

Lighting Design i.e Additional Essay

Mamma Mia! was a complex show. The lighting was particularly difficult as the lighting design naturally comes last in the design process, and with me as a lighting designer, I had big dreams for the show. The majority of the process consisted of me hanging the lights, then in about a week, I had to design practically the whole show. I was able to get it done, and I loved it, but even after the first show night, I was still changing and perfecting aspects.

Every single production I've designed has been drastically different, rather it be a closed off show, a simple and elegant show, or a bright and overdone show, which was Mamma Mia. The whole show is heavily dramatic, and the lights had to represent this. The main way I did that is through the fade times. I am a big stickler for timing, the timing can make or break a scene, so I assured that the fade times reflected the intensity of a scene.

I was proud of the design, but my favorite aspect of the lighting had to have been the texture that my school's Solaspots provided. Various scenes were set on a beach, and what I was able to do is use the Solaspots to illuminate the set with a slowly rotating, blue, water texture, to represent the reflection of the ocean. This provided the scenes with a worthy backdrop to accurately portray the setting.

Post-production came a competition called Tommy Tunes. This competition involved Houston high school musicals competing to win in each aspect of the production, the acting, the orchestra, the set, the lighting, etc. For Mamma Mia, I had the privilege to be a finalist for Outstanding Lighting Design. Unfortunately, I did not win, however, I learned a valuable lesson about the show's design and design as a whole from it. I read a quote somewhere, from a lighting designer named Brian MacDevitt, he stated that "it's not the best lighting, but the most lighting that wins a Tony". Looking back on Mamma Mia, I realized how subtle many of the light cue's were, forcing the audience to not even notice it. The quote has fueled me ever since to create beautiful, but cognizant designs. I believe this is why I did not win the Tommy Tune award, the design of Mamma Mia did not stand out quite enough to be worthy of the award.

Despite my challenges with Mamma Mia, the design came out wonderfully; something beautiful, exuberant, and sad when necessary. This was the first ever musical I had designed the lights for, and it became something special.