

Lighting design
makes the stage real
and bigger



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HERE YOUR HERE HERE HERE Lighting Design Makes the Stage Real and Majestic A recent production of “ A Midsummer Night’s Dream” illustrated the importance of lighting in creating an emotional reaction in the viewing audience. When the characters were performing, different lighting combinations, at the appropriate time during scenes which called for mood and ambiance, contributed highlight to the play’s meaning and intention. In this particular production, lighting design made the stage real and majestic. The stage consisted of approximately 80 different lights in the primary color group, including blue, green and red. The purpose of this large volume of lighting was to ensure that extra light could be utilized during scenes which called for humor and excitement. These lights were also turned down to set the mood and to create the emotion in the audience when scenes took on a more serious tone or hinted at romanticism. These primary colors, when combined, were used to create different colors outside of the primary group, including cyan, magenta, and yellow so as to express details more vividly during the production.

Using the different color combinations, the lighting design was able to blend both elements of fantasy with realism. Because “ A Midsummer Night’s Dream” has likely been an audience favorite since the 16th Century, it is necessary to create the sense of majesty and awe deserving of the production, thus switching back and forth between more subtle colors and more vibrant colors manages to pay homage to the play and to the characters performing on stage.

The background lighting, especially, served to enhance the overall size of the stage and make the performers and the various props used for the play seem bigger and more majestic. A large white screen is utilized during the

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production which is backlit by similar colors to those in the play's foreground. For example, when the play's characters are performing a scene in the forest, the background light is turned to a vibrant green so as to illustrate the feelings and sensations accompanied by forest life as well as creating the sensation of fantasy.

During one particular scene, when the play's characters are having a celebration in a beautiful palace, the aforementioned white screen is lit to orange to capture the sensations of joy and happiness in a celebratory atmosphere. This lighting scheme created the illusion that the stage had become quite larger (much like a palace's interior rooms) and made the audience feel as if they were actually part of a medieval celebration. Had the white screen been lit to a different color during the celebration scene, such as green, it would have closed off the stage and removed the intended sensations of majesty created by the orange color scheme.

Though it might be better to use simply one light when a character performs a monologue, in order to pay respect to the actor, "A Midsummer Night's Dream" successfully blended different color schemes to create sensations of realism and majesty. For this particular production, lighting was the key to building a satisfied audience who believed they were part of a grand theatrical performance.