Combining Concepts

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Introduction

Theatre is a collaborative environment that relies on multiple people to develop

a design for a realized production. As defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary,

collaboration is "to work jointly with others or together especially in an intellectual

endeavor" ("Collaborate"). Everyone involved with a design process needs to have a

collaborative attitude and be able to commit the time and energy necessary to complete

the project. On a typical design process there will be a director, scenic designer, costume

designer, sound designer and lighting designer. The following is an examination of the

collaborative process of *An Enemy of the People* by Henrik Ibsen, adaptation by Doug

Grissom, produced by The University of Virginia Department of Drama. In my opinion,

the collaborative art of theatre is based on the mutual respectful exchange of ideas and

design concepts by all members of the artistic team who must work together in order to

bring about a successful production.

The design process for any given production begins far in advance of when the

show is set to open with the core set of designers. The design team for *An Enemy of the*

People began meeting 14 weeks before it was scheduled to open. The elongated time

frame afforded the team the opportunity to discuss the themes and artistic vision of the

production in depth. In my experiences, the design process with professional theatre

companies are driven by realistic deadlines and involve fewer number of meetings since

all of the designers may not be present in the same city. The first meetings for *An Enemy*

of the People involved the director, scenic designer, costume designer, lighting designer

and the sound designer. It is during this phase in the process that a design approach will

begin to emerge and guide the entire production in a certain direction. In the book *Scene*

Design and Stage Lighting, Parker describes the design approach as:

> A design approach is the idea of visual theme of design. It is the product of creative thinking, visual imagination, and collaboration with the director. The approach provides control and direction towards a final design. The clearer and stronger the design idea, the easier every subsequent design decision will be. (Parker)

Design teams are responsible for creating the artistic world that bring the characters to life for the audience to experience. In an educational setting, the selection of the design teams are often times determined by which person is scheduled for the next production. In professional theatre companies, they have the opportunity to individually pick each one of their design team members based on the vision and style of the production. Regardless, whether you are in an educational or professional setting, the challenge for the design team is to blend a variety of artistic viewpoints and personality types into a cohesive group that must collaborate together in order to create a successful design. The design team for the production of *An Enemy of the People* included:

- Director - Richard Warner, acting professor
- Scenic Designer - Jason Randolph, graduate student studying technical direction
- Costume Designer - Lindsay Hinz, graduate student studying costume design and technology
- Sound Designer - Mark Gartzman, graduate student studying technical direction
- Lighting Designer - Jacob Kvanbeck, graduate student studying lighting design

Design Team: Director

  Directors for most productions are the driving force behind the ideas. Before

setting foot in the room with other collaborators, they establish the initial concept for the

production. It is important at the first meeting that the director presents a vision for the

production, relaying what shape he or she believes the style and form should take. The

director's concept is the driving force behind the rest of the creative process. Directors

are interested in seeing what the other designers envision from reading the script and

how their visions are either similar or different than the director's approach to the piece.

It is stated in *Theatrical Design and Production* that "questioning is one of the keys to

creativity. Your drive to create is based, to a great extent, on your perceived need for

change, or your creative discontent with the status quo" (Gillette). The questioning

phase is invaluable to my own design process. The initial questions that are brought up

in design meetings stimulate my mind and creativity with new ideas for the production.

This open ended discussion is crucial for the other designers to be able to critically

evaluate their initial thought process on a production.

  For our production of *An Enemy of the People*, director Richard Warner,

challenged the design team to make the production timely and exciting in order for this

dusty old play, originally set in 1882 Norway, to captivate audiences yet again. Warner

worked closely with fellow faculty member, Doug Grissom, to adapt and rewrite the

script to make it more timely and exciting. One of the largest changes that Grissom and

Warner decided on was to move the action of the play to 1963 in the state of Maine.

They wanted this production to capture America in a time of great change with gender

roles and civil rights being at the forefront of the battle. This change offered Warner

the ability to cast more women into the production. Besides the revisions to the script,

Warner presented his idea of the "circles of reality" to the design team. He wanted us to

shape our design process from the most real to the most abstract.

The "circles of reality" that Warner created for the design team, was comprised

of four varying levels of reality that was taken into account during our process. Warner

wanted the reality of this production to be focused on the characters themselves and allow

the world around them to become more abstract with the more distance away from the

actors. These four steps go from very realistic representation to very abstract:

1. Characters clothing (costumes)

2. What the characters touch (props)

3. Scenic environment that actors interact with (acting area)

4. Surrounding scenic elements that frame in the stage (walls)

The most realistic element was the characters and what they were wearing on stage. The

next element should be mostly realistic which was what the characters touched on stage.

The third element, the setting, could be on the edge of being abstract and realistic, as

this would influence the scenic elements with which the characters would interact. The

last phase of reality, the surrounding scenic elements, would not be realistic at all and

would take on a very abstract approach. These "circles of reality" ultimately influenced

all of the designer's work throughout the entire design process. Warner never specified

where lighting would fall in this list, but in further discussions with him we came to the

realization that we wanted the lighting to primarily visually support the realistic elements

of the play but allow for unrealistic lighting during transitions between the scenes. There

was one instance when we wanted to isolate Doctor Stockman on stage and have the set

change happen around him. This transition took us out of the reality of the prior scene into a dramatically lit moment on stage for the next scene. This visual image of seeing Doctor Stockman being alone on stage represented everything

Figure 1 - Production Photo   *Figure 2 - Production Photo*

that was happening around him in the action of the play. By not specifying where lighting should be placed on this list, Warner gave me the freedom to explore how I could allow the lighting to interact with the actors and scenery on stage.

Design Team: Scenic Designer

From my experiences, a scenic designer's role is to ground the production in a world that he or she creates on stage. The scenic designer ultimately places the action of the production in a location and defines how the actors can move around the physical stage space. Some productions have a single set location, where others have multiple locations that the scenic designer will have to take into account when they are designing. In the conceptual phase of the design process, the scenic designer is able to question and explore all possibilities and the overall visual impact of the set. Another important step for the scenic designer is to take into account the reality of the design that includes the theatre space the set will be staged in and the limitations of the budget. This can be

a difficult step in the process for the scenic designer depending on the size of the space

the production will be produced in and the number of locations that the playwright has

written into the script. It forces the scenic designer to go back and critically re-evaluate

their design decisions which hopefully result in a better overall concept for the final

production.

  The visual look and physical movement for any production is created by the

scenic designer but is worked out in close collaboration with the director. Sometimes,

however, the director and scenic designer's ideas do not match up which can lead to

compromise and a revised a design decision. An initial idea for *An Enemy of the People*

that the scenic designer, Jason Randolph, came up with was to have a large turntable

that would rotate around for different scenes. The turntable idea was redesigned early

on in the process once the design team started talking about logistics of how the kitchen

and living room spaces had to interact with each other. In response, Randolph created a

unique rotating arc-shaped platform that would swing out into the space and in the end

boosted the overall look of the show. In the collaborative process there is often a fine line

between how much the scenic designer can push and advocate for their ideas and how

much input the director ultimately has.

  For our production of *An Enemy of the People*, Randolph derived the set design

from a collection of political and artistic imagery from the early 1960's combined with

rural and natural aesthetics of a small town in Maine. From the beginning of the design

process Randolph said:

    We (the design team) had a concept that this play was not a traditional set.

    We wanted something open and abstract, laid over with a reality (like a

thin blanket) that would be represented in the specific and realistic props

and costumes. So from the beginning we wanted a set that was at odds

with itself in terms of its abstraction vs. realistic look.

These initial ideas that were developed between the scenic designer and director

defined the trajectory of the production. The biggest influence for all the designers

involved was the new time and place. We wanted the Stockmans, the family that the

production revolved around, to be a wealthy family with nice furnishings but a little

behind the times and more traditional. Connecting back to Warner's idea of the "circles

of reality," Randolph placed a greater importance of detail on the furniture and props in

the production than the surrounding set. This detail in the props and furniture helped

to define the time period
and socioeconomic status
of the family. The design
of the scenic walls that
surrounded the action on
stage was able to take on a
more abstract appearance
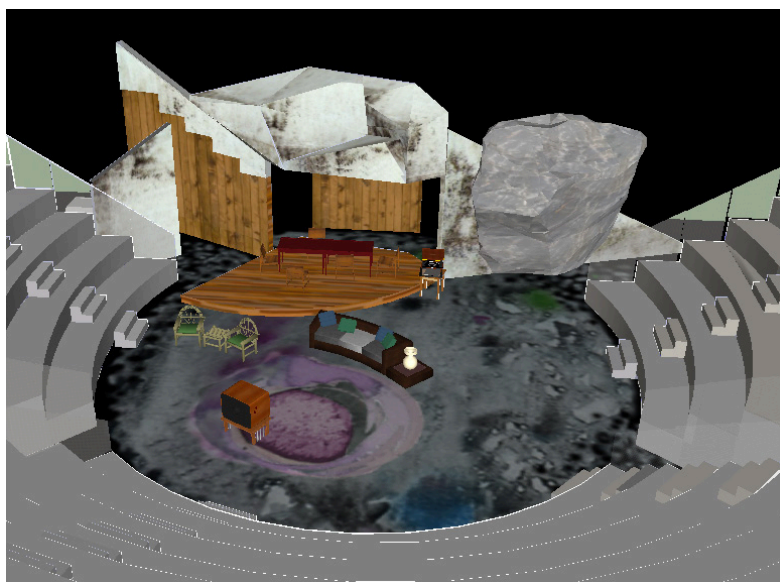combining natural and man-
made elements. To achieve

Figure 3 - Digital Scenic Rendering

this, Randolph wanted to mimic the angles of the Caplin Theatre's railings with the large

sections of "stone" walls and intersect that with a large rock formation that cut through

the plane of the wall. This rock formation was originally designed to hold running water

to reflect the idea of the springs surrounding the world of the play which further into

the design process was eliminated due to technical limitations within the time available for construction. Even though the water effect was abandoned, the rock formation still served as a large element of the scenic design.

Design Team: Costume Designer

The costume designer is responsible for designing the visual appearance of the actors while they are on stage. This includes everything from shirts, pants, socks, and shoes to hairstyles and makeup. Similar to the scenic designer, the costume designer collaborates closely with the director in order to make sure that style choices reflect the director's concept. The goal is to present the character's lifestyle and personality within his or her costume. It is important for the costume designer to consider the historical period that the director wants to set the production in as well as determining the season or climate of each scene. A costume designer thus concentrates on analyzing the script for each character to determine how his or her age, sex, socioeconomic status, and occupation will be shown within the costume.

Lindsay Hinz, the costume designer for the production of *An Enemy of the People*, began her process with an in-depth script analysis to be able to understand the character backgrounds, relationships and the themes of the show. To help show the design team what her ideas and concepts were for the show, Hinz found images that she felt influenced her design or facilitate discussion in the design meetings. One of the images that brought up a lot of discussion in our meetings was an image that had various bottles of liquid with labels on them. One of these bottles contained dirty water and looked contaminated while the rest of the bottles contained clear water. Hinz thought this image

was evocative supporting the main perception of Thomas Stockman, the main character in the production, being an enemy of the people, but while he may appear to be contaminated, the others appearances may be deceiving. The water

Figure 4 - Costume Research Image

is clear but we do not know what may be in the other bottles. This image also made an obvious reference to the design team focusing on the issue of contaminated water from the script. Along with this conceptual image, Hinz focused on more specific research:

> I gathered character research based on the chosen time period and location as well as the types of characters. It was important to display a happy, warm family life at the beginning of the show for the Stockman characters, so I found a lot of research images of families. The following steps of my design process were making decisions about line and color and then creating my final rendering.

The progression of the costume design for the characters went from warm happy colors in the beginning of the show to darker colors as the show progressed and as the conflict intensified. The last act of the play is the most vulnerable and disturbing for Thomas Stockman, which is displayed clearly in his disheveled appearance as established by Hinz. This progression of colors within the characters greatly influenced my design

Figure 5 - Costume Renderings for Thomas Stockman

approach to this production. When Hinz presented this concept to the group, my

initial thought was to slightly shift the colors of the lights from scene to scene to help

reinforce her design decision. Hinz's concept fit in very well with Warner's focus on the

production with a strong attention to detail put into the character's costumes. Through

the design meetings, the characters and their costumes were refined, modified, and

eventually finalized.

Design Team: Sound Designer

The sound designer helps place the audience and action of the play in a location

with the use of specific sounds. They must create and choose every sound, including any

sound effects that might be needed and music that underscores a scene or microphone

reinforcement if the production calls for it. With all of the tools available to them, the

sound designer is able to set the mood for each scene and the flow of the show.

Mark Gartzman's sound design for *An Enemy of the People* was based on the

underlying conflict throughout the production that the springs built in their town are

being contaminated. Basing his decisions off of this idea, Gartzman used a growing earth

rumbling and the movement that is happening all around the characters to symbolize the

problems with the springs as well as symbolize the growing tension in the community.

Utilizing the speakers surrounding the space, he was able to bring sound in from every

direction to make the audience feel as if they were part of the community. The sound

designer has the ability to influence my design for a production by setting an auditory

mood that I can then support with appropriate lighting choices. When Gartzman

presented a music sample from the artist Lawrence Welk, the jazzy tones of the music

allowed me to imagine the time in which the characters are living which emerged in a

choice of warmer amber colored lights for certain scenes.

Design Team: Lighting Designer

The lighting designer is responsible for unifying all of the design ideas into an

overall visual appearance on stage. During the early design process the lighting designer

can only remain in the theoretical mind set and there is little he or she can do to visually

show the exact lighting and overall feeling of a production. This makes it difficult for

the lighting designer to convey ideas to the director and other designers. One method

the lighting designer can use is to gather and present images that act as inspiration for

the production. These images may or may not show the combination of colors or a

specific angle of light for a particular scene. With image research only being able to

communicate abstract elements of what the lighting designer is thinking, sometimes he

or she will create renderings of scenes for the play to better show their thoughts. In *A*

Practical Guide To Stage Lighting, Shelley states:

While the aesthetics of the design are the primary concern, the lighting

designer must also possess a practical knowledge of the physical and

conceptual framework of the theatrical lighting environment, in order

to effectively communicate, coordinate, and execute those aesthetics.

(Shelley)

It is important that the lighting designer possess a practical knowledge of what is

technically possible as the design is very limited on paper and cannot adequately convey

the controllable properties of light (intensity, color, direction, distribution, texture, and

movement) that interact with the actors and the set. The lighting designer has to gain

the confidence of the director and provide a design that supports the director's concept

of the play. It is very difficult to fully realize a lighting design until the set has been

constructed, painted, in place and the actors on stage in costume. Every small detail will

affect the overall lighting design of the production. The paint treatment, the costumes

the actors are wearing and even the orientation of the scenic pieces can reflect light

differently than intended, for better or worse. This is why it is important for a lighting

designer to be part of design meetings from day one. In these meetings the lighting

designer may not have a lot to say, but will gather information that the other designers

present and figure out to what degree the information might affect how the lights are

perceived on stage. Since light is a weightless intangible medium that exists in time,

the lighting design can not be experienced until all elements are present in rehearsal.

A lighting designer can gather images, create light plots, and focus lights, but the real

design process does not begin until the start of technical rehearsals.

As the lighting designer for *An Enemy of the People*, I focused on the physical

world and worked towards the abstract. When designing, I have to constantly be making decisions on how I want to illuminate the stage and what to make visible. My first step of any design process is to understand the world around each scene and how I can contrast the scenes. My initial set of image research was in response to the director's concept of making this production timely and exciting while being transplanted from 1882 Norway to 1963 Maine. I happened to be researching building architecture in Norway and came across the Sami Parliament of Norway that made me think of the scenic design Randolph presented. This building has a large sharp grey object that looks like it busted through

the building, similar to Randolph's idea of the rock interrupting the stone walls of the set. From here I found various images of indoor environments that were naturally lit in different ways. We were working towards a naturally lit show that was set in an abstract world. The images of various indoor locations were not only to inform the design team what color and feeling I wanted each scene

Figure 6 - Sami Parliament of Norway

Figure 7 - Production Photo of Scenic Walls

to take on, but also for me to figure out how to achieve these looks using various angles of light. The lighting designer for any production needs to be able to respond to design ideas from the other designers and collaborators and adjust the original lighting design.

The scenic design of a given production helps define the movement of the actors on stage and also emphasizes areas for the lighting designer to illuminate. With this production having four different locations and a set that was going to stay fairly stationary, it was up to the lighting to shape and construct the feeling and mood within each scene. I spent a lot of my time focused on listening to the various ideas and modifications to the set that Randolph was presenting to make sure that I complimented his design with how I placed and focused the lighting instruments. With the rolling platform being arranged in different orientations for each scene, I decided that the angle of the platform needed to be supported and complimented by the angle of the lights. To achieve this, I worked closely with the set designer and director to determine locations of all pieces involved in a scene so that I could precisely focus my lights to those locations. With this production being placed in a thrust theater, I was able to easily shift the lights around the catwalks depending on the angle of the scenic platform for that scene.

The actors' costumes can end up drastically affecting the appearance of the lighting or vise versa especially with regard to color choices. Hinz presented the idea of the costume colors changing from warm happy colors in the beginning of the show to darker colors as the conflict intensifies. The idea of slighting changing the costume colors between each scene triggered an idea for me to support the progression of colors by slightly varying the colors of the lights between each scene. I used this as the basis for my design for each scene. Depending on the production, the color of the lights can

Figure 8 - Costume Renderings for Catherine Stockman

drastically affect the color of the costumes for better or worse. From the scenic design influencing the angle of light and the costume design influencing the color progression of the show, it was up to me as a lighting designer to combine those ideas into a fluid appearance on stage.

Design Process

Before going to the first design meeting for any given production, it is mandatory to have read the script. The initial design meeting for *An Enemy of the People*, was the first time the design team learned about the direction we wanted this play to follow. This is where the director communicates their initial concepts about the show, setting, and overall feeling of the production. Since this first meeting is focused around the director, all the other designers take note of what they are presenting and comment on what they agree and disagree with. This is the foundation being formed for the production and everything past this point will be building towards the end goal of a successful realized production. Being a lighting designer, it is very important for me to take notes of any

keywords the director uses during this first meeting. These phrases and keywords are helpful and important to remember, especially if you get stuck on your design.

In our production of *An Enemy of the People*, it was important for the design team to understand who Henrik Ibsen was and what political issues he experienced that influenced him to write this play. It is important to me as a lighting designer to understand the background and history of the play because it provides me with insight for my initial research. To first understand why Ibsen wrote this play, we researched who he was. Henrik Ibsen was a Norwegian playwright who was ecocentric and reclusive. His first professional interest was to study medicine but when he didn't enroll in medical school he decided to start a career as a writer. *An Enemy of the People* was finished in 1882, shortly after he wrote *A Doll House* (1879) and *Ghosts* (1881). When Ibsen wrote *An Enemy of the People*, he declared that it was a comedy, in which he focused the writing around "the conflict between the social and moral restrictions of bourgeois society and the psychological, often unconscious demands of individual freedom" (Worthen 598). He created flawed characters in his plays, not heroes.

Warner wanted to capture the importance of Ibsen's characters with his "circles of reality" concept. With collaboration with Grissom, they were able to capture the characters properly. The

Figure 9 - Henrik Ibsen

main character changes from Ibsen's original script were casting Hovstad and Billings as women, with Petra becoming a bit more prominent and, Katherine carrying a stronger

presence. The plot from Ibsen was retained, with a few exceptions, most notably, Kiil's

reason for wanting Thomas to say that the springs are fine. Grissom had this to say about

his initial ideas on the script:

> My initial idea with the adaptation was not to do so much an adaptation,
>
> but a "translation" – it couldn't literally be that because I don't know
>
> Norwegian, but I just wanted to make the dialogue more speakable than
>
> in other translations I've read. But then Richard had the idea of moving
>
> it to another time period, at least partially to make the women newspaper
>
> people plausible. And so with that came the other changes.

This adaptation by Grissom took shape over several months and many readings. The

first of these staged readings was vital for Grissom to physically hear how the adaptation

was being put together. After hearing it read for the first time, he concluded that the

adaptation he developed worked but that the play was too long.

In a typical design process, the design team members are handed a script that

is already written and finalized before beginning their own design for the production.

This did not occur in the design process for this production. To get an understanding

of the story line we first read Arthur Miller's adaptation of *An Enemy of the People*.

At our first design meeting, Warner presented the changes that would occur from the

original script into the adaptation Grissom was composing. With this adaptation, and as

a design team, we were able to make this play ours. This was unusual since with most

productions designers need to conform to what the playwright intended. In this case

we were able to meet the script half way and have it adapted to what we believed would

make this production more relevant. This didn't have much influence on me as a lighting

designer because most of the adaptation was character and line based. We did not add

or subtract locations that the characters lived in so I was able to grasp the story line from

Miller's adaptation and began to research more about the production. All of the designers

attended the first read through of the adaptation Grissom prepared and agreed that this

initial adaptation fit well with Warner's thought of crafting this production to be timely

and exciting. The readings of the play helped influence my design greatly. It is one thing

for me to read the script on my own, but I find it very beneficial to hear different people

speak the lines of each character. When read out loud, the actors put feeling and life into

the characters on paper, which helps me understand the overall feeling of the production.

For each of the design meetings, all of the designers brought a variety of different

research images pertaining to their design scope. Some of these images were a way

to convey our ideas about the production to the director and the rest of the design

team. Other images were purely there to create conversation at these meetings. As a

collaborator in these design meetings, it is the responsibilities of all the designers to

respond and let the others know what your thoughts are with what is being presented and

present alternative ideas. This discussion is crucial to all design processes. In Theatrical

Design and Production, Gillette describes the design process as:

> The design process isn't a simple, linear progression. As you move from
>
> step to step, you must check back on your previous steps to make sure that
>
> you are headed in the right direction with your proposed solution.
>
> (Gillette 17)

The second design meeting is where the designers will get to visually respond

to the director's initial thoughts and ideas of the production. This is an important step

to make sure that the director communicated their idea to the design team precisely and that all the design team members understood. Throughout the design process it is critical that all the designers take part in these meetings and are able to listen and comment on the other designer's thoughts and the direction they see the production heading. This is an educational step in the process where you get to visually see how the other designers responded to the same initial concept. I use this step in the process to present imagery that says something to me about the production. I find this useful for my design because the other designers will respond to what I present. If you are totally off from the overall concept of the play, then the other designers can steer you back on track. It is also great when other designers get inspired by an image you present that will influence their design.

After the initial meeting, the next few steps in the design process may be tedious and elongated but there is a great importance to laying a solid foundation before you start building upon it. As in any process, if you do not create a unified starting place for the designers to build upon, then the direction they take may not be anything close to what the director was intending. The director is the one who makes the initial decisions on where they see the production heading but it is up to the design team to agree or challenge these thoughts. Making suggestions on the director's initial thoughts of a production allows all designers involved to think about the production on a deeper level.

For *An Enemy of the People*, I responded to Richard's concept with images that represented different color families for the different scenes. I wanted to achieve a fairly realistic representation of what the lighting might actually be in each of the locations. I wanted a warm glow to be present for times they are inside the Stockman's house to

portray a welcoming feeling. The editor's office should feel more industrial with a whiter, greener lighting source. At the warehouse where the town meeting is held, I wanted to be very neutral in the coloration. Finally, in the last scene of the play, Warner described to me as being the light right after a thunderstorm, with a grey feeling.

Figure 10 - Lighting Color Research Image

The lighting designer in any production acts as the bookends of the design. As a lighting designer I do a lot of research on what I believe the feel of the production should take on in the beginning of the process and then have a long waiting period until close to the end of the process. All the meetings in between the first and

Figure 11 - Lighting Color Research Image

Figure 12 - Lighting Color Research Image

last design meetings are primarily focused on figuring out the scenery and costumes. This is important to focus on these departments as this is the groundwork that is being laid for the rest of the production to take shape around. It is important to be physically present in all meetings even if your department is not going to be talked about. By being present in the meetings, it opens up a line of collaboration and exhibits a willingness to work within the design team and allows you to contribute to what others have said.

Design meetings are where the world and environment of the show is developed. The

production never gets fully thought out in all details in one meeting and it is an ongoing

process that requires input from all collaborators involved to flush out all the details.

The scenic designer, Jason Randolph, had a great idea at the beginning of our

process to surround the actors on stage with images of water. Early in the design process,

the concept of water was removed due to technical limitations within the time available.

The plan was to start the show with water dripping from the ceiling onto the stage and

ending the show the same way. During the transitions between each scene, the rock

formation on stage would have water running down its face into a pool located on one

of its ledges. Thinking of how water could influence the production, both the sound and

lighting areas wanted to help reinforce this concept. Gartzman wanted to emphasize the

sound of dripping water and use that as one of the layers in the transition music between

scenes. This would remind the audience that there is the overarching threat to the

importance of the springs and the potential contamination of the water. I decided to help

strengthen this concept by using lights aimed at trays of water and reflect the light onto

the set and actors during very specific moments while keeping it very subtle. This serves

as a good example of how collaboration between several departments can impact one

element in the overall design.

During the next month or two
of design meetings, the designers are
focused on completing scenery design and
layout along with the costume design and
colors. Even though I wouldn't be able

Figure 13 - Research Image of Water Reflections

to further my lighting design until the scenery was finished, it allowed me time to listen

for any details that could change how I was planning on implementing my concept. An

example of this would be if I wanted to have low side light that lights every scene, but

the scenic designer designs wagons that are supposed to roll on and off stage right where

I want to place booms. This is a perfect time to speak up in the meetings to either come

to a compromise or influence the scenic designer to achieve their effect they want in a

different manner. Every detail that is discussed and resolved during the design process is

important for all designers involved. As a theatrical lighting designer, I believe that to be

a good designer I must remain flexible to new ideas and have the ability to compromise

parts of my design to advance the overall total production design. These types of

situations are fun and exciting for me because I am forced to think of different solutions

of how to achieve the look I want on stage. I have found that being forced to change

my design concept can be detrimental or beneficial to my end goal. Most of the time, it

gets me to think outside of the box and try something new that I may not have thought of

previously.

For the production of *An Enemy of the People*, the large angular walls of the set

restricted where I could place lights. I had to figure out in my process how I wanted

to incorporate these walls and platform that would angle to different locations between

scenes. I took a chance on this show and plotted very specific lights for each scene all

relating to the angle of the platform and I focused the lights to compliment the angles

of the large walls. Even though no audience member would have noticed these subtle

shifts in angles of the light, it was important to me in my design to keep these angles to

compliment the overall design. From my experience, I consider the scenic design to be

the most constraining element
for lighting designers, as it
sometimes can be very helpful
in challenging you to choose
alternative ways of lighting the
stage.

Towards the end of the
design process, there is typically

Figure 14 - Production Photo

an overload of information and ideas that have been presented to the design team during

the previous weeks. Many ideas have been considered, and some have been incorporated

into the design while others have been rejected. It is crucial that by the end of the design

meetings that the entire team is on the same page with all details. This is not to say

that something cannot change later in the process, but before everyone completes their

designs under certain assumptions, it is in the best interest of everyone to ask questions

to clarify these details. It is up to the design team to determine at the end of the design

process what ideas are important to the production and what ideas will be dismissed.

These concepts come together to provide clarity on the direction of the production. A

concept is the outcome of a collaboration phase in a design process, where the design

teams interpret the play and are able to insert their personal ideas and creativity.

The end of the design process also brings into account practical considerations

about implementing any design. This includes budget constraints, practicality of

technical elements, and physical space restrictions. The biggest restraining factor is

always the budget. There is never an endless supply of money and the designers have

to look over their entire design and determine what parts or pieces can be cut back or redesigned in a more economical way. These small changes can have a big impact on all design departments if not carefully dealt with. During the time that the set is being constructed any changes to size, shape, or orientation to the proposed scenery will affect the ability of how the lighting designer can light the production. Even though these practical considerations do ultimately shape the production, all designers need to keep in mind the initial design intent.

Implementation

Once design meetings come to an end, the design team should be ready to begin the technical rehearsals. At this point the set should be built, costumes ready for the actors, and the lighting instruments hung and focused. The very first time on stage with the scenery and actors is a very crucial part for all the design team members but most importantly for the lighting design process. This is the first time in the process that as the lighting designer, I will be able to visualize my design and observe how the choices I made actually affect the visual appearance. The time right after focus is most exciting to me, when I can turn on systems of lights and see how the colors I chose work together with the scenery that is present on stage. If there has been a lack of communication within the design team throughout the design process, this is where it will become obvious. During *An Enemy of the People*, there were no surprises that came up in technical rehearsals and the design team made sure that each member knew of any changes taking place and the communication was always flowing. Even though the weekly design meetings have ended, it is crucial for the design team to have an open

line of communication during technical rehearsals. The design meetings transform into informal discussions during the entire tech process. This open stream of collaboration is crucial for the lighting designer to be part of, as they will need to know about any changes to the scenery, costumes or staging. The lighting designer has a large task to fulfill during the tech process and needs to take into account any small change of costume color or scenic position. Technical rehearsals can be a very stressful time for all members of the production team since this is the first time all the design elements will come together in real time on stage.

The director has led the design team through design meetings and the actors through rehearsals. During *An Enemy of the People*, Warner was very courteous and allowed the designer to come to their own conclusions about the choices they have made. Warner took a step back during the technical rehearsals to become a collaborator while all of the designers had to step up and lead the process. This makes for a great collaboration experience for all designers as well as a freedom to explore and expand as artists. Technical rehearsals are the time that is given to designers to artistically create the world of the play that they have been working towards over the past several months. The very first technical rehearsal can be a very daunting task for all designers involved. This first technical rehearsal is where the scenic designer gets to see the completed set under lights, the sound designer gets to hear how well their design fits into the action of the play, and the lighting designer gets to see how all of their lights enhance the production. It isn't until after a few technical rehearsals that the costumes get added in. This allows the production to focus on the more technical elements of the production before getting to add in the finishing details of the costumes. Depending on the costuming designs,

some costumes will appear in the tech process sooner than others. This might be due to an actor that has a lot of physical movement on stage and allowing their costume to come into tech sooner than others allows the costume designer to foresee any problems they might have.

Until this time in the process, the lighting designer of the production has been working solely in a theoretical phase. They have made decisions on where to place the light in the space to achieve the angle of light they wish to project for each scene as well as what color and quality each light is to produce. The first day of tech is their transition from concept to reality. As a lighting designer, you take all the pre planning into consideration and still have to make hundreds of decisions about each look of the production. These decisions during technical rehearsals include what light to turn on, how many lights to turn on, how bright each light should be, and how does that effect the overall stage picture. This can be a stressful time for any lighting designer who is on the spot to make all these decisions instantaneously. The best thing to do is to be prepared going into technical rehearsals with all your paperwork organized, cues placed in your script, and then be ready to adjust and improvise.

Sometimes I believe that the job of the lighting designer might feel impossible to pull off. Besides all these design decisions that need to be made at a moment's notice, I also have to critically evaluate how the lights are affecting the scenery or costumes on stage and what impact that has on the overall design. Lighting design isn't just about seeing the actors perform on stage; lighting is a medium that allows a designer to create the sense of visibility, composition and mood on stage. Visibility may seem very basic, but it is up to the lighting designer to decide what or who is visible at any given time.

Stanley McCandless, who has paved the way for modern lighting designers, says "Good visibility is essentially selective. Its purpose is to reveal things selectively in terms of degrees of acuity" (McCandless). My personal design process is centered around being very selective on what I choose to be visible. When I first turn on a light, I choose a sculpting angle to bring up first and then eventually move to visibility angle. I feel this is what sets me apart from the other lighting designers. Working in this way allows me to paint the picture I have in my head on stage and then slowly be able to chisel the scene away till it is lit just right.

Some productions require an abundance of light and visibility for scenes and others require a very minimal amount. This is a decision that needs to be determined between the lighting designer and the director of the production. The amount of visibility the lighting designer chooses to provide for any scene is part of the overall total composition. The composition that a lighting designer creates takes into account the surrounding scenery and actors in the scene. Every scene might have a different composition of light that the designer must take into account. I am very critical of shows when the scenery is lit brighter than the actors, drawing your attention and focus away from the action on stage. This balance in composition takes a lot of time and patience to get the levels just right in the lighting console. Besides all of the practical questions that are involved in lighting design, the artistic side of the process starts with the very first cue of the show. I often like to consider, what do I want the audience to see or feel when they enter the space and as small and unimportant as this might seem, it sets the mood and a direction for the rest of the production. When the audience entered the theatre for *An Enemy of the People,* I wanted to convey a brighter foreground fading to a

darker background that accented the large scenic walls with light and shadow to perk the audience's curiosity about the many levels of interpretation of the story. This question might be answered right away in a short amount of time, or it may not be answered until several days later once the design team has seen all parts of the production played out in the space. During *An Enemy of*

Figure 15 - Production Photo

the People, I feel this was achieved during the tech process when we were able to see all the design elements combined.

It is important for all the designers that are involved in any production to critically evaluate the other designer's work. This is purely an extension of the design meeting process where ideas and suggestions can be brought before other designers to learn about their opinions. In the tech process for, *An Enemy of the People*, there was a lot of discussion on the abstract metal structure above the dining room table. Randolph, the scenic designer, and I thought it would be a nice touch to add lighting fixtures into this sculpture which would allow me to use them to light up the area of the table naturally. When these lights were added during tech, we concluded that they looked out of place and to keep with the flow of the scenic design, we should remove them entirely. This is good example of the idea on paper sounded and looked great but when it came down to the reality of the situation, they looked out of place and didn't fit in with the design.

During the tech process, every production contains some sort of challenge for which the designers have to determine solutions. For a lighting designer these challenges might be resolved as simply by re-aiming an instrument or changing the color to possibly more difficult challenges of physically moving a lighting instrument to a new location. These challenges and obstacles that all productions face come into play from either technical limitations or real world obstructions. On paper, the set might fit at a certain angle, but the reality could end up that the set has to move a few feet from where it was drafted. This is why all designers need to be flexible and open to change and be able to relay this information to fellow designers. Another example of this from *An Enemy of the People* was all the walls on the set were drafted and designed to angle from center off to the corners of the space. It wasn't until a few days into our technical rehearsal process when Randolph and Warner agreed that the walls should angle the other direction to mask the offstage area. This masking issue allowed the audience to see into the backstage areas of the set, which was not conducive with our intentions for the design. When the scenic crew re-angled the walls to their new positions, I then had to adjust all the lighting instruments that illuminated the walls. This wasn't a difficult change for me, but it is a good example of an obstacle that I faced during the tech process. This is an example of collaboration as it illustrates how one change in the design will impact other elements and how the team must be focused on the total overall concept.

Reflection

For *An Enemy of the People*, my final design emerged as subtle shifts in focus to draw attention to the action of the characters. This play is focused around the characters

and what they are experiencing, and by changing the intensity of the lights I was able to

help the audience connect and identify with these characters. Even though the lighting

transitions will not be recognized by most of the audience, all of them will experience

it. These subtle transitions of intensity within scenes keeps the audience's attention

focused to the action on stage. Another element I integrated as part of this design was

shifting the lights around the catwalks to change the angles for each scene. Since this

show was produced in a thrust theatre, I also had to keep in mind that the front light for

one audience member is the same as the side light or back light for another. This was a

good challenge for me to think about the placement of each light and how each audience

member will perceive it.

The lighting design process is very rewarding to me and I enjoy the fact that often

the best designs will go unnoticed by many people. There are some productions that

the lighting is required to be noticed but I still believe that it can be done in a way that

is visually integrated with the other design fields. Lighting design is mostly built in the

theoretical world and can never be fully imaged until you are in the physical space with

the actors. Having studied
the controllable properties
of light over the last
seven years has allowed
me to explore numerous
ways of utilizing light to
successfully create different
moods on stage that have

Figure 16 - Production Photo

allowed me to become a successful designer.

My experiences during the production of *An Enemy of the People*, reinforced my core belief that collaboration within the design team is the key element to the creation of a successful lighting design. The success of the entire total design is dependent on the coordination, collaboration, and cooperation between each of the disciplines. Successful collaboration includes a thorough understanding of the design process, a willingness by all team members to communicate effectively, compromise when needed, and operate within the practicality of the design, available time and budget.

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Figure Reference:

Figure 1: Production Photo of *An Enemy of the People* taken by Michael Bailey

Figure 2: Production Photo of *An Enemy of the People* taken by Michael Bailey

Figure 3: Digital Scenic Rendering rendered by Jason Randolph

Figure 4: Costume Research Image presented by Lindsay Hinz

Figure 5: Costume Renderings for Thomas Stockman rendered by Lindsay Hinz

Figure 6: Lighting Research Image presented by Jacob Kvanbeck

Figure 7: Production Photo of *An Enemy of the People* taken by Jacob Kvanbeck

Figure 8: Costume Renderings for Catherine Stockman rendered by Lindsay Hinz

Figure 9: Henrik Ibsen Portrait

Figure 10: Lighting Color Research Image presented by Jacob Kvanbeck

Figure 11: Lighting Color Research Image presented by Jacob Kvanbeck

Figure 12: Lighting Color Research Image presented by Jacob Kvanbeck

Figure 13: Lighting Water Research Image presented by Jacob Kvanbeck

Figure 14: Production Photo of *An Enemy of the People* taken by Jacob Kvanbeck

Figure 15: Production Photo of *An Enemy of the People* taken by Michael Bailey

Figure 16: Production Photo of *An Enemy of the People* taken by Michael Bailey