

ABSTRACT

Illuminating This Random World

Josiah Bender

Director: JoJo Percy, MFA

Steven Dietz's play *This Random World* shows the lives of seven people, some of whom have no idea how closely connected they are. I was the lighting designer for Baylor University Theatre's production of this work, which was performed in November of 2017 as part of BUT's mainstage season. This thesis will follow the process from concept to actualized production, with the vision of our director, Stan Denman, as a through-line: This world is beautiful because of, and not despite, its melancholy and random nature.

APPROVED BY DIRECTOR OF HONORS THESIS:

JoJo Percy, Department of Theatre Arts

APPROVED BY THE HONORS PROGRAM:

Dr. Elizabeth Corey, Director

DATE: _____

ILLUMINATING *THIS RANDOM WORLD*

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By

Josiah Bender

Waco, Texas

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CHAPTER ONE

Concept and Research

I was excited to learn that I would be designing lights for Baylor University Theatre's production of *This Random World* by Steven Dietz, which opened in November of 2017. I was especially interested in working on this project, because Dietz's play is a contemporary piece originally produced at the Humana Play Festival in 2016. As much as I enjoy classical plays, the opportunity to be the designer for a fairly new work excited me. The director, Dr. Stan Denman, emailed the design team a copy of the script the summer before the production and encouraged us to consider the play as "melancholy, but not in a sad way." Reading through the play, I could understand what he meant. Each scene of *This Random World* usually takes place between only two characters, although in some scenes one character will enter just before another exits and vice versa. Many of the characters know each other, or are connected by only one degree of separation, and yet so many of them do not make the connection. Sometimes interactions which would be extremely important are missed by just a few seconds. As a reader or as an audience member, one constantly thinks "If only *this* had happened differently." This is the kind of melancholy that one finds throughout *This Random World*. Another melancholy moment takes place in the final scene, which is the funeral of one of the characters. The deceased character is onstage as a ghost, and watches her children and others at her grave, but she is unable to talk to them. Instead of a heavy moment laden with sadness, this moment is somehow beautiful in its melancholy nature, which is exactly the impact that the design team and Dr. Denman wanted to have throughout the production.

Another important element of *This Random World* comes from the title itself. As I mentioned in the previous paragraph, much of this play deals with missed connections. Not only is this important for the melancholy aspect of the play, but also to help show how random our world truly is. Many of the characters are interested in being in control of their lives in one way or another. The play is filled with plans, goals, and wills, and yet in the end none of the control that the characters believe they have matters, because events just continue to play out. This randomness is mirrored in the structure of the scenes, which take place across several different locations and do not follow traditional plot conventions. Instead, each scene feels like its own microcosm, and it is only at the end that one is able to view the play as a whole. As I thought about the isolated nature of the scenes, I knew I wanted to incorporate it into my lighting design.

The last major element of *This Random World* that influenced my lighting design was the aforementioned change of locations. The play only returns to a given location twice during the play, and both times the overall tone of the setting has drastically shifted. One of the things that especially interested me about the change of location was the change in weather. Dietz specifically writes what locations have rain in them, although for the most part this rain is not seen onstage. There is also a sense that some locations were warmer or cooler, both in terms of actual temperature but also in a sense of comfort. This back and forth between warm and cool locations as well as locations where it is or is not raining became vital to my research and design. This also became a way to play up the melancholy feelings during specific scenes, while allowing the audience to feel more relaxed at other points. However, I wanted to be clear from the beginning that “cool” did not mean “bad” and warm did not mean “good.” Instead, the

warmth of the scene had to do with the familiarity and comfort level of the characters, not necessarily how “well” everything was going in that scene. Ultimately, Dr. Denman and the design team landed on the following concept: “The world is beautiful, not in spite of, but *because* it is random and melancholy.”

Concept Images

As I began reflecting on my concept, I researched images to help guide my design. To begin, I want to briefly define the difference between “concept images” and “research images.” For the purposes of my work, a concept image is an image that works alongside the concept to help me, the director, and the rest of the design team visualize the emotions and ideas I want to communicate in my lighting. A research image, on the other hand, is a more literal image designed to show the color and type of light that I intend to replicate with my design. This section will go over my concept images, and the next section will discuss my research images.

The concept image that I wanted to use to guide my lighting the most was an image of two people standing by a campfire in the middle of a snow-covered forest (Appendix A1). The cool tones throughout the image reflects the melancholy aspect of the play, and yet at the center of it all is the warmth of the campfire. As Dr. Denman would later say, this play communicates how we need to “find the light” amidst confusion and sadness, which is well illustrated in this image.

The next image I found shows a series of random dots connected by different lines (Appendix A2). I liked this image because it communicated to me the sense of randomness that is prevalent throughout Dietz’s play, while still showing how surprisingly connected we all are. I found other images that depicted constellations, but

Dr. Denman was concerned that those images – as well as this one – were showing too much connection. He reminded me that *This Random World* is specifically about *missed* connections, and that our folly is often in “trying to map the stars.” We eventually decided to include this image in my collection of concept images, as the connections themselves seem random as well as the points themselves. This image would eventually inspire me to consider using a patterned light on the floor to symbolize the random connections that are made throughout the play, which I will discuss further in a later section.

My final concept image came from Serge Najjar’s photography series entitled *The Architecture of Light*. Najjar’s photos used high-contrast images to show how much light plays a part in our world. The specific image I was drawn to appears to be a tunnel with several skylights, which create distinct squares of lights surrounded by darkness (Appendix A3). This image was appealing to me because it shows the sense of separation that appears in moments of the play. Initially Dr. Denman and I were interested in using sharply focused downlight to create similar squares on the floor for each scene. After further discussion with my lighting design mentor, JoJo Percy, we concluded that it would be difficult to create the same effect as Najjar’s photography because of the inevitable light that would spill and flare from other necessary light, such as side or face light. I brought this concern to Dr. Denman and the design team, and Dr. Denman expressed that he also had been reconsidering our plan for harsh downlight, specifically because he was worried this plan would be too harsh of an effect. Although I kept this concept image for the feeling of isolation that it communicated, we agreed to the use of softer edge downlight to create the effect.

Research Images

As previously mentioned, this section will discuss images I found with the specific intention of researching physical light – either in real life or other theatrical productions – in order to guide my color choices and scene lighting and to communicate those ideas to Dr. Denman and the design team. The first scene is set in an apartment while it is raining. I still wanted this place to be warm, as it is a safe place for the characters, while still getting a sense of cooler, neutral light from the outside (see Appendix A4). I wanted to maintain the sense of familiarity, since the two characters in the scene are siblings who are clearly very comfortable with each other, and they are in the Tim's – the brother – apartment. I wanted to keep a sense of the neutral light that would come from the outside because both of the characters express a level of dissatisfaction with their current lives and the need to “go out” of the apartment to do something, or anything.

The second scene takes place in a park at sunrise. This is also the first scene in which we see Scottie, who understands best of all the idea of finding beauty in a melancholy world. I found in my research that most sunrises cast a deep amber light, but with a hint of magenta as well (see Appendix A5). The warmth in this scene was especially important, both because of the literal warmth from the sunrise and Scottie's aforementioned understanding of the beauty in the world.

The third scene, on the other hand, needed to be much cooler. The scene is set at a restaurant during a breakup. Although I wanted to keep some of the warmth that a restaurant usually tries to provide, I envisioned a large window that was allowing in the cool light from the rainy outdoors, which is also in this scene (see Appendix A6).

The next scene takes place at a funeral home, and I found that funeral homes are predominately lit with warm tones, with only a hint of neutral light. However, despite the warm tones there is still a sense of drabness to them (see Appendix A7). I also thought of adding an additional amount of warmth because the woman who is working at the funeral home keeps an incredibly positive attitude, to the point of being off-putting. The play transitions into a scene in which one character gives a monologue while the other reads on their computer. Dr. Denman wanted this scene to have tight light on both characters, with only darkness around them. I pulled an image from Bo Burnham's *What* comedy special to give a sense of what I would do with the lighting for this moment (see Appendix A8). Although in this image the performer is in a spotlight, Dr. Denman planned on blocking the actors to stand in place during the monologue, so I knew I would be able to hang traditional fixtures and focus them on the location of the monologues without worrying about the actors moving out of their light. This would be an excellent opportunity to emphasize the isolation that many of the characters feel throughout the play, sometimes not realizing how connected they are.

Scene six is set outdoors in Nepal, at the foot of a snow-covered mountain. I wanted cool and neutral light to help emphasize the freezing temperatures as well as to help replicate the bright blue color cast by shadows, especially in mountainous areas (see Appendix A9). The coolness of this scene is particularly fitting, as it is one of the major scenes where the characters' plans have gone awry. Although there are some moments of softness between the two characters in the scene, they spend a majority of it arguing about whose fault it is that they are unable to go on an expensive hike for which they have already paid.

The seventh scene is much warmer by contrast, as it is set once again at sunrise, this time at an airport. I continued to use the image from Appendix A5 to guide my color choices, and specifically envisioned the characters standing in front of a large window in the airport to account for the amount of warm light that would be hitting their faces (see Appendix A10). The next scene takes place at the restaurant again, which allowed me to use the same research image from Appendix A6. However, because this restaurant scene is more about attempting to reconnect rather than pushing away, I knew that wanted this scene to be lit more warmly.

The eighth scene is set in a hospital waiting room, which are usually lit with white lights that are not very comforting (see Appendix A11). In this scene, Tim reveals to us Scottie's recent death and we find out that Claire – Tim's old high school girlfriend who is dumped by her new boyfriend, Gary, in the first restaurant scene – has attempted suicide. The hospital is certainly the most melancholy scene of the play, and I wanted to be sure to emphasize that in the lighting. In addition to the other dialogue in the scene, there are two phone calls in which we see characters outside of the waiting room. Dr. Denman wanted these characters to be isolated in a similar way that the characters would be for the monologue scene, so I was able to use the same image from Appendix A8.

The following scene takes place at a shrine in Japan during pouring rain. I wanted to have a hint of cool green notes to suggest the foliage around the shrine, without making it overwhelming. The green would be an unnatural lighting element, but the image that I found (see Appendix A12), showed a great number of trees and bushes, and as the scenic design would not allow for that amount of foliage, I still wanted to give a sense of it with the lighting. The other major note from this image is how neutral of a

white tone the light is during the rain. However, I wanted to make sure to bring in some warmth as the moment at the shrine is incredibly reverent and important to both of the characters involved. It is also a melancholy scene, but the beauty that the characters find in it allows for warmth.

The final scene takes place at the funeral home again, so I used the same image from Appendix A7, knowing however that I wanted to warm it up just slightly as the scene takes place between two ghosts. In addition to the funeral home, the final moment of the play shows the sun rising once more. In addition to the light from Appendix A5, Dr. Denman suggested using a cyclorama – a large white backdrop hung upstage designed to be lit in various colors – to create the image of the sunrise in front of the audience. I found images of sunrises whose colors ranged from deep magenta to amber to blue, and wanted to play with using a series of cues to emulate the sunrise (see Appendix A13). Dr. Denman suggested to the scenic designer, Caroline Gharis, that we hang a full black curtain upstage, in front of the cyc, which would then be flown out to allow us to see the sunrise on the cyc. However, our technical director, Jordan Rousseau, reminded us that the fly system in the Mabee Theater did not allow for a curtain to be completely flown out and hidden from the audience's views. Although we briefly discussed rigging a curtain to be furled up as it was flown out, Dr. Denman and the rest of the production team decided that the logistics of getting this moment to work might simply be too complicated. At this time, I suggested the possibility of using a scrim in front of the cyc. A scrim reflects little light and so appears black but when objects are lit behind the scrim the material becomes transparent. I posited that this could allow for the appearance of a black curtain throughout most of the show, and then in the final moment would allow the

sunrise lighting on the cyc to shine through it without having to move any scenic pieces. This was largely accepted by the production team, although there was some concern that the white cyc behind the scrim would not be fully hidden. We decided to wait until we had loaded both curtains into the space to test how well the scrim would work as a replacement for a black curtain. Professor Percy suggested that in the case the scrim did not block the cyc well enough, I could use a low saturated blue light on the cyc to keep it muted, but not an eyesore. Later in the process Professor Percy, Dr. Denman, Gharis, and I looked at the cyc behind the scrim with only the Mabee Theatre's work lights on, as we had yet to hang or focus any of the lights for the show, and found that the white cyc reflected too much area light back through the scrim to leave it unlit. At this point, we decided to go with Professor Percy's plan of using a dark blue cyc light for the majority of the show.

Another important element that was not specific to a scene was the separation previously discussed in my concept images. As mentioned, Dr. Denman and I agreed that we wanted to isolate the scenes in a softer light than Najjar's photography project. I pulled an image from one of my earlier designs for a production of *Maple and Vine* to show how I could use LED color-changing wash fixtures to achieve this effect (see Appendix A14). Like the image shows, with a marked difference in the color for the downlight, a visible separation can be created between spaces. The plan was to isolate each scene as much as possible, with only dim blue light and gobos filling the space around. As previously mentioned, I wanted the floor pattern to indicate the randomness of the world and the connections that can be made. Although my concept image inspiring this decision was a series of straight lines, Dr. Denman and I agreed that it would be

better to use a softer, more fluid symbol for the randomness, which led me to a swirling breakup pattern (see Appendix A15). I chose to put these in an amber color, and used them to fill spaces which were not used for a specific scene, as well as to add texture to the transitions. The scenic design included a large arch which extended the proscenium of Baylor Theatre's thrust stage by about three feet on each side. I wanted to include color-changing gobos on the portal, as we called it. I chose a breakup pattern called Ink Roller, because I knew that, depending on the color I chose for it, I could make it look like ice, water, or foliage (see Appendix A16). The LED wash fixtures and the gobos were especially useful to create the world of the play.

CHAPTER TWO

The Design Process

Schematic

After the concept and research phases, I started working on the actual lighting design. This began with developing a schematic, which represents the standard lighting for each acting area as well as any other special lighting needed. As I looked through my research images, the consistent color pattern was neutral and cool tones, with only specific moments such as the sunrise scenes necessitating warmer tones. In talking with Professor Percy, she advised me against overloading my plot, and to take into account that because *This Random World* was being produced in a thrust stage it would be sensible to use the same color sidelight in order to create the most uniform lighting experience for the audience. As can be see in my schematic (see Appendix B1) I decided on R53 face light, which, although the gel is described as lavender, creates a neutral tone on the actors. I chose L201 for my sidelights, which would be the cold, unsaturated blue. In order to facilitate separation of space as well as versatility in my area lighting, I chose color-changing down washes, represented by the black arrow. I originally wanted my swirling area gobos to be in color-changing ERS instruments, but after talking with my Master Electrician, Joshua Wilson, he advised me against this decision, considering the number of instruments I would need for this. I made the decision to use incadescent ERS instruments instead, with an warm amber gel.

I continued my schematic to include a list of special, or non-area specific, lights that I would need (see Appendix B2). For the final sunrise, I decided that LED Showline lights would be the best instruments for this final image, as it would allow me to create a more vibrant sunrise than traditional RGB cyc lights would normally allow. Because Dr. Denman intended on blocking the actors during the two sunrise scenes to be facing in different directions, I needed two sets of sunrise lights. Taking into account the pinkish hue within the amber light, I decided to double-hang the sunrise positions, using a deep amber and a pink to mix the optimal color. The monologue and phone call specials each used three high-angle lights, mimicking the front and side light configuration and color of the area lighting, but placed to hit specific places on the stage, which the stage manager, Annie Saum, marked for me.

One of the greatest challenges of the play is the scene set in Japan, as it requests that a rain effect with actual water be used, rather than simply suggested. Gharis and Rousseau were enthusiastic about the technical challenge that this posed scenic, and devised a sprinkler system that dispensed water from the theatre's grid system in a six-by-four-foot rectangle. The rain also offers a challenge to the lighting design, as falling water is almost impossible to see without light catching the raindrops to make them visible. Professor Percy advised me to use low-angle side lights for the rain, which led me to hang an ERS fixture on the balcony on either side of stage. In addition to the rain specials, I also needed to add special gobos to add texture to the pagoda, which flew in from the grid and was one of the few moving set pieces in the show. I chose a light amber for these gobos, so that I could bring the warmth into the Japan scene, as mentioned in my concept and research work. I quickly recognized that the height at which Gharis

intended to hang the pagoda and how much Dr. Denman planned on blocking the characters under it during the Japan scene would also require special low-angle face light to shoot under the pagoda, as my area lights would not be able to hit under the overhang. I also hung a special to hit each vomitorium in the same R53 color as the facelight, so that I would be able to light actors seamlessly as they entered and exited. Finally, I chose color-changing ERSs for both the fill and gobo lights on the portal. As mentioned in Chapter 1, this allowed me to adjust the setting of each scene by changing the color of both the wash and pattern on the portal. I also decided that, in order to connect the portal to the floor during specific scenes such as Nepal and Japan, I wanted to add the Ink Roller gobos in a color-changing ERS down wash, which is reflected in my final schematic.

Light Plot, Hang and Focus

After completing my schematic and specials list, I created my light plot using Vectorworks Spotlight (see Appendix B3). I have had plenty of experience with Vectorworks in the past, and the processes of finding vertical and field angles was easily achieved. The major challenge at this point was determining special lighting needs. There were a few changes in the blocking of particular moments, which is why one can see lights on this plot not previously mentioned in my schematic, as I put them in before changes were made, and they were eventually cut. For example, I had originally planned on hanging six lights for the phone calls, as one was originally blocked stage left and the other stage right. Dr. Denman eventually moved the stage left phone call to take place on the same spike mark as the original stage right, and so I didn't need the other three lights to be hung, and I was able to use the three lights already in place stage right for both

phone calls. On the other hand, although I did not initially plan to hang them – and thus they are absent from my schematic – after discussion with Professor Percy, I decided to add four backlights for the portal, as she advised how backlight coming through the netting of the portal would help add texture to Gharis' design. Vectorworks is an incredibly useful tool, because it allows you to compile all necessary information about each lighting instrument into a single format, which is easily exported to other programs for the Master Electrician to run the hanging and focusing of the lights. After completing my light plot I also created an effects plot (see Appendix B4). This used the same floorplan as the light plot but included colored arrows and channel numbers for specific lights to work as a quick reference when I programmed cues later. On the right side of the effects plot I included a list of lights that it was simpler to list instead of adding arrows on the groundplan.

Hang week, during which the student electricians as well as the students in the Lighting Elements class worked daily to hang and circuit the fixtures according to my light plot, went incredibly smoothly under the guidance of ME Wilson. We also put in gels and gobos at this time. One of the major issues at this point was fitting all of the lighting fixtures that I had plotted center stage on Catwalks 2B and 3A. As can be seen in Appendix B3, this area was filled with area lights and specials, which was reasonable considering the angles necessary for specific areas like the pagoda, the vomitoriums, and the phone call monologues. Wilson was particularly helpful at this point, as his understanding of my needs for the show and his own experience in lighting design enabled him to guide the crew in the best ways to reposition the lights so that there was enough room for all of them while maintaining the best possible position for focus.

Wilson and Professor Percy both assured me that certain locations on a plot being slightly overloaded is a common and natural part of lighting design, and my own experience working as a crew head and Master Electrician on other productions has confirmed that slight repositioning of lights is often necessary.

Another challenge that we faced during the hang process was that I had asked for a total of seventeen color-changing ERS lights, between the four portal washes, four portal gobos, and nine color-changing area gobos. However, Wilson informed me that we did not have this many color-changing ERS fixtures in stock, and that I would need to cut down somewhere. After discussing with Professor Percy, I decided that I still wanted all of these washes and gobos to remain color-changing because of the versatility required of them. Professor Percy suggested that perhaps I did not need for the stage gobos to be area-specific, as I had already voiced to her my desire to use them as general stage breakups during the outdoor scenes. Considering this, I cut down the number of color-changing ERS gobos for the stage from nine to four, and simply increased their barrel size to still be able to cover the entire stage. In the future, I will want to make sure that I pay closer attention to the inventory of the theatre I am working in before making my plot.

We focused the lights on a Saturday, as we wanted to block out a longer period of time to finish. Focusing involved lighting crew members maneuvering the fixtures as I stood on stage directing them. We were able to quickly focus the area lighting and most of the specials without any difficulty. One of the challenges presented was the fact that the hanging pagoda had not been finished by the time we were focusing, which meant that we had to roughly focus the facelight designed to shoot under the pagoda, the gobos that would eventually hit the top of the pagoda, and the rain specials, which we did not

want to accidentally hit too much of the pagoda. However, once the pagoda was hung a few days later, we were able to correct the focus with little difficulty.

While I was focusing the specials hitting the portal, I would often ask the crew member in the catwalks to adjust the light based on how they saw it hitting the portal. However, they could never quite seem to hit the portal correctly, often leaving the light at strange angles. This was understandably frustrating, and I let it go for the focus. Later, I went to the catwalks myself and realized that the angle at which the crew members had been viewing the portal drastically changed how they saw the light. Because of this, they would do what I had asked by focusing based on their perspective, but this was drastically different than how I had perceived it from the audience. In the future, I would be better served guiding the crew member from my perspective, and giving them more specific directions about what kinds of adjustments I want.

A slight hiccup came after we had focused the lights but before we began tech week. Dr. Denman expressed concern to Gharis that the portal, which had been hung the day before focus and was present during the rest of rehearsals, was not as aesthetically pleasing as he had originally imagined. The portal was also made from erosion cloth, which is known for releasing particles that can cause allergic reactions for some people. Dr. Denman voiced that, in the first few rehearsals after the portal was hung, it was difficult to breathe for himself and his performers, and that he was further concerned the audience would also react to the particles. Dr. Denman's original solution was to completely remove the portal from the production. Gharis passed this information on to me, and I offered to Gharis and Dr. Denman that removing the portal would reveal the entire scrim and cyc for the show, which would greatly effect the impact of the final

sunrise moment for which we had planned. Rousseau also became involved in the discussion, and he assured Dr. Denman that, because of the difficulty moving the portal and the amount of particles released during this process, the problem would most likely go away after we had let the portal sit still for a more significant amount of time. Dr. Denman agreed to wait on removing the portal until we had given it more time to settle. Eventually, the portal was able to stay in the show, as Rousseau's assessment proved correct.

Tech Week

I used an ETC Ion lightboard for programming the show, which is one of the most commonly used lightboards in theatrical lighting. This process required “dark time” coordinated with the scenic crew so that I was able to design the show without work lights being needed for painting or construction. Although I did get a significant amount of dark time, I did compromise with the scenic crew to allow them to paint in dim lights while I programmed my own show lights, with minimal blackouts. This was necessary because of the stage that the scenic crew was at with painting the floor before tech week. The Ion is an excellent board, because it allows you to not only save cues for the show, telling fixtures what intensity – and color in the case of LED fixtures – to use during a given point of the show, but also to create pallettes. My first set of decisions while programming the show was creating saved color pallettes for the color-changing ERS and Showline fixtures. I chose a wide spread of colors, including light and dark blue, magenta, amber, green, light purple, and white. When I was programming my cues, I was able to use these already-made color pallettes to create a sense of continuity throughout

the show, while also minimizing the amount of time I would have had to take picking a color for every cue.

The Ion is also equipped to create effects, which allow fixtures to be controlled in various ways, such as setting up a chase, flashing, or pulsing effect within a single cue. I used the effects to create a slow, random pulsing effect with the swirling gobos during transitions. Although it is conventional to move into a dim blue wash during transitions, Dr. Denman wanted the transitions to be just slightly more visible and I was excited by the opportunity to create an interesting look for the transitional lighting. For the transitions, each of the area gobos was set to oscillate between two relatively low levels at random intervals. The result was a pattern on the floor that constantly shifted without settling. Although I knew the effect was random, I could not help but try to assign some pattern to the constant shifting, which I believe works beautifully with the idea of a random world that we constantly try and fail to ascribe meaning to, as discussed in the concept for the production.

The last major asset of the Ion that I used while programming for *This Random World* was follow-cues. These allow for multiple cues to run automatically, one after the other, timed out by the board. This is helpful for moments where the exact timing of a series of cues is vital, and would be cumbersome for a stage manager to call. I specifically used follow-cues for the final sunrise, which allowed me to create the image of dawn breaking on the sky, as colors fluidly moved and changed using my eight cyc lights. Although these cues were not timed closely together, which is one of the major reasons a designer might use follow-cues, I knew it would be difficult to call the series of cues exactly, as many of the cues needed to begin in the middle of another cue to keep

the fluidity of the moment. See Appendix B5 for my cue sheets, which include the cue number, timing, a short description of the cue for myself and the stage manager to use as a reference, and the point at which the stage manager should call the cue.

After programming lights into the board, it was time for tech week. Tech week began with a cue-to-cue rehearsal, in which Saum led us through the show, only running light and sound cues and transitions with the actors. This rehearsal is an excellent way for the stage manager to familiarize herself with calling the cues for the show as well as for the director to focus on how the technical elements are integrated within the performance. As is standard, there were a few timing changes that happened pretty early in this process, which were simple to adjust.

One of the largest challenges that we faced during the cue-to-cue rehearsal was a realization that the rain effect was not visible, despite the lights that we had hung to light the water. The following day we hung an additional light above the pagoda so that we could also light the water from above. We also widened the focus of the gobos already focused on the pagoda to catch more of the falling water. Although we were unfortunately unable to change the focus of the original lights as they would begin hitting audience members, and any lights coming from a more direct angle would hit the scrim and portal too much, the extra amount of light from the downlight and gobos immensely helped the rain read better on stage.

The lighting element that ultimately took the most tech time was the final sunrise cue, which involved a series of five total cues that initially took about thirty seconds to complete. Dr. Denman was concerned that this was too long of a time for the final cue to land, and so I worked with the sound designer, Andrew Davis, to shorten and coordinate

both of our cue times. There was further concern that, although Dr. Denman enjoyed the way the sunrise looked, Scottie's line in which she states she has missed the sunrise made it strange to show the sunrise after this point. After further discussion with Dr. Denman and Professor Percy, we concluded that the cyc would already be halfway through the cue when it grew brighter, so that, instead of watching a full sunrise, the audience would get a sense that they too have missed the sunrise, and are only able to see the end of it.

The day before our final dress rehearsal, Dr. Denman emailed me with a concern that the play was feeling too "gloomy." Dr. Denman asked if I would be able to find ways to "brighten" the scenes. I had recently added haze to add texture to the lighting, but had not quite figured out the levels, which I believe was a large reason for the gloomy feeling. I contacted Dr. Denman and explained that I would be able to lower the amount of haze, which should be able to help with the gloominess that he was experiencing. I expressed concern that simply bumping the intensity of all the lights up would only lower visibility if we kept the haze at the point it was currently at, and I was worried about flattening the image too severely. Dr. Denman agreed with the plan to lower the intensity of the haze, and I also went through my cues and focused on finding points where I could make the scenes brighter. Overall, the objective was to keep with our original concept of a beautiful sense of melancholy, and Dr. Denman and I both agreed that "gloomy" was not the appropriate feeling to communicate this concept. With these changes, the final dress rehearsal was much closer to Dr. Denman's desired feeling. In the future, I would try to test the haze levels much earlier so that this would not be a matter needing to be addressed so late in the rehearsal process. Although there were many changes during the tech rehearsal process, ultimately the show was made better because of them.

CHAPTER THREE

Production

Baylor University sent a photographer to the final dress rehearsal of *This Random World*, which I was given access to for my portfolio. This chapter will reference these photos with short descriptions. The action of the first scene (see Appendix C1) was centered around a chair and rug in the center of the stage. Because the stage direction says it is raining outside, I kept the tones neutral and used a cool area light.

The next scene (see Appendix C2) is the first sunrise scene, set in a park. I used the low-angle amber and pink lights to create the appearance of early morning sunlight. I also increased the intensity of the area gobos to give a sense of the scene taking place outdoors and brought up the cyc to be reminiscent of the sky. This scene took up a much larger portion of the stage, and the sunrise specials helped reinforce the scope of this moment.

The third scene (see Appendix C3) was tightly focused on a single restaurant booth. Although the neutral face light showed up a little warmer at a lower intensity, such as in this scene, the cool side and area lights were enough to keep this break up scene cold and even awkward at moments. The following scene (see Appendix C4) is the first scene at the funeral home. I used warmer area lighting, which blended with the neutral face light to make it feel flat and boring. I wanted to avoid making the funeral home feel sad or gross, but still wanted a sense that it was a place without the same kind of

dimension as other locations. The fact that the characters in this scene are strangers to each other and they never truly connect emotionally helped justify this design choice.

I appreciated the wide angle shot that the Baylor photographer was able to get for the scene set in Nepal (see Appendix C5). This image shows the way the beams of light interacted with the haze and the texture that was involved in the majority of the scenes. I added the texture on the floor in a low saturation blue to give it an icy feeling, while keeping the neutral face light and blue side lights very high, as per my research about how bright it is in snow-covered areas.

The next image (see Appendix C6) is back in the restaurant, but this time I made the scene slightly warmer because it is not as gloomy of an interaction. This image is also great to see how tightly focused I was able to make most of the scenes. The scene in the hospital (see Appendix C7) was also a moment where tight focus was necessary, because of the two phone calls that take place during the scene. I made the hospital as neutral as possible, and even added a slightly green downlight to add to its dreariness.

The scene in Japan (see Appendix C8) had the most texture. I did this both to give the sense of the garden surrounding them as well as to play with the sense that there is rain all around them. Although it may be harder to see in this document, the lights being used were able to pick up the falling water decently well, and a few water drops are noticeable in this image. Unlike other scenes, where the area lighting not in the scene was generally a blue wash, I went with a greener wash to reinforce the idea of them being in nature.

During the final scene, which takes place in the funeral home once more but this time with the ghosts of Scottie and a man also named Tim, I decided to go with a warmer

light, both to counter the traditional perception of death and the afterlife as “cold” as well as to remind us of the warmth and beauty that Scottie has always been able to see in the world. Partway through the scene, the funeral procession for Scottie begins and moves upstage of the funeral home. For this, I added cool area lights for the mourners, separated from the funeral home using the LED downlight wash lights. The difference in color helped reinforce both that the funeral procession was taking place outside while the funeral home was indoors, while also showing the separation of the ghosts from the living characters. Unfortunately, I do not have production photos for this part of the scene. The final image of the show (see Appendix C9) takes place at the end of this scene. At this moment, I abandoned realism to isolate our Scottie in a single warm light, while the other characters are nearly silhouetted by the cyc light. This image shows the end of the sunrise effect discussed earlier. I also brought in gobos that had previously only used for transition cues to increase the supernatural feeling of the moment. These gobos also replaced the cool face light on the funeral procession, allowing for much warmer tones, showing us that they are learning to see the beauty in the random and melancholy world.

CHAPTER FOUR

Self-Assessment

I was very pleased with my final lighting design for *This Random World*. In general, the lighting areas were focused tightly on each scene, maintaining my original concept idea of having each scene exist as a kind of microcosm within the play. Although the haze and overall brightness of my cues had to be addressed during the technical rehearsal process, ultimately there was a strong sense of melancholy without making it too sad. I personally felt a great amount of emotional release at the end of each performance, guided by Dr. Denman's direction, by Davis' final music, and I believe in part by my final sunrise lighting cue.

One of the major changes that occurred from the research for to the implementation of my lighting design was the color choices. Although there was a much wider array of key light colors in my initial research, several of the scenes ended up looking fairly similar, especially in reference to how they appeared on the actors' bodies. This is due largely to the need for a consistent color palette throughout the show. In the future, I would be better served to find research images that more realistically depicted the kind of lighting I would be able to produce onstage. The funeral home and hospital research images especially did not have any human bodies as a reference point for the lighting, which would have been much more helpful. Despite this weakness in the design, I believe that images such as Nepal and the two restaurant scenes show the variety in scene images that I was able to achieve.

Although, as mentioned above, some of the research images did not always translate directly to a stage image, the concept and research was still largely maintained.

Places of security and light, such as the first sunrise and the second restaurant scene are significantly warmer than places of confusion, such as the hospital and the first restaurant scene. Further, although lighting the rain was challenging, the scene in Japan effectively gave a sense of both rain as well as an overall feeling of being in nature.

Dr. Denman commented that after originally seeing a production of *This Random World* at the Humana Play Festival, he was shocked by how emotionally struck he was by the performance. This emotion led to our concept of a beautiful world made beautiful by, and not in spite of, its random and melancholy nature. I believe that through the use of tightly focused lights, slight differences in cool and warm tones between scenes, and a consistent theme of random connections in all areas of design including my own, I was able to reinforce this concept in my lighting design. This project was truly a joy to work on.

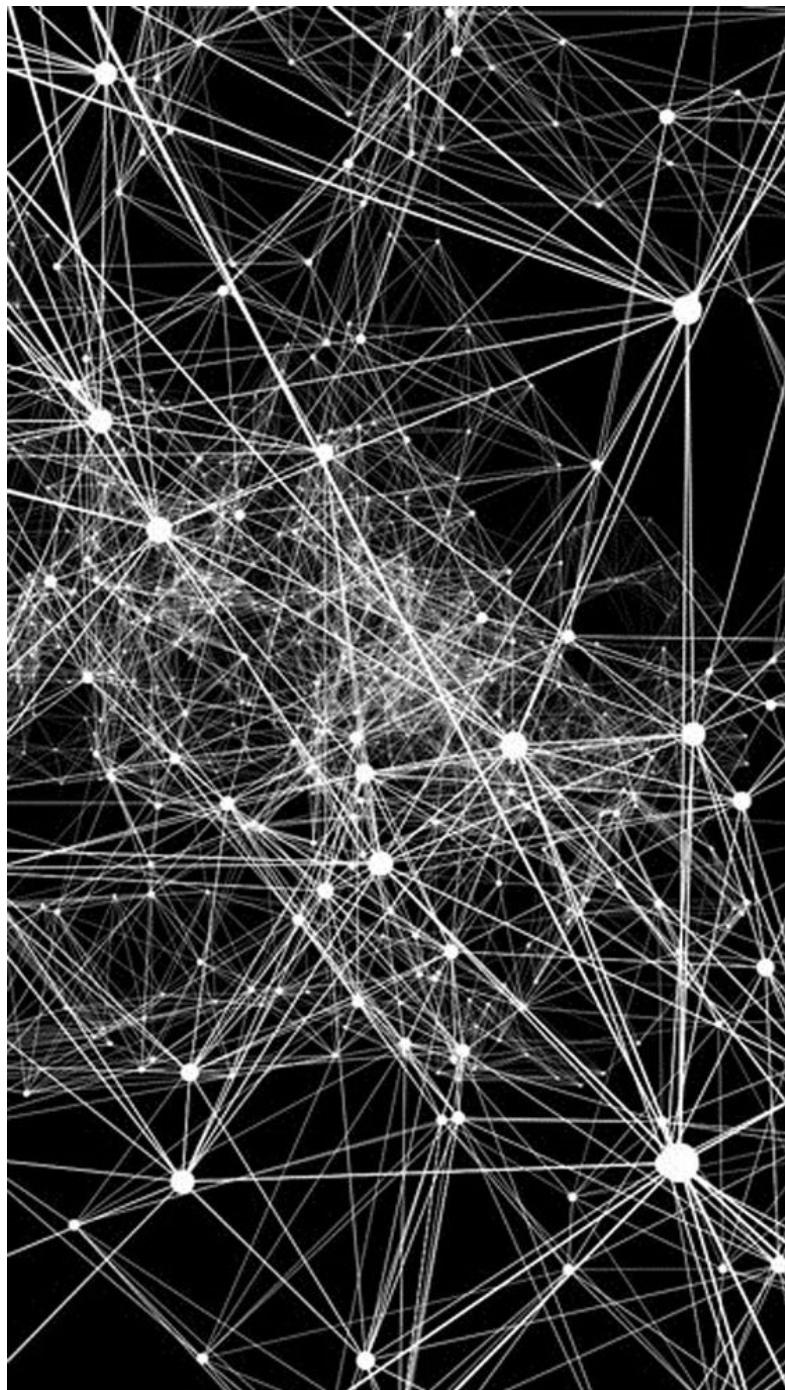
APPENDICES

Appendix A – Concept and Research Images



A1: Overall Concept Image – Warmth in a Cold Place

Appendix A – Concept and Research Images



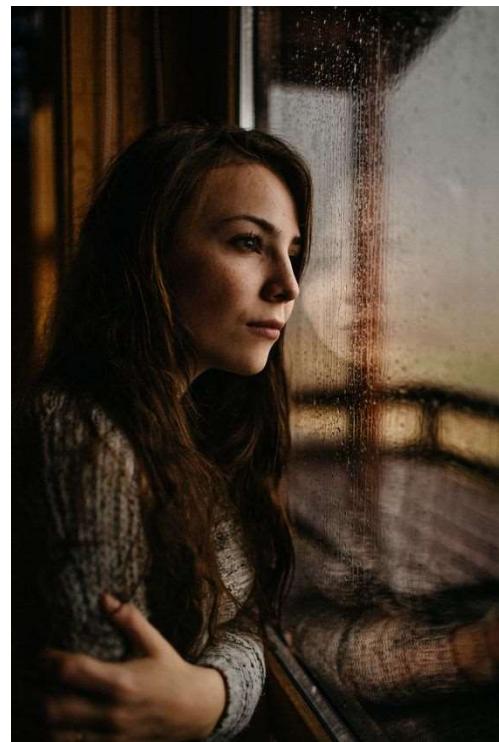
A2: Concept Image – Random Connections

Appendix A – Concept and Research Images



A3: Concept Image – Najjar's *Architecture of Light*

Appendix A – Concept and Research Images



A4: Research Images – Tim's Apartment

Appendix A – Concept and Research Images



A5: Research Image – Sunrise



A6: Research Image - Restaurant

Appendix A – Concept and Research Images



A7: Research Image – Funeral Home



A8: Research Image – Monologues, Isolation

Appendix A – Concept and Research Images



A9: Research Images - Nepal

Appendix A – Concept and Research Images



A10: Research Image – Airport Sunrise

Appendix A – Concept and Research Images



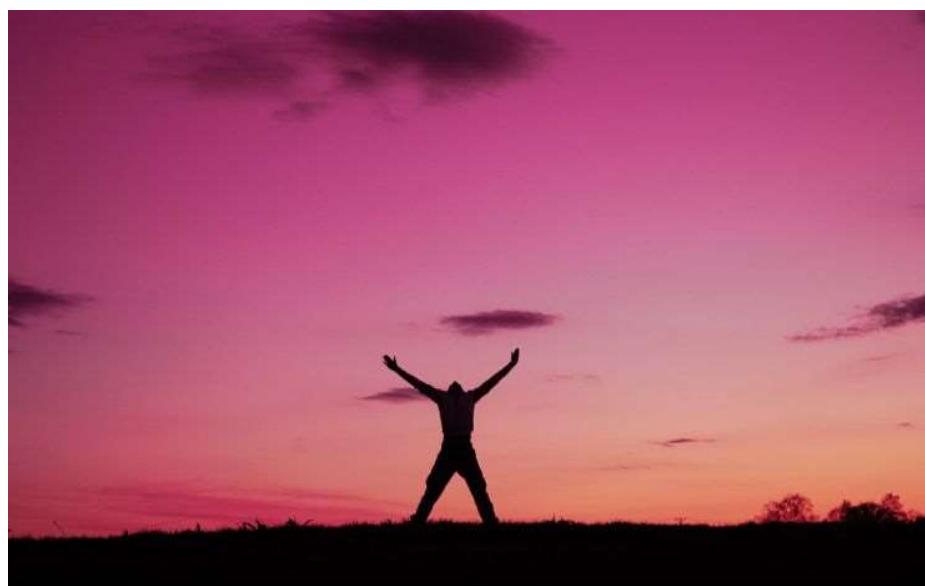
A11: Research Image - Hospital

Appendix A – Concept and Research Images



A12: Research Image - Japan

Appendix A – Concept and Research Images



A13 Research Images – Sky at Sunrise

Appendix A – Concept and Research Images



A14: Research Image – Separation, Isolation

Appendix A – Concept and Research Images

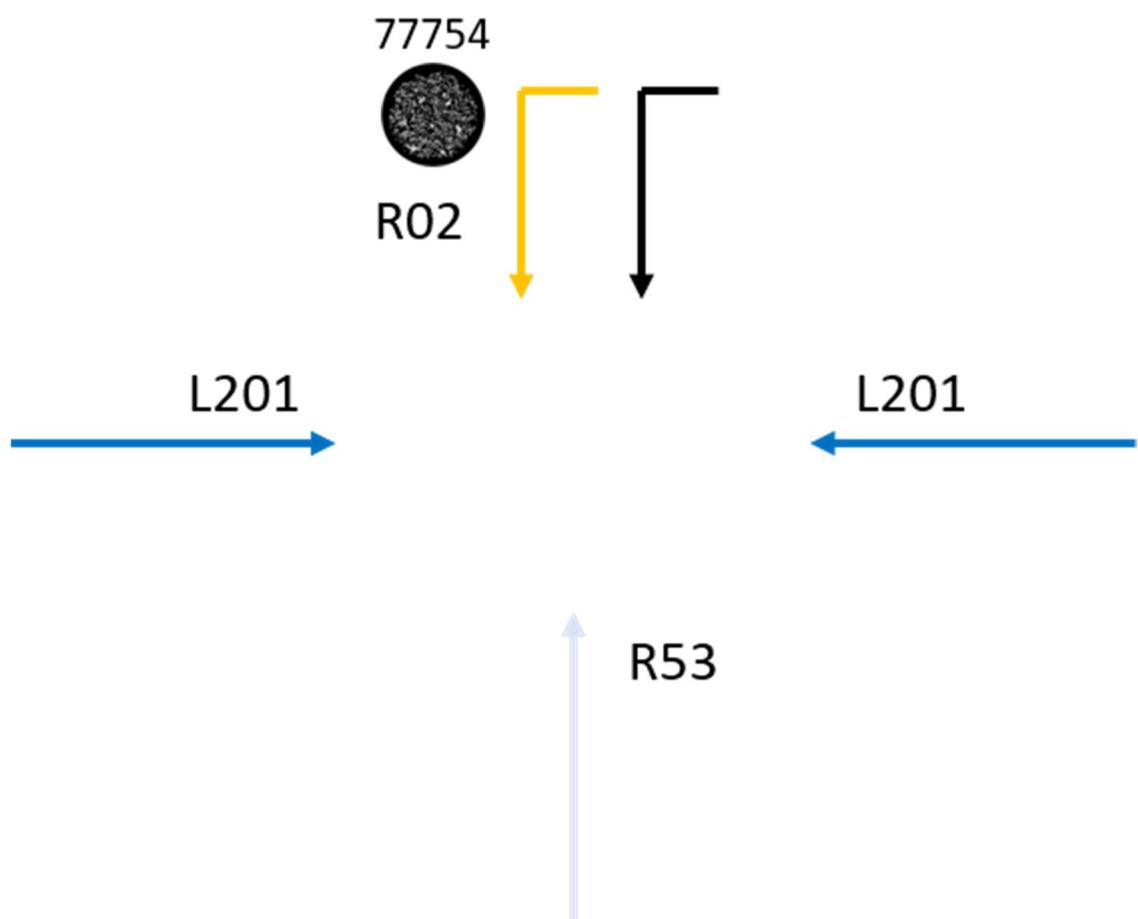


A15; Gobo - Swirling



A16: Gobo – Ink Roller

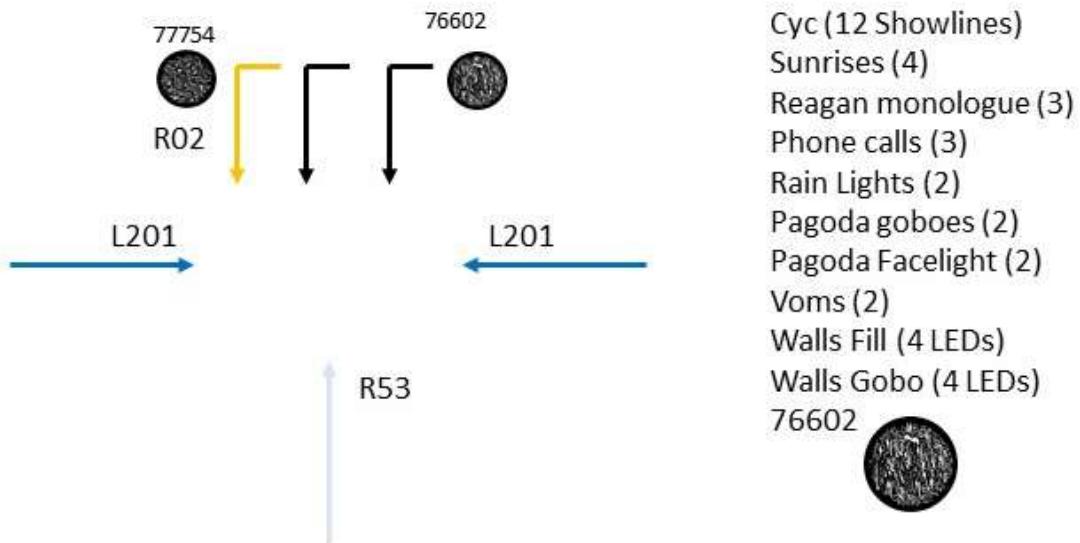
Appendix B – Paperwork



B1: Original Schematic

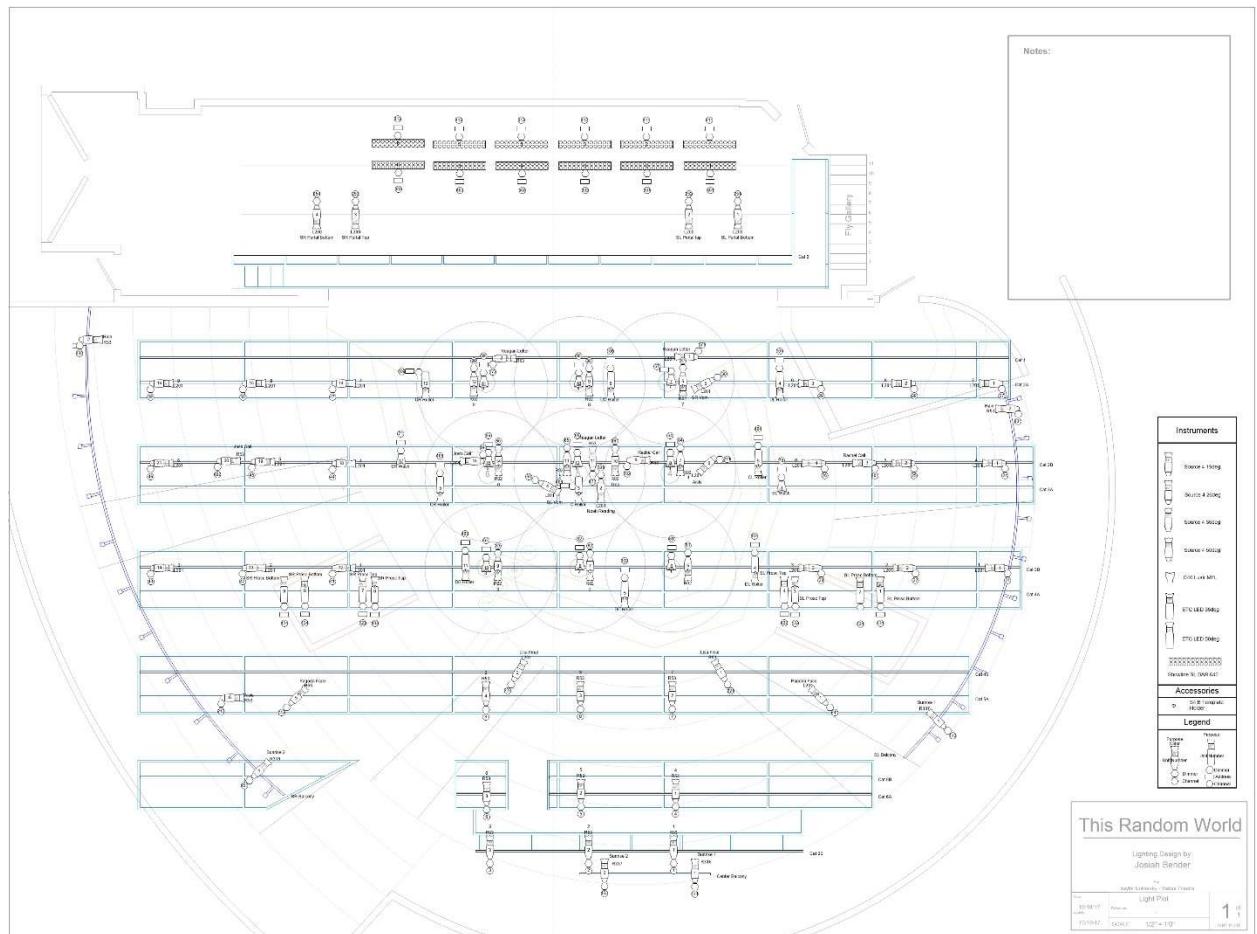
Appendix B – Paperwork

Specials



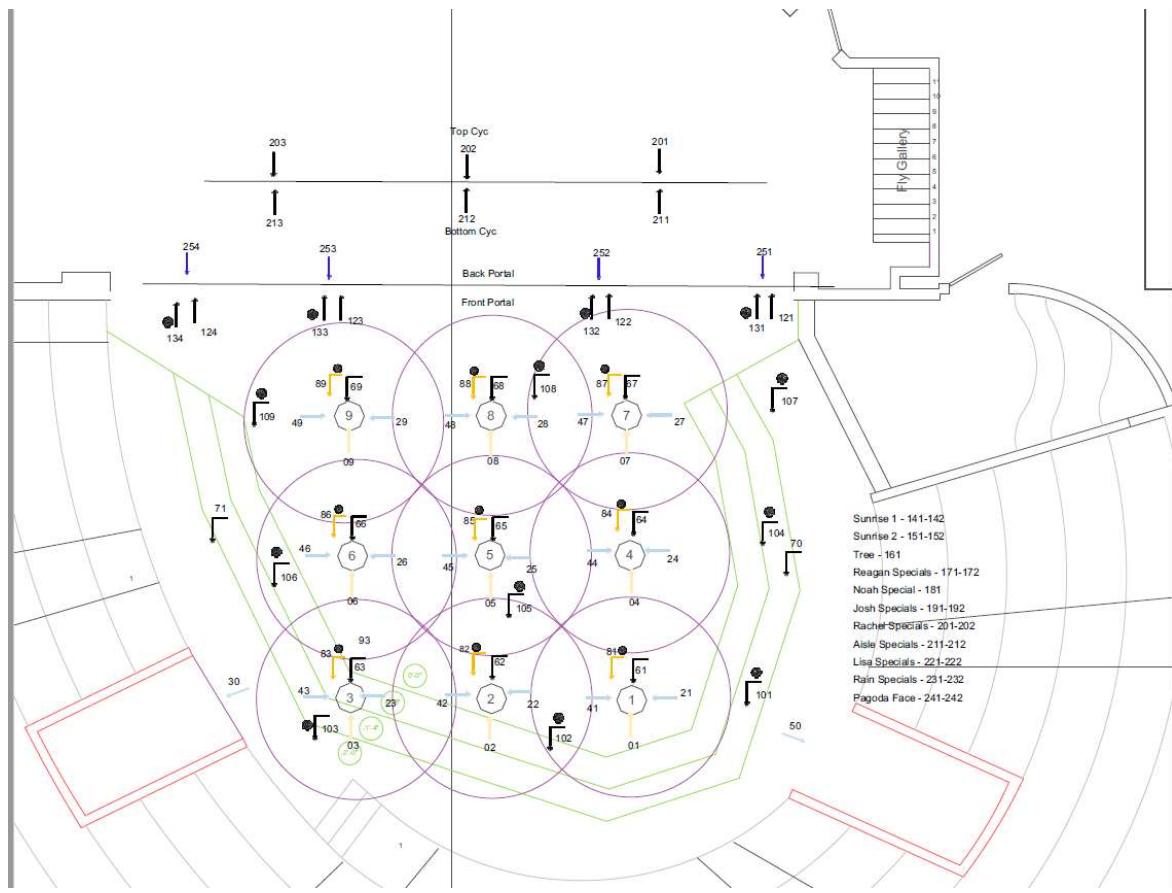
B2: Further Developed Schematic

Appendix B – Paperwork



B3: Light Plot

Appendix B – Paperwork



B4: Effects Plot

Appendix B – Paperwork

This Random World
Cue Descriptions

Cue	Time	Description	When
1	Preshow	House lights up, blue area light, with ink roller gobos in a pinkish-amber color	Preshow
2	5	House goes to half, area 5 comes up for Noah to sit in for the curtain speech	Curtain speech
3	3	Blackout	SM call
4	3	The apartment up, area 5, neutral as key light, with slightly warm tinge from downlight, swirlies gobos around, cyc light in deep blue, portal is warm	Actors set
5	3	Fade to transition light, pulsing gobos, blue area light	BETH: Nice final words** (p14)
6	3	Sunrise from C and SR balconies (6 second fade), area 7-9 fill lights (sunrise as key) ink roller gobos around in a warm color and on the portal, with soft dim area lighting. Cyc in a lighter blue	Scene set (p14)
7	3	Fade to transition	SCOTTIE: Not like yesterday at all** (p18)
8	3	Diner up in area 7, SR cool as key light, almost matched by the neutral, swirlies gobos around. Dark blue cyc	Actors set (p18)
9	5	Fade to transition	CLAIRE crying (SM call, p23)
10	3	Funeral home, areas 2,3,5,6 - Neutral key light, with off white down light. Beigey. Bland.	Actors set (p23)
11	3	Fade to transition	RHONDA: ...to go home** (p30)
12	3	Transition gobos shift to ink roller, in a magenta/amber tint. Downlight stays blue. Specials come up to reveal floating-head Reagan	Actors set (p31)
14	5	Area 5 downlight shifts slightly lighter blue to highlight Noah just slightly	Noah opens computer (p 31)
15	2	Reagan lights out	CLAIRE: ...but I don't care ** (p32)
16	3	Transition lights	TIM looks to audience ** (SM call, p 32)

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B5: Cue Descriptions

Appendix B – Paperwork

This Random World
Cue Descriptions

17	0	Nepal in Areas 1,2,4,5,7 - SR blues as strong key light, neutral fill, area lights slightly lighter blue than normal, ink roller, portal is bright, icy, light blue cyc	Actors set (p33)
18	3	Transition lights	BETH: Not gonna work Gary ** (p42)
19	5	Sunrise from SR balcony and C balcony, in the airport, cyc is a deeper blue, neutral fill light, areas 1-3, 5,6,9	Airport set, before actors enter (p42)
20	20	Sunrise dims slightly, neutral becomes key, we pull out all areas except 1,2,5	RHONDA crosses back to SCOTTIE (around "Of course you'd take her side" p43)
21	3	Transition lights	SCOTTIE: ...Do this for both of us** (p48)
22	3	The same restaurant, but now slightly warmer downlight, neutral key light	Actors set (p48)
23	3	Transition lights	CLAIRE exits, beat ** (p54)\
24	3	Dim hospital lights up, area 4 brighter for Ricki, neutral and white, sterile. Josh's specials on SR proscenium wall	Actors set (p55)
25	5	Josh specials fade, rest of the hospital up (areas 1,2,4,5)	GARY exits (p56)
26	3	Rachel special on SR proscenium wall comes up	BETH enters (p60)
27	3	Rachel special out	BETH hangs up (p61)
28	3	Transition lights	BERNADETTE exits (p67)
29	3	Japan. Rain specials on, pagoda face specials on, hazers on, ink roller gobos on, neutral as key face, downlight all around is soft, not too cold, portal in amber, backlit slightly, all areas up, cyc in verrry light blue	Actors set (p67)
30	30	Pull into area 8, pagoda	BETH goes under the pagoda, around "Oh I'm just lost." (p70)
31	3	Transition lights	RHONDA: Elizabeth McHenry Ward (BEAT) ** (p76)
32	3	Funderal home look, but slightly warmer, aisle light up, areas 1-6	OLD TIM set (p76)

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B5: Cue Descriptions

Appendix B – Paperwork

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B5: Cue Descriptions

Appendix C – Production Photos



C1: Tim's Apartment



C2: Park at Sunrise

Appendix C – Production Photos



C3: First Restaurant



C4: Funeral Home

Appendix C – Production Photos



C5: Nepal



C6: Second Restaurant

Appendix C – Production Photos



C7: Hospital, Phone Call



C8: Japan

Appendix C – Production Photos



C9: Final Image