

Team Lighting Challenge Concept Statement - Elijah Maxey and Shepherd Wilhelmsen

The music provided for the team lighting challenge is clearly intended to invoke terror and animosity. When considering what themes and ideas align with this tone, war and other human atrocities came to mind, and thus the theme behind our presentation was born. There are many different terrible things throughout history to consider, including instances of enslavement, forcible transfers of people groups, persecution, and segregation, but we wanted to hone in on only some in order to have a more focused and meaningful presentation. After some discussion, we agreed upon atrocities as seen in the Holocaust, those being persecution, genocide, and censorship. Although the concepts in our presentation are primarily inspired by the Holocaust, we wanted our scenic elements to remain at least somewhat ambiguous so that they may be interpreted differently to apply to different instances throughout history, seeing as there are many other occurrences that carry the themes we wanted to portray.

Our first scenic element is a wire fence set centerstage, which is representative of the imprisonment and forced labor of various people groups throughout history. The concentration camps of the holocaust are the primary inspiration, but the wire fence can also stand to represent the Soviet Gulags of the 1900s, Japanese American Internment Camps as seen in America during World War II, and other current day prison camps. The next scenic element we selected is a pile of clothes, representative of lives lost, neglected, and abused throughout history, and the general mistreatment of people, primarily during times of war. And our final scenic element is a pile of books. Inspired by the burning of books during World War II, the pile of books is representative of censorship, the ruination of art, and the restriction of individual expression.

Within the first few seconds of the song, each scenic element is illuminated with a color, those being green on the clothing pile, purple on the pile of books, and blue on the fence. The color green was selected for the clothes to represent harmony and possession, which is soon to be torn away, leaving a pile of what once was, and the books have purple lights over them, which not only make them pop, but also are representative of creativity and spirituality, soon also to be torn away by cruel circumstances as with the clothing. The blue lighting on the wire fence is representative of security. It is supposed to be a positive sense of security conveyed, which will later be turned awry, and the cool blue color makes the

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wires of the fence stand out less, whereas in future cues, bolder, warmer colors will make the fence pop, accentuating the sense of security being twisted into helplessness and imprisonment. The cyclorama during the opening dons a dim, but sharp and oppressive silhouette, which gives the colors and scenic elements breathing room and an opportunity to make an impression, invoking a sense of apprehension all the while.

As the song carries into the bridge, thematic colors are maintained with an emphasis on synchronization with the provided music via various effects including rhythmic strobing, alternating intensities, and brisk movements. Synchronization was achieved by the meticulous analysis of the provided music, its rhythms, and its timestamps. This all builds up to a moment of eerie silence, soon followed by the climactic culmination of intimidating tones; we took advantage of the silence before this big moment to start a slow fade, the interruption of which subverts expectations, adding to the dramatic effect of the music coming back in, accentuating feelings and themes of fear. A bold red takes the cyclorama for this purpose, and flashes of green compliment it, inspired by the fact that green is oftentimes a militaristic color (consider the term “army green”), and red is a vicious and cruel one. The audience will notice that the motions of the lights generally stick to a looping circular path over the scenic elements, which not only brings forth the scenic elements and the themes they represent more effectively, but also stands to represent the vicious cycle of history repeating itself, presenting the thematic concept that human atrocities seem inevitable. We opted to employ lots of strobing effects, as it makes for a very intense appearance, and instills a sense of shock when used on the cyclorama, making for an impressive backlighting effect. The cyclorama proved to be very important in making eye-catching motion, since such a large view is bound to grab people’s attention. We did however make sure to use it sparingly for that purpose so that attention would not be taken from the motions portrayed on the stage itself, creating an intellectually engaging balance between background, foreground and scenic elements.

Our last cue in the show is one of our most impactful, meant to fully represent the aforementioned censorship, ruination of art, and restriction of individual expression that has clashed with the artistic and creative nature of humanity all across time, perhaps coming to a pinnacle during the Holocaust. We

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decided that the burning of books as seen in the Holocaust was an adequate representation of all of these things, an all encompassing beacon of the dangers of censorship and cruelty, thus a slow, dramatic flickering effect resembling fire is the last thing left on stage other than silence.

During the time from when we started production on the team lighting challenge to when we had to submit it, we were faced with the challenge of harsh time constraints because our stage was occupied by other organizations as well as an additional week of break from school, significantly reducing the amount of class and after school time we had to work on the challenge. In order to overcome the difficulties of time constraints and an occupied stage, we committed to completing what tasks we could without access to the stage and light board, and applied the fullness of our work ethic in order to make the most of the time we finally had to work with when actually programming the design of the show. Another challenge we faced was some expected difficulty with programming relatively complex ideas, considering the fact that we wanted to achieve something of significant spectacle and grandeur, worthy of the title of “lighting show”. We used imaginative ingenuity, cooperation and general prowess in lighting technology, in order to work together in achieving said spectacle.

Ultimately, our design is meant to subtly but effectively capture themes of oppression, genocide, and crimes against humanity via color choices and scenic design, as well as captivate the viewer with lighting effects that are just as impactful as the music that goes with them, in order to make a fearful, entertaining, and impressive show with strong thematic undertones.