Lighting Design for Tom Stoppard’s Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead: Chapman University Spring 2015

Nikolai B Eiteneer, Chapman University

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If we have a destiny, then so had he – and if this is ours, then that was his
– and if there are no explanations for us, let there be none for him.¹

Introduction

Tom Stoppard’s tragicomedy, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead, written in 1964, earned the early popularity and world-wide reputation that such a work deserved, which booted Stoppard into the limelight as an up-and-coming young writer.² The play itself verges on an absurdist style, but due to the realistic nature of the title characters, the audience finds themselves sympathizing with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern’s plight and lack of knowledge. Any theatre goer acquainted with the works of Shakespeare, Hamlet in particular, will know the final outcome of this play, but for those not endowed with this knowledge, Stoppard gives the end away: Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead on the title page and in the words of the program long before they first appear on the stage before the audience.

The brilliantly written work rests upon a narrow line between a comedic absurdist representation of

two characters who find themselves bereft of purpose and a deeply existential look at predetermination and fate which push Rosencrantz and Guildenstern inexorably towards their deaths without their knowledge. Tom Stoppard himself once said in an interview, “the chief interest and objective [in writing the play] was to exploit a situation which seemed to me to have enormous dramatic and comic potential — of these two guys who in Shakespeare’s context don’t really know what they’re doing. The little they are told is mainly lies, and there is no reason to suppose that they ever find out why they are killed.” As such, the audience members watching *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* find themselves following the action of the play from the perspective of two characters who do not themselves know the plot, and it is this disjunction from which Tom Stoppard’s humor is derived.

This spring, Chapman University included *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* in the season, directly after *Hamlet*. Through this thesis, I created a preliminary lighting concept that would reflect the precariously balanced mood of the script, highlighting Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as they continuously stumble between humorous banter and existential despair. In an effort to be chosen as the designer for this production, I proposed this lighting concept to the theatre department of Chapman University. Due to departmental regulations on student designers, however, I was selected as the associate designer in support of my mentor and faculty advisor, Don Guy.

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3 Jenkins 38.
My thesis consisted of creating a preliminary lighting design for the Chapman University production of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, focusing on the separation and alienation of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern from the remaining characters, so that the design echoes the themes of predetermination and death within the play. Thus, scenes in my design vary dramatically in form, either focusing singularly on the antics of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, or illuminating the whole stage as a claustrophobic setting for the characters to be discomfited and observed. My vision of the production would force the audience to empathize with the confusion that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern feel, as scene changes would occur suddenly and with no forewarning, changing the location of the action almost instantaneously—this would force the audience to recognize this change in setting the same way the main characters do. Due to my position as associate designer, rather than the only lighting designer of the show, however, my ideas had to be balanced to account for the visions of Don Guy and the director, Gavin Cameron-Webb, who wanted the lighting to be practically identical to cues from the previous production of *Hamlet*.

**Literature Overview**

In order to create a solid platform of research to inform my initial design, I gathered sources discussing Tom Stoppard’s particular approach to absurdist theatre, the phenomenon of absurdist theatre as a whole, and finally various approaches to lighting design. By establishing a framework of Stoppard’s other works, as well as by examining previous productions of *Rosencrantz and*
*Guildenstern are Dead*, I hoped to garner a broader understanding of Stoppard’s vision for this piece, and in order to properly convey his messages through lighting choices. Although I did not have the potential to talk with the design team before the creation of my lighting key, I had the opportunity to converse with the director as well the lighting designer in order to integrate my own ideas, leading to the creation of the final design, which was able to match the director’s vision as well as my own reconstruction of Tom Stoppard’s conceptualizations.

In order to look at Stoppard’s plays through the lens of absurdist theatre, I have been examining Victor Cahn’s book, *Beyond Absurdity*, the first chapter provides an overview and a definition of “absurdist theatre”, as differentiated from absurdist works in general. Cahn states that in older absurdist works, as in those by Sartre and Camus, a character is portrayed as a “‘tragic-heroic’ figure, struggling nobly against an unknowable universe, seeking to inject meaning into his life and thus a measure of triumph over the absurdity surrounding him.”⁴ In the modern absurdist theatre, and therefore in the works of Tom Stoppard, Cahn states that the approach to characters changes and becomes “comic-pathetic. Here man is seen as little more than a clown, bumbling and fumbling his way through the incomprehensible maze that is existence, to both the amusement and pity of the artist-observer and the audience.”⁵ This view of the reality of the play is clearly evident in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are*

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⁵ Cahn 18
Dead, especially as the two title characters struggle to recall the events of the morning, and indeed, which of the two of them is Rosencrantz, and which is Guildenstern. Cahn also states that in theatre of the absurd, the very action of the play is absurd, rather than merely about absurdity. In such a world human relationships and interactions are fragile at best, and as each character finds themselves thrown together by fate, they stay so not from a desire to maintain a relationship, but rather from a fear of being alone. This fear is clearly evidenced by Vladimir and Estragon in Samuel Beckett’s Waiting for Godot, and it seems to be an important factor in why Rosencrantz and Guildenstern stay in constant companionship. Cahn argues that absurdist theatre presents a “world without divine order, without relationships, without sexual fulfillment or a genuine love, and without any moral awareness. Such a life is hardly precious, and consequently death holds no terror.” This theme is echoed in the ending of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead, yet it is the tragedians who seem to not fear death, while Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are afraid of their impending doom when they discover they are being shipped to their murderers in England. This departure from the conventions of absurdist theatre makes Rosencrantz and Guildenstern more relatable as real persons, and so the audience pities them and empathizes with their fear of death, strange to no man. In a fit of passion, Guildenstern, wielding a dagger, turns on the Player and exclaims:

\[\text{[Cahn 20]}\]
I’m talking about death — and you’ve never experienced that. And you cannot act it. You die a thousand causal deaths — with none of that intensity which squeezes out life... and no blood runs cold anywhere. Because even as you die you know that you will come back in a different hat. But no one gets up after death — there is no applause — there is only silence and some second-hand clothes, and that’s death.\(^7\)

It seems that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern themselves do not neatly fit into Cahn’s definition of absurdist characters as they fear the death in store for them as nothing more than that. Although Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are surrounded by the absurd events of their lives, it has not led them to believe that “life is hardly precious”\(^8\), and in fact, the two characters are in a constant struggle to make sense of their lives, trying to find the course of action that would save their lives and stave off fate. It seems that Stoppard created these two characters trapped within an absurdist world; Rosencrantz without a care, resigned to his fate, and Guildenstern, who struggles to break the bonds of absurdity and escape to live his own life. Hence it is he who tries to stab the Player, attempting to prove that life is finite and abides by certain laws. The knife he holds is a prop, however, and the Player soon stands on his feet again, completing the absurdist plot and delivering Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to their much foreseen deaths.

Stoppard’s play ends upon Rosencrantz and Guildenstern’s arrival to England, were they are promptly slain, and the curtain closes on the final tableau of Hamlet, conspicuously missing the two

\(^7\) Stoppard 65
\(^8\) Cahn 20
title characters (as their bodies are elsewhere, in the court of England). Anthony Jenkins, another
theatrical scholar with many insights into Stoppard’s work, points out that in Shakespeare’s Hamlet
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are “mere henchmen who betray their past friendship with the Prince,
though they are too transparent to ever pose a threat to him.”9 In Stoppard’s play, on the other hand,
the two are portrayed much more jovially and naively; they are tricked by Claudius and Gertrude, and
later Hamlet as well, into doing their bidding, and into being the pawns of the royal court. The two of
them do see themselves as Hamlet’s friends, however, and earnestly do their best to cheer him and
“glean what afflicts him.”10 A major difference between the work of Shakespeare and Stoppard lies in
the final tableau of their plays. In Hamlet, the audience is shocked by the carnage that has been wrought
by the lies of the court; the murder of Hamlet’s father by Claudius led to the deaths of so many
innocent people, including the prince himself. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern deserve their deaths in
this outcome, as they plotted against the protagonist in his vengeance, and are the henchmen of the
rebellious king. At the end of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead the carnage is no less real, but
the audience has been following the actions of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern over the course of the
play, who both seem innocent and ignorant of their crimes, while the members of court of Elsinore
have been behaving miserably, spouting lies and intrigue. Hence, all of the characters excluding

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10 Stoppard 50
Rosencrantz, Guildenstern and the tragedians are merely characters in passing: simply there to further the plot and provide the setting and similarities to Shakespeare’s original work. The audience of *Hamlet* is shocked to see the corpses of the royal court, including the prince, and is reassured that those who were in the wrong have been punished. In *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, however, the audience does not see the deaths of the two title characters, but is left with that knowledge without seeing their corpses present on stage, instead presented with the bodies of the conspiring royal court. As such, Anthony Jenkins claims that Stoppard has managed to flip Shakespeare’s work on its head—the audience empathizes with the two faceless henchmen of Shakespeare’s original work: the ultimate absurdity.

In addition to articles and books written about Tom Stoppard and absurdist theatre, I have also gone through several textbooks on lighting design—the most the helpful of which was *Designing with Light* by J. Michael Gillette. The book contains a page of key light reference images (Figures 1.1 and 1.2 in the Image Glossary), which are very helpful in picturing the actors with the corresponding scenic lighting; this allowed me to create a basic plot with lights at key positions before I would have added specials closer to the production. By reading the script in conjunction with these examples of lighting directions, I was able to clearly visualize the mood I wished to convey through the directionality and intensity of light for any particular scene, leading to the creation of a lighting key (Figures 3.1-3.11). This lighting key specifies the direction and color (and therefore purpose) of all of the fixtures I
planned to include, functioning as a preliminary plot before the inclusion of a set design would mandate the placing of fixtures in concrete locations.

I also found a very helpful compilation of buildable theatrical gadgets that help facilitate certain effects. For instance, one of these, “A Free-Falling Ball of Light”,\textsuperscript{11} details how to place a small lamp inside a spherical aluminum reflector with holes drilled into it. I would have liked to use a very similar device to the one detailed in the book, creating a smaller ball with cutouts for light only on one hemisphere. Alternatively, if possible, I would have liked to design a small ball with a bulb inside it and a spinning mirror above; the purpose of this device will become evident later. In the beginning of the play, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern bide their time by flipping coins, betting on the outcome, heads or tails. I hoped that the small ball could be fashioned to resemble a coin flipping through the air while the rest of the stage was plunged into a blackout. The ball would be suspended from a length of fishing line held by a technician in the grid, the ball itself placed in Rosencrantz’s pocket. This small ball could then facilitate scenic transitions, in particular the transition between the unnamed forest and the castle of Elsinore. The transition between these two locations would have to be abstract or minimal with the crew ready to quickly bring on scenery during the preceding scene (Fig 3.2-3.3). At the end of Rosencrantz’s line “I say – that was lucky. It was tails”\textsuperscript{12} he would lob the ball high into the air as if he


\textsuperscript{12} Stoppard 15
were jovially flicking the coin back to Guildenstern. Meanwhile, the stage lights would quickly cross-fade as the glowing ball was pulled upwards into the rafters by the technician, forcing the audience’s eyes to trail upwards as the scene transition quickly happened below, revealing the set of Elsinore moments later. The script specifies that Rosencrantz “tosses the coin to GUIL who catches it. Simultaneously— a lighting change sufficient to alter the exterior mood to interior, but nothing violent.”\textsuperscript{13} The stage would not plunge into a blackout for the scenic change, but the movement of the flickering ball combined with the dimming and cross-fading of the stage lights would be enough to distract the audience from the transition, making it seem even more absurd that Ophelia and Hamlet run onto the stage moments later in the midst of this confusion. In Chapman University’s production, however, the coin was not utilized in this scene transition, and so the creation of such an intricate device became unnecessary. Instead, I attached a piece of glo-tape to one of the coins, which Rosencrantz and Guildenstern spun in the blackout before the show, allowing the audience to see the first coin spin through the air, as well as allowing Rosencrantz (played by Isabelle Grimm) the opportunity to catch it.

Two other effects were discussed over the course of the two volumes of the \textit{Technical Design Solutions for Theatre} that I thought could be interesting for the production. One, called “Dancing

\textsuperscript{13} Stoppard 15
Light\textsuperscript{14} details how to affix shards of a mirror onto the speaker cone of a monitor, causing light reflected from the monitor to bounce and move to the beat of the music. Depending on the intensity and prevalence of music in the sound design, I think this effect could have been used during the approach of the tragedians in the first act. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern first notice the sound of music on the air, which eventually resolves itself into the tune the tragedians’ merry band play as they approach. Had the music been played through the speaker system rather than being live, then the lights and music could have slowly faded up together as the tragedians approached. In Chapman’s production, however, the music was played by a tragedian with a trumpet, and so this effect could not be utilized.

The final effect listed that I was intrigued by allows fixtures to imitate the movement of light through the leaves of a forest. I think that allowing breakup gobos some movement would strengthen the illusion that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern were in an undisclosed outdoor setting at the beginning of the play, creating a very realistic illusion of an outdoor space through lighting alone, simplifying the first scenic change. However, this effect requires the addition of a spring in between the c-clamp and the fixture, meaning that the strong enough springs would have to be purchased and fastened onto the fixtures according to the diagram in Figure 2. Additionally, this effect would need to extend to the

entirety of the breakup gobos and fixtures on the stage, meaning that there would be at least 9 lights that would need the springs attached to them. In order for the fixtures to move, however, it is also necessary to run wire to all of them through a system of pulleys or sheaves, allowing a technician to pull on the line causing all of the fixtures to sway slightly. Once this system of spring clamps was constructed, it could be used for any number of consequent productions in a similar manner. So although this device would require a moderate amount of funds and labor to construct, once the system is complete, it would significantly increase the realism of outdoor lighting effects. Again, this effect did not come into play for Chapman’s production, as Gavin Cameron-Webb’s vision placed Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in a backstage green room of the production of *Hamlet* rather than in the non-descript forest mentioned in the script.

**My Approach and Concept**

Using the sources listed in conjunction with the script of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, I created a lighting key as well as verbal descriptions of several lighting effects, leading to my presentation of the final key and my concepts to the Chapman Theatre Department. In order to visualize this lighting key, however, it is important to keep in mind the action and the tempo of the play, leading to the creation of a scene-by-scene breakdown of the production.
The play opens with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern passing time in an outdoor location, a place Tom Stoppard himself describes in the director’s notes as “a place without any visible character.” I would have liked the stage to be completely stark — the only shapes breaking the monotone blackness being the bodies of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as the lights slowly fade up at the start of the show (Fig 3.1). For the duration of the outdoor scene (through the arrival of the tragedians and until the set changes to Elsinore) I would have liked to use the spring effect described previously, creating a grid of breakup gobos on the floor of the stage. The rest of the stage would remain dark, but as the characters moved through the space, additional fixtures would come on to expand the “forest floor” on which they were standing, creating a fluctuating amoeba-like playing space for the actors. All of the breakup gobos for this scene would be hung from the electrics above the stage, with a few as high-sides, and with some additional light from the front of house to make the faces of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern easily visible by the audience. As the scene progresses, and Rosencrantz crosses to the edges of the stage to look and listen for the approaching band, these lights would brighten, assuming a warmer tone and illuminating the entire stage for the arrival of the tragedians (Fig 3.2).

During the approach of the tragedians, I would have liked to include the dancing light effect created by shining a luminaire at a speaker with mirrors attached to the front cone. The music and

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lights would fade in together, creating a lively and excited atmosphere for the arrival of the Player and his merry band of tragedians. Additionally, I would hope that the tragedians bring in some form of cart or stage as the script commands, so that some of the illumination on this stage could come from “torches” built onto the cart, or from luminaires made to imitate these torches. Additionally, I would have liked to have footlights placed on the stage apron to provide up light for the actors, but these lights could also be built into the front of the tragedians’ cart, in order to illuminate them as they display their talents. Near the end of the scene, the tragedians’ cart could either start to be moved off stage, as per the script, or it could stay on the stage, waiting to be transformed into part of the set of Elsinore (the outcome I would prefer, but would be up to the director’s discretion). Finally, as the Player scoffs at the coin on the ground and begins to walk off stage, Rosencrantz would bend to pick it up, using this time to palm the ball for the next effect. Previous to this, the ball can be stored just off stage with the line already running to the catwalk, or it can be kept in Rosencrantz’s pocket the whole time. Rosencrantz would turn the ball on and lob it into the air as a cue was called, leading the stage lights to quickly dim and begin cross-fading, while the technician would whisk the ball up to the rafters and the rest of the scene change would occur. As the lights cross faded to a more interior setting, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern would be revealed, perplexedly looking around in the air for a coin as the scenery behind them rapidly changed.
Very few of these ideas came across in the final design of Chapman’s production – the cart used for the tragedians was retrofitted from the platform used for the thrones in *Hamlet*, and thus could not accommodate practicals nor the addition of footlights, and footlights placed on the apron of the stage would not have been useful throughout the production. Additionally, the placement of the first act in a backstage greenroom eliminated the need to imitate the lighting of a forest, while the use of the live trumpet preempted the use of the dancing light effect.

The remainder of Act I and the entirety of Act II take place in the castle at Elsinore, Hamlet’s home. Shortly after the scene transition, Ophelia and Hamlet run onto the stage past Rosencrantz and Guildenstern who stand there bewildered, running off stage before the two are able to react (Figure 4.5). Immediately, Gertrude, Claudius, and the rest of the royal procession enter the stage, greeting our heroes by politely alternating their names (Figure 4.6). For these several cues, I would have liked to have the first setting in the forest roughly match the brightness of the indoor setting through which Ophelia and Hamlet run, the crossfade between the two being very subtle (Figures 3.2-3.3). As soon as the king and queen enter, however, the lights would all blaze up, illuminating them in their regal glory as they convey their charge upon Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, outshining the two main characters in their noble splendor. The royal court leaves as quickly as they enter, however, and once Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are left alone on stage I would have liked the lights to very slowly fade down to just their playing space again (Figure 3.4), similar to the my concept for the beginning of the show –
except with window gobos and warmer tones instead of leaf breakups. In Chapman’s production, the
use of a window gobo to indicate a transition to indoors was cut, however. Shortly following the
transition to Elsinore, the two play a game of questions, shortly followed by another game wherein they
try to sort out Hamlet’s lunacy by pretending that they are him, a tactic which yields marvelous results
(Figure 4.8). Here, I would have liked to create a very distinct rectangle of light on the stage, resembling
a playing field or tennis court, inside of which the two may play their game: switching sides and keeping
score. Eventually, Rosencrantz would the game of questions, triumphantly exclaiming, “Rhetoric!
Game and match! (Pause) When’s it going to end?”16 at which point I would have liked his portion of
the “court” to brighten as Guildenstern’s went out, leaving the two of them to meet in the remaining
light to discuss Hamlet’s transformation.

Act II would follow many of the lighting conventions established towards the end of Act I,
illuminating Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in fairly small pools of light that would seem to follow their
movements (Figure 3.5). As the Player entered to speak to them, he would join the amoeba of the light,
but the majority of the stage would still remain fairly dim. The remainder of the tragedians would soon
enter (Figure 3.6), however, dressed as members of the royal court. Rosencrantz mistakes Alfred for the
queen, and in order to confuse the audience into believing the tragedians’ illusions as well, I planned to
use a very similar effect to the original entrance of the royal court, bathing the stage with light until
Alfred turns around: revealing himself to be an actor, at which point the backlight providing his glowing halo will quickly die down. In Chapman’s production, the character of Alfred was scrapped due to gender-blind casting, and thus this bit of physical humor was ignored.

At this point, the tragedians presented “The Murder of Gonzago”, (Figure 4.12 and 4.13) which I had hoped to light very theatrically and dramatically (Figure 3.7), but the precise nature of this scene will depend on the direction the actors are given and whether their cart or other small stage is set up on the stage to create a secondary playing space. However, throughout the course of this scene, I would have liked the color of the lights to slowly cool and darken, imitating the coming of sunset. Although I did enjoy the dramatic lighting that Don and I created for this scene in Chapman’s production, it was decided the lighting would remain static leading to a sudden blackout at the end of the scene, rather than a slow fade to sunset as I had envisioned it. The sun quickly rises again as Rosencrantz watches it (Figure 3.8), and soon he and Guildenstern are presented with a letter, and bidden to accompany Hamlet on a journey to England (Figure 4.16).

For the final act, which takes place entirely on a ship, I planned to make much use of the cyclorama and the several LED fixtures that we possess, creating vibrant color washes behind the set. Additionally, I hoped that the set for Act III would feature a mast and sail, allowing further luminaires to project patterns onto the sail, or to create additional shadows on the stage using the mast. If possible, I would have liked to use several effect gobos in the moving lights to create water ripple effects around
the stage, and in particular on the sail itself. Additionally, since the location of this final act is very concrete and real, I planned to have the entirety of the stage illuminated as realistically as I could manage to look like an ocean — first at night, and then through sunrise and the following day.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern originally find themselves on the ship at night, in the darkness (Figure 3.9). Eventually, some light resolves itself onto the stage in the form of moonlight, as well as additional illumination in the form of a lantern prudently placed on the mast. Gavin, however, believed that the night-time scene was too dark, requiring that Don and I brighten the lights, but this created very little differentiation between the illumination during the day and the night. During the night, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern read the letter given to them by Claudius, (Figure 4.18) and discover the purpose of their mission: Hamlet’s execution. After the two fell asleep, however, Hamlet himself approached their sleeping forms and removed the letter (Figure 4.19) as darkness once again enveloped the stage. When the sun rose the following day, again through the use of several LED fixtures fading through warmer tones of color, as in Figure 3.10, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern heard the tune they had grown so accustomed to emerging from 3 barrels placed on the deck, and shortly the tragedians emerged. Shortly after they exchanged greetings, the call of “Pirates!” (Figure 4.20 and 4.21) was heard, and after a short stint of running around the stage in circles, the entire cast (including Hamlet and the Tragedians) leapt into the barrels as the lights went out. When the stage brightened again (Figure 3.11), it is discovered that the middle barrel, into which Hamlet had leapt, is missing.
Chapman’s production cut this scene slightly shorter, and the blackout occurred while the characters were still running around the ship, and thus the audience had to draw their own conclusions regarding the missing Hamlet and absent barrel. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern scrambled desperately to find their charge, and eventually happened upon the letter still in one of their pockets. As they read it, they discovered that its contents have been altered, and that now they are on a mission to deliver themselves to the English hangman. In desperation, Guildenstern turned on the Player with a knife, in an effort to scorn fate, but the knife he held in his hands turns out to be fake, and the stage begins to fade to black, cloaking the characters in darkness. Suddenly, the stage is became lit resembling the halls of Elsinor, revealing a tableau of deceased nobles, Hamlet himself among them, the corpses of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern conspicuously absent. Horatio stands alone in the chamber, and speaks the final monologue of Hamlet; he is overtaken, however, by dark and ominous music as the lights fade for the final time (Figure 4.24)

**In Summation**

*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* is a play that is of great personal importance to me – one of the first plays I read that truly inspired a love of theatre and its storytelling capabilities.

Additionally, throughout the process of working on this thesis, most notably during the creation of the lighting key, I was able to synthesize much of the information that I have gleaned throughout my years at Chapman University. Because *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* is such a vital part of my
maturation into a theatrical artist, I was thrilled to discover that it was selected for this year’s theatrical season, and determined to perform to my utmost as a technician and designer for the production. Because the production is a personal passion of mine, I really enjoyed synthesizing the information from all of the classes that I have taken, which assisted me in re-reading and understanding the messages of the play, as well as in the creation of the lighting key itself: a process I found extremely enjoyable as it allowed me to imagine a more detailed, concrete, and planned out vision of a production than I have experienced. Finally, being able to synthesize my ideas with my mentor Don Guy was a very rewarding experience that I feel will help me in future productions. And even if Rosencrantz and Guildenstern will remain dead of the title page, their presence in the work of Tom Stoppard will continue to inspire my theatrical career and spur my imagination.
Working Bibliography:


Guy, Don. Personal Interview. 17 October 2014.


Image Library

Figures 1.1 and 1.2

Figure 2

FIGURE 3.1 ACT I OPENING

Notes:
Addition of footlights, N/C in order to pick up the coin

FIGURE 3.2 ACT I THE TRAGEDIANS

Notes:
Footlights remain for coin
Addition of practicals on wagon
Back low-side as tragedians enter (N/C or R351)
“dancing lights” effect special

FIGURE 3.3 ACT I ELSINORE (ROYAL COURT)

Notes:
Large window gobo in LED Source 4 on FOH (R08)
R33 wash for rest of front
FIGURE 3.4 ACT I ELSINORE

Back R09

Notes:
For game of questions: brighten window gobo to key for the shape of the court.

R60 R37

Low Side Front Low Side Front

*Key*

R08 R33

Front Front

FIGURE 3.5 ACT II OPENING

Back R09 R54 Top

Notes:
Key switches from front to low side front as Hamlet leaves at the beginning of the scene.

R37

Low Side Front

R08

Front

FIGURE 3.6 ACT II TRAGEDIANS CATCH UP

Back R09 R54 Top

HAMLET: “Follow him, friends.”

Notes:
Brighten wash for the entrance of the Royal Court

R351 R37

High Side Front Low Side Front

R09

Front *Key*
PLAYER: “Dress rehearsal. Everyone ready?”

Notes:
Front LED Source 4 slowly shifts from R16 to R216, followed by R318 and R321, leading to the blackout Utilize same practicals as before for the Tragedians

ROS: “That must be east, then.”

Notes:
Additional specials to highlight members of the royal court as they enter and exit from the wings

Notes:
Fade in R360 first slowly, and leave last as “moonlight” Lantern Practical for Hamlet Create “cloud” effects using color chases on cyc Water ripple effect on sail
FIGURE 3.10  ACT III  MORNING AT SEA

ROS: “The position, as I see it then.”

Notes:
Front LED Source 4 fade from R351 to R09 for sunrise

FIGURE 3.11  ACT III  PIRATES

ROS: “They’ve gone”

Notes:
Footlights at the apron
Fade to single spotlights as characters disappear
Use DRESS REHEARSAL for finale
Figure 4.1
Pre-Show

Figure 4.2
The Tragedians Arrive
Figure 4.3 The Tragedians

Figure 4.5 Hamlet and Ophelia
Figures

4.6 and 4.7 The Royal Court

Figure 4.8 Game of Questions
Figure 4.9 “Did you know him?”

Figure 4.10 “I am only mad when the wind is southerly.”
Figure 4.11 “Nymph, in thy orisons be all my sins remembered.”
Figures 4.12 and 4.13 The Murder of Gonzago
Figure 4.14 The Royal Court Leaves

Figure 4.15 The Messengers to England are Hung
How all occasions do inform against me.
And spur my dull revenge. What is a man,
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.
Sure he that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason
To fust in us mere mortals. Now whether it be
Sectial oblivion, or base crave scuffle
Of thinking too prolix, or on 't event
A thought which, spread on, hath but on part wisdom
And ever three parts cowardice, I do not know.
Why yet I live to say this thing I do,
Sigh I have cause, and will, and strength, and means.
To do 't. Examples gross as earth shall meet me.
Witnesse this army of such mass and charge
Led by a dedicate and tender prince.
Figure 4.17 Rosencrantz and Guildestern at Sea
Figure 4.18 Examining the Letter

Figure 4.19 Hamlet’s Treachery
Figures 4.20 and 4.21 Pirates!
Figure 4.22 The Aftermath

Figure 4.23 The Re-Written Letter
Figure 4.24 The Final Tableau