creating additional movement and visual interest.





Posterity

Nashville Repertory Theatre
February 2017

Direction **Rene D. Copeland**
Costume Design **Trish Clark**
Lighting Design **Darren E. Levin**
Scenic Design **Gary C. Hoff**
Sound Design **Ricky Lighthall**
Photography **Darren E. Levin**

Regional Premiere Production





Posterity is a new work written by Tony and Pulitzer prize award winning playwright Doug Wright. The show follows a meeting between playwright Henrik Ibsen and sculptor Gustav Vigland. Vigland is hired to create one of the final busts of Ibsen just prior to his death. The story follows their interaction as they debate the purpose and meaning of artistic legacy through their first interaction and interview in Vigland's studio to the start of the sculpture in Ibsen's home study.

The content of Posterity immediately strikes a chord with any artist working on the production. The script explores not only artistic legacy, but also draws focus the basic artistic motivations. The lighting design concept drew inspiration from the line, "What's left then? Only form and color. It says the artist, the true artist, wants to do more than copy nature. He wants to depict emotion itself." From these words, the research of the show following the work of Gustav Vigland and Norwegian painters and artists that were active from 1880 – 1910. I was immediately drawn to the stunning, yet reserved color palettes.

I utilized three systems of template washes in warm, cool, and neutral tones which gave the ability to create the impressionistic quality seen throughout the research images. This ability was of the utmost of importance during the more dramatic moments of the show, creating a historical and painterly feel to the compositions. High side systems in warm and cool tones provided isolation and a realistic tone that allowed me to pull out the key moments of the show though very precise isolation and focus.

A great challenge of the production was telling time of day and appropriately lighting the scenic elements and set dressing. The walls of the set became a pallet for the lighting design where allowed me to make subtle coloration and texture changes to slowly and carefully manipulate time of day throughout the production. In addition, a system of LED down light provided a great punch of intensity, but also allowed for subtle and slow color fades guiding the viewer through the journey of the script.





Good Monsters

Nashville Repertory Theatre
February 2016

Direction **Rene D. Copeland**

Costume Design **Trish Clark**

Lighting Design **Darren E. Levin**

Scenic Design **Gary C. Hoff**

Sound Design **Ricky Lighthall**

Photography **Darren E. Levin and Shane Burkeen**

World Premiere Production





Good Monsters is a new work written by playwright Nate Eppler. The script tells the story of Frank, a police officer who shoots an unarmed teenager in the parking lot of Walmart, working an after-hours security job at the store. The victim, Zero, is ever present throughout the show in Frank's psyche as he deals with the fallout from the accident. Exploring loss, commenting on gun violence, and exploring mental anguish, the script forces conversation about hot button issues in today's (2015/2016) society by humanizing both sides of the issues. This world premiere production was produced by Nashville Repertory Theatre, the premier equity acting company of the metropolitan Nashville area. Good Monsters was produced at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center, one of the premier venues in the Nashville area as well as the country.

The lighting design concept for the show emphasizes bridging the gap between realism and psychological moments. Numerous scenes take place in a realistic tone at Frank's house as he navigates the fallout from the tragedy (divorce proceedings, lawyer interviews and persuasions, as well as visits from Zero's father). However, moments of non-realism are sprinkled through the script as Zero haunts Frank's psyche and influences his perceptions and reactions to the fallout. To bridge this gap, I utilized four systems of template in warm and cool tones to create an undulating light quality to the non-realistic moments.

Time of day also plays a large role in the show, especially in the realistic scenes. The template systems at low and steep angles came into use to recreate fill light for various times of day. Steep and low angles were selected for the key lighting angles to allow for flexibility to create specific times of day. A significant amount of the show takes place at night, which dictated careful color selection to achieve multiple times of night in addition to several afternoon scenes. As the show takes place around the 4th of July, unsaturated ambers, lavenders, and blues were selected to give a full spectrum range of colors.





Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead

Nashville Repertory Theatre
October 2015

Direction **Rene D. Copeland**

Costume Design **Trish Clark**

Lighting Design **Darren E. Levin**

Scenic Design **Gary C. Hoff**

Sound Design **Kyle Odum**

Photography **Darren E. Levin and Shane Burkeen**





Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead is the Tom Stoppard comedy that explores the events in the life of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, two minor players in Hamlet, as Hamlet is being performed. Through the show, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern absentmindedly banter back and forth about the happenings in the show of Hamlet. The show is presented by Nashville Repertory Theatre, the premier equity acting company of the metropolitan Nashville area. Productions are produced at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center, one of the premier venues in the Nashville area as well as the country.

The lighting design concept for the show is based in the paintings of the Renaissance era. I wanted to stay specific to Elizabethan, however to get the look of the show and the qualities of light correct for the action on stage, I ended up expanding out slightly earlier and later.

Soft focused light was utilized throughout, with a few key moments become very dramatic to allow for some of the more difficult entrances, exits, and scriptural challenges presented to us by Mr. Stoppard. Creating isolation is absolutely essential to telling the story. I utilized a system of neutral lavender texture from above to quickly and easily pop out key moments of action in larger scenes, and really pull down to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

A challenge of the show is playing interior vs. exterior at all times of day. To deal with this, I in essence doubled up on systems of light. Coloration was based in systems of warm tones with cool ultra -blues to contrast and allow for shifts in time of day. The exterior portions of the show were lit with diagonals as the primary angle, while the interior swapped to front light and high sides as the primary angles. This thinking worked well to give me great contrast between the different locations, and also allowed for the non-primary angle to serve as fill light when needed.





Pipeline

Nashville Repertory Theatre
October 2019

Direction **Jon Royal**
Costume Design **Lori Gann-Smith**
Lighting Design **Darren E. Levin**
Projection Design **Colin Peterson**
Scenic Design **Gary C. Hoff**
Sound Design **William Kyle Odum**
Photography **Darren E. Levin**

Regional Premiere Production





Pipeline examines the school to prison pipeline in the American education and judicial systems. The show follows the life of Nya, a mother whose son is facing the possibility of charges after a physical altercation with a faculty member. Throughout the story, each character is faced with scenarios depicting many of the common challenges in primary and secondary education.

The lighting design concept for Pipeline is drawn heavily from the artwork of Revolutionary African American artists including Jennifer Packer, Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Mario Moore, and Benny Andrews as well as paintings visually depicting the school to prison pipeline in our society. The school became the anchor for the concept utilizing unsaturated blue and green tones to replicating cold fluorescent tones.

A great challenge of the production is creating the intense isolation required by the coexistence of realistic and non-realistic moments. Two systems of down template and a system of led down light provided the flexibility to quickly navigate between reality and heightened reality moments in a fluid yet impactful manner.

Ragtime

Nashville Repertory Theatre
November 2021

Direction **Micah-Shane Brewer**

Musical Direction **Randy Kraft**

Choreography **Tosha Pendergrast**

Costume Design **Lori Gann-Smith**

Lighting Design **Darren E. Levin**

Scenic Design **Gary C. Hoff**

Stage Management **Cecilia Lighthall**





Ragtime is a grand scale musical based on the novel by E. L. Doctorow. The show follows three distinct groups (the New Rochelle Townspeople, the People of Harlem and the Immigrants) as they navigate tough topics like immigration, racism, xenophobia, white privilege, etc. The show is filled with challenging conversations and poignant moments illustrating the struggles that we have dealt with in this country for over 100 years.

The concept for the show draws from a variety of source materials. Central to the framework of the show is black and white photography of New York City that has been colorized. This research provides great sepia and pastel toned color pallet that became essential for the book scenes of the production. Additional research into the lighting qualities in Ellis Island and Atlantic City provided grounding framework in angle and texture for those scenes. As the show deals with three distinct ethnic groups, it was essential to look into artwork of the period created for additional depth of research in color, angle and texture which manifested in the book scenes and more specifically in the musical numbers.





I utilized a system of low side template in both warm and cool tones to create the strong use of texture seen through the artwork and throughout the production photos. This paired with a system of LED down template which provided for color flexibility while creating isolation. Additional intense isolation was created via two systems of moving lights (system of wash units, and one system of profile units). This gave the flexibility to create full stage company numbers while allowing for quick transition to isolated and intimate moments as dictated by the book and score.

A great challenge of the work is the structure of the writing, multiple simultaneous locations, and visual cross-fades between locations that are required to effectively tell story. This required a cue structure that was continually responding to the music of the show, the staging of the show, and the physical restrictions of the instrumentation utilized in the rig. This meant intense preplanning of mark cues and timing was of the utmost importance so lighting continually supported story.







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