A Scenic Design For Richard O'Brien's The Rocky Horror Show

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A SCENIC DESIGN FOR RICHARD O’BRIEN’S *THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW*

by

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B.F.A. University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2003

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Fine Arts
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ABSTRACT

This thesis documents my process as Scenic Designer for Richard O’Brien’s musical, *The Rocky Horror Show*, presented by the University of Central Florida Conservatory Theatre. This production premiered on the University of Central Florida’s Mainstage Theatre 29 March 2007 and ran for fifteen performances, closing on 15 April 2007. This thesis includes my research and analysis of the published script and a production journal which documents my process for our specific production.

In this document, I illustrate how my communication and meetings with the director and members of the design team moved from initial conversations into the research, development, and construction processes in order to create the realized production. I explain the challenges and obstacles I faced in the development and construction stages and how my communication with members of the design and production staff led to the final design. Throughout this document, I present figures displaying the preliminary sketches, renderings, construction process, and production photographs that illustrate how the production moved from an idea to a reality. I also present a self analysis of the process and final product through personal reflection and outside response.
To Mom, Dad, and Jeremy,
who have supported my continuing education.

To Vandy, Bert, and Kristina,
who are mildly aggravated by my emails and constant nagging.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge Mitchell Orben as Assistant Scenic Designer for this production of The Rocky Horror Show at the University of Central Florida, spring 2007.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

My career in theatre has been constantly evolving. I have explored scripts both onstage and behind the scenes shifting from an actor, to a stage technician, and currently as a Scenic and Lighting Designer. Throughout my design experience, I had been timid in my approach and often have difficulty in making my creative voice heard.

My first encounter with Richard O’Brien’s *The Rocky Horror Show* occurred in August of 2000 while working as an undergraduate assistant in the scene shop at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. I worked as a carpenter and assisted in constructing the scenery for *The Rocky Horror Show*, which opened on Halloween of that year. One of the department’s graduate students, Kyle Biery, designed the scenery and it was grandiose in every aspect. The Scenic Design was so monumental in scale that the scene shop employees had to work additional hours in order to get the show built on time. In constructing this show I simultaneously had the most fun I have ever had and the most misery.

I saw the show twice after it opened and at the time, it was one of my greatest theatrical experiences. The inventive design choices changed my perspective of how scenic design communicates. I got goose bumps and felt content with my career choice. The experience impacted me so much that my memory of the visual climax of the play still makes the hair on the back of my neck stand up.

When the University of Central Florida selected *The Rocky Horror Show* for the theatre department’s 2006-2007 season, I knew immediately that I wanted to design it. I envisioned recreating the same satisfying theatrical experience that *The Rocky Horror Show* originally provided me. This was where my challenge began with this show. The decisions that Kyle
Biery made in his scenic design had such an impact on me that I found presenting my own ideas challenging. If I was to recreate an experience for others, how could I make it my own and receive the same theatrical gratification that I experienced earlier?

This thesis was the exploration of my design process and implementation and my hope was that other designers could read this thesis and see the importance of having their own creative voice heard. Throughout the design and production process, I discovered moments where I struggled with timidity and shyness that let others dictate my design choices. These struggles arose in instances where I experienced failures in communication, encountered difficulty in presenting my ideas, and challenged others to be true to my design. In my reflection, I evaluated moments where I was successful in collaborating and moments that challenged my design aesthetic.
CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Script Analysis

Rosemary Ingham is a successful designer and author who has written about script and design analysis. In her book, From Page to Stage: How Theatre Designers Make Connections Between Scripts and Images, she explains a method of script analysis that presents a series of questions in an outline format. The following scriptural analysis for The Rocky Horror Show follows the analysis outline found in the third chapter of her book. In this outline, I answer questions and then present lines from the script that justify my answers. If the scriptural reference is quoted from the libretto, the quotation is in capital letters and indented with each line of the song.

I. Where are they?

We begin the play at a small church in the town of Denton after a recently celebrated wedding. The script fails to mention the state in which Denton is located, but the language of the two central characters, Brad Majors and Janet Weiss, suggests Denton is a typical mid-western small town that could exist anywhere in America. Also present onstage is the character of the Narrator who, for the majority of the show, is in a completely separate world from the rest of the actors.

After a brief engagement in Denton, the script transitions into a brief car scene. A flat tire strands the couple outside as they approach the castle of alien transvestite, Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter. We stay at the castle for the rest of the show, transitioning from room to room as the play progresses. This atmosphere mimics scenes from old science fiction movies as we move from
parlor interiors, to a laboratory, to a few bedrooms, and finally to a theatrical stage where Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter enthusiastically presents his floorshow.

BRAD. I think we took a wrong fork a few miles back there. We’d better go on ahead up the road and see if we can find our way back. (O’Brien 11)

BRAD. We seem to have a blow-out in the front left hand tire. (O’Brien 11)

BRAD. [the castle is] probably some sort of hunting lodge for rich weirdos. (O’Brien 14)

II. When are they?

In the stage directions in the opening pages of Richard O’Brien’s script, a specific time period is never mentioned; however, the dialogue that is spoken by the characters place it into a mid 1950’s, science fiction genre. Because no clear time period is ascribed to this play I could follow numerous assumptions. From the original script written in 1972, I could extrapolate that the majority of the show’s action could take place at this time. Another assumption is that the setting of Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter’s castle references the work of Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein which recalls the early nineteenth century when Shelley originally created her novel. The classic Boris Karloff film Frankenstein is also conjured from the setting because it references the horror genre of 1931, the year that it was filmed. My research revealed that O’Brien had a strong influence from classic horror and science fiction “B-movies” when writing the script for The
Rocky Horror Show and it was safe to assume that because of his fascination with classic horror films, he was referencing the stylization and period of the 1931 Karloff film.

USHERETTE. SCIENCE FICTION – DOUBLE FEATURE
DR. X WILL BUILD A CREATURE
SEE ANDROIDS FIGHTING BRAD AND JANET
ANNE FRANCES STARS IN FORBIDDEN PLANET
(O’Brien 7)

FRANK. … you see Brad and Janet you are fortunate for tonight is the night my beautiful creature is destined to be born (O’Brien 22).

Another time period reference is centered on the characters of the Transylvanians. These characters, including Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter, inhabit the castle and speak in their own style of dialogue which carries an “I don’t care” punk rock attitude of the 1970’s and 1980’s. With the exception of Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter, the Transylvanians dialogue is usually brief and to the point, and it is through these actions that the punk attitude comes through.

The Narrator seems the most integral character in stating when we are. The Narrator bridges each character in this setting by bringing a scientific and sociological approach with his\(^1\) dialogue that can place the audience in any time period. Since he is presenting the script as if it

\(^1\) In Richard O’Brien’s script, the character of the Narrator was written as a male. In the production at UCF, however, the Narrator was cast as a woman. I will continue to use the masculine pronoun in the analysis and reference the Narrator as a female in subsequent chapters.
were a case study, it proves that the play has already occurred and that he is showing his findings in the present.

NARRATOR. It seemed that fortune had smiled on Brad and Janet and that they had found the assistance that their plight required. (O’Brien 14)

Where the script lacks references to specific periods, there are references that state when we are in terms of environmental setting. The Narrator states early in the script that Brad and Janet venture out on a late November evening during a thunderstorm. Once stranded in the wilderness Brad and Janet begin searching for a phone thus implying the lack of cellular phone technology and grounding the play in an earlier time.

NARRATOR. (two young ordinary healthy kids) … left Denton that late November evening … they were not going to let a storm spoil the events of their evening. (O’Brien 10-11)

BRAD. … do you have a telephone we might use? (O’Brien 13)
III. Who are they?

The Rocky Horror Show begins with the central characters of Brad Majors and Janet Weiss, who are recent graduates of Denton High School. These two characters were recently engaged to each other and both act as if they are a happy and innocent couple who are sexually inexperienced. Brad Majors displays a chauvinistic demeanor in how he interacts with Janet, especially when in front of others. Throughout the play he loses his protective, tough guy attitude and transforms into someone easily controlled by others. Janet serves as the foil. She allows the chauvinistic attitude of Brad to control her, until she finally transforms her quiet and innocent demeanor into one of confidence and sexual aggression.

BRAD. For God’s sake keep a grip on yourself Janet. I’m here – there’s nothing to worry about. (O’Bien 14)

BRAD. IT’S BEYOND ME
HELP ME MOMMY
I’LL BE GOOD YOU’LL SEE
TAKE THIS DREAM AWAY (O’Brien 45)

JANET. Oh Brad let’s go back. I’m cold and I’m frightened. (O’Brien 13)

JANET. I FEEL RELEASED
BAD TIMES DECEASED
MY CONFIDENCE HAS INCREASED
REALITY IS HERE (O’Brien 45)

Along Brad and Janet’s journey, they encounter Riff Raff and Magenta who are the obeying servants of the dominant transsexual, Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter. Acting as Dr. Frank ‘N’
Furter’s personal slaves, the brother and sister characters, Riff Raff and Magenta, have their own ambition to be rulers of the planet Transsexual in the galaxy of Transylvania.

RIFF RAFF. Everything is in readiness Master, we merely wait for you to give the word. (O’Brien 21)

RIFF RAFF. YOUR MISSION IS A FAILURE
YOUR LIFESTYLE IS TOO EXTREME
I’M YOUR NEW COMMANDER
YOU NOW ARE MY PRISONER (O’Brien 47)

Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter proves the strongest character through his exuberant display of confidence. He has a strong desire to be controlling in every task that he approaches. He is controlling with how he brings his creature to life and he is controlling to the inhabitants of his castle. He strives to provide a comfortable atmosphere for his guests where they can be comfortable with both themselves and their sexuality.

FRANK. [whipping Riff Raff] … How did it happen – I understood you were to be watching [Rocky] (O’Brien 34).

FRANK. GIVE YOURSELF OVER TO ABSOLUTE PLEASURE
SWIM THE WARM WATERS OF SINS OF THE FLESH
EROTIC NIGHTMARES BEYOND ANY MEASURE
AND SENSUAL DAYDREAM TO TREASURE FOREVER …
DON’T DREAM IT – BE IT (O’Brien 45-46)

Mixed with the cast of main characters, are a few supporting roles that help push the story forward, the first of whom is the character of Eddie. In the script, Eddie is Dr. Frank ‘N’
Furter’s sexual partner who starts as a punk delivery boy whose vices are motorcycles and rock-n-roll porn. After the relationship with Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter ends, Eddie begins to date Columbia, one of the other Transylvanians. Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter kills Eddie, and steals his brain to use for his creation, Rocky. Afterwards, Eddie proves to still be alive, making a brief appearance to sing his final song which references the rock-n-roll lifestyle to which he aspired.

EDDIE. HOT PATOOTIE BLESS MY SOUL
I REALLY LOVE THAT ROCK AND ROLL (O’Brien 26)

NARRATOR. HE WAS A LOW DOWN CHEAP LITTLE PUNK (O’Brien 38)

Rocky, the character with which Eddie shares his brain, is rather naïve in his experiences. He is created to be a show pony and object of sexual satisfaction for Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter and quickly becomes uncontrollable as he begins to make his own decisions to achieve his own happiness. With his first on stage dialogue, he sings the upbeat song “Sword of Damocles,” in which he foreshadows his downfall.

ROCKY. … I’M AT THE START
OF A PRETTY BIG DOWNER (O’Brien 24)

ROCKY. [To Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter] Piss off. (O’Brien 37)

Columbia moves in and out of the story as a featured dancer and girlfriend to the recently deceased Eddie. Columbia easily falls in and out of love with different characters throughout the play. She serves as the voice of the chorus of Transylvanians who manipulate Brad and Janet’s world.

COLUMBIA. My God! I can’t take any more of this. First you ditch me for Eddie and then you throw him off like an old overcoat for Rocky. You chew people up and then you spit them out again. I loved you, do you hear? I loved
you, and what did I get? I’ll tell you, a big fat nothing. (O’Brien 43)

When Brad and Janet first embark on their journey at the beginning of the play, they are seeking out their old science teacher from Denton High School, the wheelchair bound Dr. Evrett Scott.² As an undercover government agent, Dr. Scott is secretly researching UFO’s while at Denton High. Speaking with a German accent, he³ first appears in the script in search of his nephew, Eddie. Throughout his visit at the castle, Dr. Scott rejects the sexual advances from the Transylvanians but ultimately succumbs to the control of Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter.

SCOTTY. [Speaking with the music] Hmm … We’ve got to get out of this trap

Before this decadence saps our wills
I’ve got to be strong and try to hang on
Or my mind may well snap
And my life will be lived
FOR THE THRILLS [revealing legs in stockings and high heels]
(O’Brien 46)

² The character of Dr. Evrett Scott was listed with different names throughout this script, such as Dr. Scott, Dr. Evrett Scott, and Scotty. Throughout this document, whenever I reference Dr. Scott’s dialogue, I am quoting from Richard O’Brien’s script which lists him as “Scotty.”

³ In the script, the same actor who portrayed Eddie also played Dr. Scott. In the production at UCF, we split the roles and cast Eddie as a male and Dr. Scott as a female. Throughout the analysis, I will refer to Dr. Scott as male, but in subsequent chapters, I will refer to Dr. Scott as female.
IV. What happened before the play began?

From the script references that Richard O’Brien provides for *The Rocky Horror Show*, I can make assumptions regarding the events that happened before the play began. From the very first scene, it became apparent that all of the events we as audience members and readers were witnessing have already occurred in the past. The Narrator was presenting Brad and Janet’s story, who met each other in Dr. Scott’s science class at Denton High, as if it were a scientific case study. Throughout the play, he was recounting the events that led up to Brad and Janet encountering space aliens.

Richard O’Brien limited the amount of back story for his Transylvanian characters Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter, Magenta, Riff Raff, and Columbia. I knew from the script that they were space aliens and before the play began, they arrived on Earth and at some point, Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter emerged as the dominant leader, while Magenta and Riff Raff backed down to act as faithful servants.

Upon arriving to Earth, Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter dated the delivery boy, Eddie. Unsatisfied with Eddie’s physical appearance and attracted only to his mind, Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter constructed a plan to create a muscular man using Eddie’s brain. However, Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter and Eddie’s relationship was not the only one that occurred among the Transylvanians before the play began.

Before Eddie’s brain was butchered, Columbia and Eddie developed a relationship as a result of them both being neglected by Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter. I could only assume that it was Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter’s jealousy over Eddie and Columbia’s relationship that spawned the massacring
of Eddie’s brain; or it could also be that Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter wanted to substitute Eddie’s body with an attractive one.

COLUMBIA. …First you ditch me for Eddie and then you throw him off like an old overcoat for Rocky. You chew people up and then you spit them out again. I loved you, do you hear? I loved you, and what did it get? I’ll tell you a big fat nothing. (O’Brien 43)

Before Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter performed his experiments with Rocky, Eddie drafted a letter and sent it to his uncle, Dr. Scott. This letter encouraged Dr. Scott to search for his nephew, which led him to the castle of Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter during the second act.⁴

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⁴ Richard O’Brien’s script was written with two acts. In the production at UCF, we presented the show without an intermission.
SCOTTY. BUT HE [Eddie] MUST HAVE BEEN DRAWN INTO

SOMETHING

MAKING HIM WARN ME IN A NOTE WHICH READ...

...I’M OUT OF MY HEAD

NARRATOR. HURRY OR I MAY BE DEAD (O’Brien 39)

V. What is the function of each character in the play?

In order to properly analyze the function of each character, I had to ask myself which character I felt portrayed the primary role. In the script, the character to celebrate as protagonist is left up to the artistic team. Some might argue that the character of Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter is the protagonist, since he demands the majority of the attention throughout the script and is a hero for many audience members.

In spite of this rationale, I feel that the protagonists of The Rocky Horror Show are the characters of Brad Majors and Janet Weiss. They are the primary characters we see in the first dialogue of the script and the progression of their story is what the Narrator presents to the audience. They are also the two characters with the most at stake. Brad and Janet have their normalcy challenged upon entering the castle of Dr. Frank “N’ Furter and after a bit of a struggle, come through as stronger characters which is the example of a classic protagonist.

If Brad and Janet serve as the protagonist, then I would have to label Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter the antagonist. He is the character that stops Brad and Janet from achieving their goal which is primarily to use the phone for help. Also, Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter is the character that stops Brad and Janet’s attempt to leave the castle and provides numerous obstacles that Brad and Janet face.
By the end of the play, Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter’s lifestyle ultimately leads to his demise which is the example of a classic antagonist.

The rest of the characters in Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter’s castle serve as secondary characters who first support Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter and then end up killing him. Riff Raff, Magenta, and Columbia begin as obedient servants to Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter’s every demand. However, like most antagonists, the servants ultimately triumph over their master.

VI. What kinds of dialogue do the characters speak?

The dialogue the characters of The Rocky Horror Show speak is a form of realistic speech that is mixed with a campy, B-movie style of dialogue. This dialogue is consistent throughout the script and helps reinforces the science fiction undertones presented. As with most B-movie science fiction films, the primary characters, in this case Brad and Janet, are often naïve and melodramatic.

BRAD. It’s alright, Janet, everything’s gonna be all right, we’ll just play along for now - and we’ll pull out the aces when the time is right.

JANET. This is no time for card tricks, Brad, are you sure we’ll be alright?

BRAD. …I’m sure, Janet. (O’Brien 20)

This is also apparent with other characters in terms of character stereotypes: The scientist is overly intelligent, the Narrator is all knowing and pompous, and the villains revel in being bad.

SCOTTY. … - this sonic transducer! It is I suppose some type of audio vibratory physiomolecular transport device!...

BRAD. You mean…?
SCOTTY. Yes, Brad – it’s something we ourselves have been working on. But it
seems our friend here has found a way of perfecting it – a device that is capable
of breaking down solid matter and then projecting it through space and who
knows, perhaps even time itself. (O’Brien 41)

VII. What happens in the play?

Brad Majors and Janet Weiss leave their small town of Denton to visit their science
teacher and friend Dr. Evrett Scott. While in route to see Dr. Scott, they encounter car trouble
and seek a telephone and refuge from the night’s thunderstorm. They eventually make their way
to the castle of Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter, an alien transvestite from the planet of Transsexual. Once
inside the castle, Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter incorporates Brad and Janet into his evening’s events by
having them in attendance at his creation of Rocky. After brief sexual escapades between Brad,
Janet, Rocky, and Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter, Dr. Scott arrives at the castle in search of his nephew
Eddie. Once Dr. Scott discovers that Eddie’s brain is what provided life for Rocky, Dr. Frank
‘N’ Furter transforms his guests into characters at his theatrical floorshow, who then give their
innocence over to pleasure. The castle’s servants, Riff Raff and Magenta, also aliens from the
planet Transsexual, want control over the castle and interrupt the floorshow to assassinate
Columbia, Rocky, and Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter. After Riff Raff and Magenta take control of the
castle, they rocket into outer space, leaving Brad, Janet, and Dr. Scott behind.

VIII. What is the play’s theme?
The theme of *The Rocky Horror Show* encourages the audience to be comfortable with themselves and their sexuality, to not conform to the conventions of society, and to not label others who lead their lives in this way as strange. It deals with the problems of excess and showcases what could happen when left without any inhibitions.

**Playwright and Social Analysis**

In my late teens, I first discovered the movie *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* and, although I did not understand its premise upon my first viewing, I vividly remember the powerful voices and stylization the characters portrayed. The character with which I associated most in this early viewing was Riff Raff, actor Richard O’Brien’s quiet servant who had strong aspirations. His voice was dynamic and his characterization was unswerving. It was not until the late summer of 2000 with the DVD release of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* that I realized that O’Brien had not only written and performed in the show and movie, but had also provided the music and lyrics to its’ rock-n-roll soundtrack.

It was difficult for me to break the visual impression of O’Brien as his character Riff Raff and respect him as a playwright. But upon viewing the bald and bitter Australian as he gave interviews in the bonus features of the DVD, I found listening to the challenges he faced to bring the play and movie to life fascinating. He struggled with respect, understanding, time, and money in each instance.

**Social Background**

In order to fully understand and approach the Scenic Design for *The Rocky Horror Show*, I needed to look at how and why Richard O’Brien created his script. Looking into the
circumstances surrounding Richard O’Brien’s life in London during the early 1970’s, it was apparent that a large change was occurring in the theatre. Glam or Glitter Rock was the standard music style which displayed a bubble-gum pop format and told the public to enjoy a glamorous lifestyle and question variations of sexual identity (Du Noyer 84). From this inspiration, musicals began to change with the rock-n-roll movement. Musicals such as Hair, Jesus Christ Superstar, and Godspell were not only becoming popular in performance, they were also creating rock stars out of their casts (Michaels 24).

Also at this time, the start of the British punk movement was growing as a reaction to mainstream Glam rock. The movement introduced the birth of musical groups such as the Buzzcocks, the Sex Pistols, and the Clash. People were sick of seeing life portrayed as if it were a Hollywood movie with glamorous make-up, unlimited money, and a million-dollar lifestyle. People began to rebel against this Hollywood lifestyle by smearing their glamorous make-up and juxtaposing it with a fabulous mish-mash of torn gowns and street clothes (Du Noyer 88). With the films A Clockwork Orange and Cabaret having a huge influence in the style of dress and make-up (Michaels 18), many adolescents began to looking up to anti-heroes who were rebelling against the normal way of living. This caused the definition of punk to introduce a “do it yourself” attitude and many emerging artists had been encouraged to present music and art, even if they lacked any formal training (Du Noyer 88).

Playwright Richard O’Brien

Experiencing the change in music and lifestyle, out of work actor Richard O’Brien dreamed of becoming the next rock star from a musical. He began putting together music for his own rock opera originally titled, They Came From Denton High, which focused on the main
characters Ricky and Janet. Many of the songs O’Brien introduced came from previous experiences in his life. The song “I’m Going Home,” was a love song he wrote to his wife at the time, Kimi Wong O’Brien; and the opening song, “Science Fiction, Double Feature,” was inspired from O’Brien’s favorite science fiction movie scenes such as *Flash Gordon* and *Forbidden Planet*. Other songs, based on B-Movie dialogue and jokes Richard O’Brien found amusing were included in order to provide structure for the rest of the script (Michaels 42).

In VH-1’s documentary television show, *Behind the Music*, Director Michael McNamara illustrated that the success of Richard O’Brien’s script proved to be both a blessing and a curse to him. He became successful in getting the show presented, but failed at rock-n-roll stardom. He was incredibly bitter about the success Tim Curry garnered because of the production and refused to talk about Tim’s success in many social circumstances. Whenever he did mention Tim Curry, there was a strong distaste spoken about him. O’Brien continued to write music, and honored his love of science fiction films by contributing to science fiction scripts and appearing in small bit parts (McNamara).

**Production History**

1973

In the summer of 1973, the bohemian district of Chelsea, London, served as the starting point for Richard O’Brien and *The Rocky Horror Show*. The Royal Court Theatre introduced a new experimental theatre in its attic and became the first theatre that introduced such an idea. The aptly named Theatre Upstairs opened *The Rocky Horror Show* in June to rave reviews.

Even in its early form with limited production values, the audience felt the impact of this production. Producer Jim Sharman granted O’Brien a budget of £2000 to cover all production
and performance costs. O’Brien then granted Scenic and Lighting designer, Brian Thomson a budget of only £600 to create all of the scenery and lighting designs, as well as install the theatre’s audience seating (Michaels 38). This inspired Thomson to create his design out of discarded materials and resulted in torn and broken audience seating that helped create the macabre nature of the design (Michaels 72).

The show performed so well at the Theatre Upstairs, that in July of 1973 it moved to an old, run-down movie theatre, the Classic Cinema on King’s Road in Chelsea. The impact of the movie theatre surroundings enhanced the atmosphere of the play with its numerous B-Movie references and The Rocky Horror Show became the hip thing to do. Mentioned in numerous interviews from Scott Michaels and David Evans book, Rocky Horror: From Concept to Cult, celebrities began making appearances to sold out shows, and the arts community reveled in the show’s controversial message.

1974

As stated in the various interviews in Scott Michaels and David Evans book, Richard O’Brien felt that he was ready to pursue a production for Broadway. Theatre producer, Lou Adler, had a different plan for the show, however, and opened another production in Los Angeles in March of 1974, while the London production continued to thrive. In Los Angeles, a new cast began performing with Tim Curry, who was now a Rocky Horror Show veteran after originating the role of Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter at the Theatre Upstairs. This cast performed for American audiences to the same praise they received in Chelsea. Audiences loved the performances and attended the show as a cultural event as stated in Michael McNamara’s VH-1 documentary
When the theatrical run in Los Angeles concluded at the end of 1974, production on the movie *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* had begun with a 1975 premier date. Preparations were also underway for the stage show to move to Broadway.

**1975**

*The Rocky Horror Show* premiered on Broadway in the Belasco Theatre to lackluster reviews. Brian Thomson reprised his role as Scenic Designer and replaced the audience seating with cabaret tables to try and recreate the look of the Classic Cinema in Chelsea, but reviewers commented that it was “flashy, expensive, and over-staged” (Kalem 312). This was quite different from the reviews from the original production that premiered at the Theatre Upstairs. This was the only negative review to his design and the critics felt that the remainder of his Scenic Design and use of technology was incredibly inventive: a light up runway, neon lighting with neon lightening bolts, dry ice fog, and rear screen projections (Gottfried 311).

The majority of the New York theatre critics thought the production was a signal that Broadway was about to close forever. The script held absolutely no shadow of a plot and the shock value it created was lost on American audiences. Many critics even informed the audience members to order as many drinks as possible before the show began in order to understand the show and tolerate the theatre’s uncomfortable seating (Kalem 312). *The Rocky Horror Show’s* Broadway run was short-lived and closed one month after opening. This contributed to an even worse reaction when the film was released. The show continued to play in London, but to American audiences, the production concept was lost.
After closing on Broadway and receiving poor reviews for the film *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, Richard O’Brien’s rock opera drifted out of existence with American audiences. The film remained dormant with limited screenings until a new craze brought it back to life. The rise of this cult following was well known among *Rocky Horror* fans and its’ rise to popularity was easily explained in the 2005 documentary, *Midnight Movies: From the Margin to the Mainstream*, directed by Stuart Samuels.

This movie explained that during the late 1970’s, many of the movie theatres in Los Angeles and New York began screening socially disturbing, avant-garde films every Friday and Saturday at midnight. This cult phenomenon of “midnight showings” featured films such as David Lynches *Eraserhead* and John Waters controversial *Pink Flamingos*. This style of avant-garde films ran in rotation and often attracted the same audience members every week. These audience members often resorted to dressing-up as the movie characters and shouting out the film dialogue in the middle of a packed house (Samuels).

*The Rocky Horror Picture Show* began playing at these “midnight showings” and it started to grow in popularity. Audience members found their hero in Tim Curry’s characterization of Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter and began coming to the showings dressed in corsets and fishnet stockings. The audience also began adding dialogue to the film, making it more outrageous and shocking to generic audience members, and began bringing props in order to feel like they were actually in Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter’s castle. For instance, they would squirt water pistols into the air to simulate rain, throw rice during the wedding scene, and would snap pairs of surgical gloves in unison with Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter.
After playing many midnight showings in New York and Los Angeles movie theatres, The Rocky Horror Picture Show began playing nationwide in small, independent theatres that were still drawing large crowds at midnight. This cult following is still occurring today with new audiences coming to the theatre heckling with an up to date script that they shout at the screen (Samuels).

I was able to take advantage of a few of these “midnight showings” at the Rialto Theatre in Raleigh, North Carolina in September of 2000, and it was an experience that I would not soon forget. Audience members were in various stages of undress with some people dressed as their favorite character and others appearing in black leather and lingerie. A featured cast stood in front of the film and lip synced the dialogue, as they acted out the various scenes with low budget props and scenery. A few times during the screening, members of the audience would participate not only in the dialogue, but would also strip down to their underwear and interact with the on screen actors.

This type of involvement was what The Rocky Horror Show grew into in it’s time away from Broadway. From my personal experience as a Rocky Horror Picture Show fan, as well as a carpenter and designer for The Rocky Horror Show, a certain stigma became associated with the play. Many audiences came to the play expecting to witness the same audience participation that they have become familiar with over the years, only to be disappointed when their favorite character was dressed differently, or that they are not able to shout their favorite line to the actors onstage.
The Rocky Horror Show experienced its first Broadway revival in late November of 2000. Opening to a new generation, the popularity and cult following of the film The Rocky Horror Picture Show came with a large audience expectation that the 1973-1975 production lacked. The Circle in the Square Theatre, which housed the revival, now catered its facilities to welcome the numerous props that audience members would throw into the air during the performance. Sound Designers Richard Fitzgerald and Domonic Sack mixed the audio of the show as if it were a rock concert, and allowed moments for the audience to participate with the actors on stage (Johnson 52).

Since it had a larger production budget, the producers of The Rocky Horror Show could now spend the money on an intricate scenic design by first time Broadway Designer and Architect, David Rockwell. Rockwell’s design expressed the concept that he and Director Christopher Ashley were trying to convey. Their design statement illustrated a “piece about personal choice and creating yourself, while taking people on a fantastic journey” (Lamperl-Créaux 49). Rockwell’s design brought the performance into the twenty-first century and interacted with the cult audience by presenting the play in front of a movie screen, to which the actors would interact. Brad and Janet started on the movie screen and would then walk out onto the stage (Lamperl-Créaux 50).

According to New York Times reviewer Ben Brantley, the 2000 production of The Rocky Horror Show, however fun, seemed to fall short of its expectations. With the production values being as strong as they were and audience members enjoying themselves, this production lacked shock value. He, as well as other critics, disagreed with the manor in which the audience
shouted the scripted lines and would come to performances dressed as their favorite character (French 52).

Even though the 2000 revival opened to mixed reviews, it still had a strong and successful Broadway run. The intricate scenic design from David Rockwell was featured in the March 2001 issue of *Entertainment Design*. The article showcased the pioneering methods that Rockwell experimented with in order to achieve some of the complex motion control that his design required. The show continued to entertain fans for over a year, and after the drop in theatre attendance following September 11, 2001, it had to close in January of 2002.
CHAPTER 3: SCENIC DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The Design Process Journal

Due to my earlier experiences with The Rocky Horror Show, I went into my scenic design with many preconceived ideas. After meeting with the director and other designers, many of my ideas changed, but I found a stubbornness that did not allow me to let these ideas go. I preface my Design and Production Journals with a quote from Rocky Horror fan and author David Evans, from the book Rocky Horror: From Concept to Cult:

"The world revolves around creations. They are as fascinating to us morbid creatures as ends. Of the two, creations are rather more difficult to pin down and appreciate accurately because, as Doctor Frank ‘N’ Furter was to find out, creations are usually unpredictable and notoriously accidental, and trying to recreate creations precipitates a succession of casualties, the first and most mortal of which is often the truth itself." (Evans 23)

First Reading

April 15, 2006

After wanting to design the scenery for The Rocky Horror Show for many years, I came to the table with many ideas of how I thought this show should be designed. I visualized how I would create particular moments in the script well before I had the opportunity to design it. When given the assignment, I wanted to use as many of those preconceived ideas as possible.

The first of these ideas was the inclusion of an elevator. I would use this elevator as a source of movement in the show and would provide entrances and exits for the Rocky Horror
cast. Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter would primarily enter and exit through the elevator and I would reuse it for the blast-off sequence to transport Riff Raff and Magenta into outer space.

The floorshow was a moment of great importance. I did not know if I needed to display the RKO symbol that resonated with the film, but I did envision each of the characters in the floorshow presented in their own lighted archway, with the exception of Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter. During this moment, I saw him as the representation of Elizabeth Taylor’s “Cleopatra.” A tableau curtain would reveal Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter as slave boys fanned him and fed him grapes. I also wanted a ton of black light bubbles for the moment when Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter sang “Don’t dream it, be it.”

I imagined the Ushers\(^5\) constantly being onstage, serving as manipulators of Brad and Janet’s reality. This would happen in the first scene at the church and then continue until they arrived at the castle. The Ushers needed to create the car that Brad and Janet got into, as well as the various pieces of scenery that Brad and Janet encountered. To get the audience into the right mindset, I wanted to play old movies onstage as the audience entered the theatre. These movies would present Flash Gordon and other cult science fiction films and would correlate the play’s opening song “Science Fiction, Double Feature.”

My primary goal was to evoke an emotional response, and in order to do so, I needed to include all of these scenic elements. Having an elevator in the show, dictated how I would make

\(^{5}\) The Chorus of characters who inhabited Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter’s castle were written with different name references in the script. Richard O’Brien lists them as both Transylvanians and Phantoms. The costume design at UCF dictated that these characters would be stylized as early twentieth century movie Ushers.
the castle blast off at the end. I could also use it during the numerous scenic transitions. This method of thinking was way ahead of where I needed to be with the design process, but with my previous experience of working on this show, I felt that I had a good understanding of the script.

When approaching Director Earl Weaver with my initial design ideas, I wondered what he was thinking for his initial design expectations and character blocking. I was concerned that he would not care about what I wanted to achieve and I did not want him to reject all of my ideas and ruin my vision of the show. I was also curious of what sort of emotional connection Earl wanted the audience to have with the show. It was not a script that required a lot of character research because the characters’ personal stakes seemed obvious. Since the script lacked emotional substance, the designers usually enjoyed figuring out how to present Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter’s lifestyle in conjunction with the numerous science fiction effects.

Earl and I scheduled a preliminary meeting just before the summer break of 2006. At this meeting, I hoped that Earl would answer many of my questions so I could work on the design over the summer.

*Concept Meetings*

*April 28, 2006*

Director Earl Weaver, Costume Designer Harmony McChesney, and I met today for a preliminary concept meeting. A Lighting Designer had yet to be assigned to the show. The meeting served two purposes. The first was for formal introductions, and the second was to begin discussing our design concept.

We started our conversation by explaining why each of us wanted to do the show. I shared my views of how much fun I had working on the show six years ago and how I had
always wanted to design a “Rock Opera.” Harmony expressed her interest in designing bright and flashy costuming that she would include throughout the show. Earl was thrilled to hear our enthusiasm and initial outlook on the design and began to explain his concept.

Earl wanted to present a version of The Rocky Horror Show that went against the conventional approach that most audience members were expecting. Instead of presenting a musical, he wanted to give the audience a rock-n-roll show with hardly any dialogue. This rock format did not change the script, but changed the way that the actors related to the audience. He thought that the music needed to be the primary focus of the design, not the story. The design of the play would exhibit a rock-n-roll mentality and present the show in a fashion which the actors were interacting with the audience. Earl expressed interest in seeing the technology of the world: we would not avoid moving lights, microphones, or hide the musicians, but rather celebrate them as if they were characters themselves.

Earl knew that he was presenting The Rocky Horror Show and that due to the cult success of the film, the audience would be coming to the theatre with many expectations. Instead of pausing for audience lines and showing moments from the movie, he wanted the audience to experience a new version of Rocky Horror that would be just as strong as what the audience might expect. Because of this, he wanted all movie representations avoided in the design. He did not want to see the swimming pool, the RKO display, or skeleton framed grandfather clock that most audiences loved and would be looking for from the film. In terms of color and feeling for the show, we wanted to use the generic red and black that was typical of the original Rocky Horror Show. If we used the red and black colors as a base, we could introduce other colors with lighting and costuming.
When Earl finished explaining his preliminary concept, we started discussing more specific items he had in mind for staging the actors. We began this conversation on the climax of the play, the floorshow. Earl had envisioned removing some of the center audience seating in the first three rows and inserting a runway with footlights in order to bring Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter within smelling distance of the audience. We discussed the possibilities of having stripper poles appear out of the ground that presented an exotic dancer style runway for the actors to interact with.

Earl was so in love with the idea of stripper poles that we broadened their inclusion to the rest of the show. He wanted Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter to walk across the stage and then enter upside down from a center stage stripper pole, to start the song “Sweet Transvestite.” It was something Earl could incorporate into Janet’s song “Creature of the Night,” as well as many other moments in the show. He stated that he was looking for a refined and “polished” show, even though everything he requested was sexual in nature.

Earl also shared some other general staging ideas. We discussed the scenic placement of the laboratory and the birth of Rocky occurring down stage left, and how we needed to outfit the laboratory with levers, dials, and phallic-shaped pulleys. We also discussed how Earl would like to see the character of the Narrator down stage right. Other general suggestions included the idea of the character of Riff Raff having a room at the top of a circular staircase, having very phallic ray guns, and having video monitors on stage to show moments in the play that required a live video feed.

There was a blocking challenge in the script that he did not know how to solve yet. In the script, the character of Eddie has to enter abruptly through a hidden area onstage. The script referenced a Coca-Cola ice box that Eddie burst through, but we struggled to find a solution for
where this would be placed. In order to have Eddie enter from a piece of scenery downstage on the apron, he would need to be planted in his position for the first twenty minutes of the show. We tossed around ideas about how to accomplish this and were excited with the different possibilities.

Earl had requested that I see how many seats the runway would remove and draw up some initial sketches and construction drawings so that the department could grant approval before the season sales began. I felt that we were getting way ahead of ourselves by pinning down too many particulars in the design. I did not know what the rest of the set looked like, and I needed to provide construction drawings for a piece of scenery that showed the climax of the play. I was concerned that this might not fit in with the rest of my design and could comprise my concept. We needed to continue exploring movement, colors, and concepts, and not focus on preliminary design drawings.

Since this was a different direction than I had originally planned to pursue, I needed time to digest and see where this conversation led me. This gave me some fuel for the summer when I would be stuck in the backwoods of New York without any connection to the outside world. I planned to stop by the theater the next day in order to see what was involved with the runway and what I needed to do in order to remove the audience seating.

May 1, 2006

It turned out that there were not any digital plans for the seating of The Mainstage Theatre, so I took their measurements and discussed the possibility of removing them with the scene shop staff. I was also able to obtain a copy of some hand drafted, architectural drawings of our theatre from one of my technical theatre professors, Kyle Becker. I spent the remainder of
the day converting the drafting into a computer drawing that had the appropriate seating removed.

May 2, 2006

I dropped by Director Earl Weaver’s office to show him the proposed drafting (Figures 15 and 16) for the removed seating and runway. He told me that they were exactly as he had envisioned and that he would be in contact via email with Artistic Director Dr. Sloan, the box office, Technical Director Zachary Stribling, and Production Manager Kevin Rose to talk about the feasibility of the proposal.

May 10, 2006

I received emails from everyone regarding the runway and it seemed that we were all in agreement. It would be possible to install the runway and remove the seating under the stipulation that it met the standards set by both the box office and the Fire Marshal. Our Production Manager Kevin Rose stated that he would facilitate these communications with the drawings and information I provided him. If any concerns arose, then he would contact everyone during the summer.

June 16, 2006

I had yet to work on Rocky Horror at all during the summer since my restrictive schedule had prevented any work on any school related assignments. The campsite I was working at lacked any connection to the outside world via cell phone, internet, radio, or television. This limited the amount of contact I had from Director Earl Weaver or Production Manager Kevin
Rose in regard to the runway and it restricted the amount of research I intended to do. The only work I accomplished with the show was in thinking of what Earl had said and whether or not I could design such a large show in our limited theatre space.

**June 27, 2006**

I was able to check my email and discovered that Director Earl Weaver had sent me four pages of ideas for the show. A few of these ideas were ones we had discussed in our introductory meeting and others were in complete contrast. The majority of the items focused on small vignettes of what Earl saw happening in terms of scenic movements with lighting and sound cues. I had to stop reading after the first page because the work schedule demanded by my current employment prevented me from making any progress.

**September 5, 2006**

The fall semester had begun and I entered my second year of graduate school. Life had been a little hectic since returning to Florida. I was anxious to get started on *Rocky Horror,* but had a few other designs to accomplish first. I had been going through the process of designing the scenery for Nilo Cruz’s *Anna in the Tropics,* which would begin building in the scene shop next week and I started meetings for Ödön von Horvath’s *Don Juan Comes Back from the War,* my very first lighting design.

I looked at the posting of my production team and found myself quite pleased since I now had a design assistant for the show. Mitchell Orben, a student whom I had taught last year as a teacher’s assistant, would have his first Assistant Scenic Design on *The Rocky Horror Show.* The Technical Director changed since my initial design meeting. Assistant Technical Director
Michael Layton was so excited about the possibility of moving scenery and scientific gadgets, that he and Technical Director Zachary Stribling had switched spring show assignments. George Jackson was named as the Lighting Designer, and I was ecstatic to get to work with him in a design capacity because in the past, I had only seen his work as a technician. I also took notice of William Boles and Beth DeCarlo as my Props Designers. While I had never worked with Beth before, I knew the strength of William’s work and I was quite pleased with the assignment.

September 11, 2006

Director Earl Weaver sent an email to everyone involved with the production to follow up on the progress the runway had made over the summer. It turned out that the runway presented to the department in May never made it past the Production Manager Kevin Rose. He did not contact Box Office Manager Donna Rahman or the Fire Marshal. It might be too late to include the runway because season tickets for the proposed seating had already been sold. I spoke with Vandy Wood, my Scenic Advisor for the show, about this concern and we agreed that in the future I might want to be more vigilant with following up on my design requests. I may have been too trusting of others, especially when it came to important elements of my design.

Donna Rahman was checking the situation in regard to whom we would have to contact in order to move seating assignments and Kevin Rose was trying to set up a meeting with the Fire Marshal to discuss the guidelines for installing the runway. At the next faculty meeting our new Artistic Director Kate Ingram, would decide whether to pursue the runway installation any further, after she received updates from everyone.
September 12, 2006

I had a concept meeting with Scenic Advisor Vandy Wood and Costume Designer Harmony McChesney in our Advanced Model Making and Rendering class and we came up with a few questions and discoveries about the show. Vandy’s questions were centered on how I visualized movement in the show. She asked me about how the scenery would move in juxtaposition with the characters on stage and noticed how my answers expressed both vertical and horizontal movement. Vandy inquired about the visual climax of the show and wondered how I would set this moment apart from the rest of the action.

After pondering Vandy’s questions, I discovered that for me, the visual climax was when Riff Raff and Magenta were blasting off into outer space. It would be the only moment in the show to explore both vertical and horizontal movement simultaneously. This movement would look different from any other that I had been presenting and it would fit into the same scenic vocabulary that I had introduced. Vandy was excited with my discoveries and encouraged me to research these ideas further.

September 13, 2006

The Fire Marshal came by the theatre and addressed our concerns with installing the runway. The University approved the removal of the seating, as long as the theatre department agreed with their terms. First, they would like the Physical Plant to remove the seating instead of letting the theatre department’s scene shop do it. The Fire Marshal was afraid that if we had let students do the removal, then safety would have been jeopardized. The Fire Marshal wanted to make sure that the runway platform would be no taller than thirty inches and would not exceed ten square feet. Also, around the perimeter of the runway platforming, I needed to paint a safety
line so that in the event of an emergency, audience members would have a safely marked exit. I planned on lining the perimeter of the runway platform with footlights, but the stipulations required that I needed to provide a painted line for the audience.

September 14, 2006

I received an email from Artistic Director Kate Ingram explaining that the department abandoned the idea of installing the runway. It would have been unfair to ask our patrons to change their seating for this one scenic element. The theatre department would have approved the runway if we had explored the option before they had sold season tickets. In actuality, I was glad that the department cut the runway because I felt that it was impeding my initial design choices. From that moment on, I needed to provide more follow-through on questions and requests that needed to go through others. I did not want other scenic elements to suffer the same fate as the runway.

I could now return to exploring new design concepts and ideas for the show. Costume Designer Harmony McChesney and I began talking over ideas in Advanced Model Making and Rendering class. Since we were the only two students in the class, our project for the semester was focused on our design for The Rocky Horror Show. Scenic Advisor Vandy Wood sent a request to Director Earl Weaver and Lighting Designer George Jackson to see if they could join one of our classes for another concept meeting so Earl could expand upon his ideas from the email he had sent over the summer.
October 17, 2006

Director Earl Weaver came into class for the first group concept meeting since last May. The design team met Earl in the kitchen at the University Tech Center and we went down his list, item by item, discussing any thoughts or changes that may have occurred.

We spoke at length about how the design of the show centered on a style of rock concert presentation with a raw, nasty, in your face, industrial approach to the design. We were not going to present a fourth wall but planned to annihilate it with cast to audience interactions in every scene.

Earl provided a verbal introduction of Vocal Director Kip Taisey, who would be altering the musical score as part of his Master of Fine Arts thesis. Kip had received permission from the publisher to alter a few of the songs in order to introduce an altered, gospel inspired soundtrack. Some songs would present an operatic tone, some rock-a-billy, but the majority of the music would be gospel. The gospel inspiration made me think about my scenic design in a new way. I knew originally that I wanted a gothic style of architecture present for the castle and with the inclusion of gospel inspired music, I might be able to explore this idea further.

We shifted our conversation to a scene by scene analysis of the show. Instead of pursuing my idea of projecting a movie during the preshow, Earl wanted one of the Ushers to sit onstage with a toy piano. The actor would mime the playing of a piano while a sound cue blasted grandiose organ music over the theatre sound system. Earl also wanted to cut the idea of having an elevator, feeling that its’ inclusion would be too reminiscent of the movie. After explaining that I had planned on using it for the blast off, he allowed me to pursue it further.

With the runway cut, Earl was looking for a new way to present the floorshow. I shared my ideas of presenting each character in an archway and revealing Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter as if he
were Cleopatra, which he absolutely loved. As long as we still had stripper poles present, I could add as many visual toys to this scene as I would like, such as black light bubbles, moving scenery, or a stained glass window.

I presented a few of my research images that illustrated how I was approaching our concept. I explained to Earl that my goal was to recreate the same raw and gritty environment that surrounded Richard O’Brien when he wrote the script. The rise of the punk movement was full of ideas in finding beauty from items that had been destroyed and in my design, I wanted to mimic these same ideas. I presented my initial research image for the show, which was a photograph that displayed this punk rock attitude. I wished to include this image as my primary research inspiration in the Appendices, but the photographer denied use of the image for any reference or citation. Instead, I have provided a verbal description.

The image showed a blond teenager standing in the middle of a dirty sidewalk in front of an industrial garage door. The background, above a garage door, warning signs gave rules to the viewer and that was blatantly disregarded by the character standing in the foreground. The teenager, who was the primary subject of this image, was shown holding a cigarette in her left hand and an empty bourbon bottle in her right, as eye makeup ran down her cheeks. Her outfit was shredded and layered with fishnet stockings, both ripped and unrolled, one down to her knee and the other to her ankle. There was an array of empty bottles to her right that spilled into a filthy street gutter. The subject of the photograph intimidated the viewer with a look of determination and defiance.

I saw this character portraying each of the Transylvanians that inhabited Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter’s castle. The attitude and style of dress the teenager was exhibiting, spoke to me as what
the characters in the script were trying to say. For my scenic design to be successful, I needed to base my concept on recreating the environment that surrounded this teenager.

Earl loved this image and thought that it embodied every aspect of our production. It displayed the overall feeling he wanted to present in the scenery, costumes, and lighting. Earl urged me to pursue this research further and find more images that referenced the same attitude shown in the image. After everyone agreed on this concept, he then wanted to move on to discussing what he needed in order to stage the actors.

We discussed the possibility of including staircases to the set for multiple character interactions that would provide perches to sit, places to dance, and show a small amount of voyeurism with the various characters from above watching. We also wanted to have at least three stripper poles on the set to add dance possibilities. There also needed to be enough space for a cast of fifteen to twenty-five people to dance comfortably across the apron of the stage. Knowing that the cast would take up a lot of the stage space, we revisited the idea of including a circular staircase. This type of staircase provided more room for the actors onstage and based upon my research, fit into the design aesthetic of a science fiction laboratory.

We were not planning to meet again until our first group meeting on Halloween and I had enough feedback to begin a more focused research. I also planned to do some initial sketching and construct a preliminary model box. Having a scale representation of the theatre would be extraordinarily helpful in figuring out how to place such a large cast into a limited space. For this design, I was planning on building a larger scenic model than usual. This model would be either one-half inch or three-eighths inch in scale so that I could show more detail as opposed to the typical one-quarter inch scale model.
Design Meetings

October 31, 2006

Today the design team met with the rest of the production staff for the first time. The meeting primarily focused on formal introductions of the production staff instead of introducing design concepts. Director Earl Weaver told everyone how we had already met a few times as a design team and explained the concept that we were exploring.

After the production staff finished with its official business, I introduced a few research images of gothic architecture for us to talk about. These images showed the interiors of medieval churches which had a specific look with its architecture, religious statues, and stained glass windows. Overall, he liked the gritty feeling that these images presented, but thought that they were too religious and obvious for the direction we were going. If I could merge the atmosphere exemplified by my initial research image with the appearance of the medieval imagery, then I would be on the right track. The gothic look would work for the scenes in the church and would support the theme of religious creationism, epitomized by Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter’s monster. Earl encouraged me to pursue this further and requested that I find a few more research images and present some initial sketches at the next meeting.

November 15, 2006

My assistant and I had our schedules completely full over the past few weeks and we had been experiencing some time management issues. Due to the commitment I had to maintain with recent designs, I was unable to focus on Rocky Horror over these past few weeks. Design Assistant Mitchell Orben has overbooked his schedule as well, and we were both falling behind on the design.
I, however, did make progress on the show. While researching the word “industrial” on a photography website, I came across some interesting images of bridges. I noticed that the bridgework in some of these photographs had the capability of creating a style of gothic arch with their design. When I cross-referenced these with my initial research image, I found that I could create the same emotion of that image by marrying the dirt and metalwork elements into my religious and gothic ones.

I planned to explore this more in my Advanced Rendering and Model Making class, before the evening’s production meeting. During this class, I hoped to find more bridge imagery that felt more like the world that I was interested in describing.

November 16, 2006

I was successful with my bridge architecture research and each image I found showcased a consistent use of metal bolts and rivets that were used in their design and construction, as well as glorified layers of rust and erosion. I felt that if I incorporated the bridge architecture into my design, then I needed to include the metal bolts and rivets as well.

I spent the majority of Advanced Model Making and Rendering class working on sketches for the 5:30 p.m. meeting. I started with the preliminary blocking notes that Director Earl Weaver and I discussed, with the laboratory existing stage left and the Narrator stage right. The sketch was rough, but showed the direction that I was going. I could not finish the sketch in time for the meeting, but since my design was becoming symmetrical, Earl could easily visualize what the finished sketch would have looked like (Figure 4).

In the meeting the sketch went over well. Earl and Scenic Advisor Vandy Wood both had positive responses and were anxious to see how it would work in groundplan form. The
The sketch showed the elements of bridge architecture that Earl had approved of, as well as an element of truss work. We could hang lighting equipment from the functional truss which would help reinforce the rock-n-roll concept that we were trying to create.

The sketch displayed the musicians across the back of the theatre, elevated above the cast as part of the scenery. It also depicted a spiral staircase stage right that led to Riff Raff’s room. This area lacked connection to any other piece of scenery onstage, and could create an obstacle with Riff Raff’s entrances and exits.

It turned out that there had been a miscommunication as to when our next meeting would be. The master calendar did not have us meeting again until December 5, 2006 which would have been when preliminary designs were due. Thrown into the mix were Thanksgiving and the end of semester exams which limited our ability to meet. I needed to work at my present pace in order to get the preliminary design finished and approved. The production team had requested a rough model, sketches, and groundplan for the preliminary designs, but final designs were not going to be due until early January 2007. I wanted to see if I could turn in my preliminary designs later since I planned to be in town over the holiday break.

**November 20, 2006**

I received an email from Professor Zachary Stribling that told me that I could push back my preliminary design date until after I was finished with exams and that I did not have to complete a preliminary model, as long as I had an approved sketch, a rough groundplan, and a layout of all of the scenic effects required.
November 23, 2006

I did another sketch in preparation for my preliminary designs (Figure 5) that was slightly different from my first one. After studying the first sketch, I found that I was not happy with the design of center staircase. I felt that its curvilinear nature did not work when juxtaposed with all of the other angular pieces in the design. I also felt that it would have caused a traffic problem further down the road.

I started exploring some of the moments in the show that Director Earl Weaver and I had discussed to see if they would work with this design. Not having the room to stage the proposed Coca-Cola ice box, I decided to scratch Eddie’s entrance from Rocky’s creation area. Instead, I designed a trap door center stage from which he could enter. It would create a moment that the audience would not expect and would be easier to plant him prior to his entrance.

I was still pursuing the idea of having a tableau style curtain on stage, but I did not know if it should be made or purchased. I sent out a request to Rosebrand, a theatrical draping company, to see how much it would cost to purchase one. Technical Director Michael Layton informed me that creating a custom curtain out of their cheapest material would have been a third of my budget. I needed to see if I could still achieve this effect another way.

Preliminary Designs

December 5, 2006

I started laying out the necessary scenic elements in groundplan and section, and came up with some challenges. In order to have an elevator onstage, I needed to have a much taller proscenium. The complications with space and height placed the elevator and trap door so far upstage, that their impact would have been lost. Also, I found a problem with making the design
symmetrical. Due to the asymmetry of our Mainstage Theatre, the audience was placed to the right of center, and in order to compensate for this in previous designs, the scenery usually shifted off center as well. This created a larger area of space stage right which looked awkward if it were symmetrical to stage left. In order to make the laboratory large enough, I needed to be able to add a few feet to the width our stage.

Scenic Advisor Vandy Wood and I worked through these problems in model making class and decided on a couple of solutions. First, I decided to cut the elevator. I had fought hard to keep that scenic element included, but I could probably create the same effect by adding a false catwalk across the stage. This catwalk would be upstage of the proscenium and would create Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter’s spectacular entrance. It would be tall enough to show the actor’s legs walking across it before he entered upside down on a stripper pole.

Cutting the elevator also changed my idea for the blast off sequence at the end of the show. I discovered that all I needed in terms of movement was the feeling of Riff Raff and Magenta moving away from the audience. I could still achieve the feeling of the castle blasting off toward the end, if Magenta and Riff Raff were on a moving platform that was heading backward. It would be cheaper, easier to build, and could possibly create the same emotion that I was looking for.

I quickly penciled out a sketch based on this realization and had something for the preliminary designs (Figure 7). The sketch presented the down center staircase as one solid unit that split from the middle platforming as it ascended toward the upper level. I placed stripper poles throughout the design to use for dancing and had laboratory doors both stage left and stage right using the entire stage. I had attempted to cover the pre-existing doorway stage left to make the fire exit part of the design.
The Narrator’s area was placed directly under the spiral staircase stage right, which might not work and could become too crowded for actors to enter and exit safely. I connected the spiral staircase to a platform off stage right, upstage of the proscenium, so that Riff Raff had more than one place to enter and exit.

At the meeting, Director Earl Weaver was ecstatic. He loved all of the blocking possibilities and was in agreement with the cuts and additions that I had made. He also loved the idea of the suspended catwalk; the shop, however, was concerned with this. The amount of bracing and access required would chew up the majority of my budget and might not be as visually effective as I wanted it to be. Instead, I discussed the idea of making a false catwalk. Hanging it on a lineset would eliminate the need for bracing, but wouldn’t allow anyone to walk across it. In order to achieve the same effect, the design team explored the idea of adding a pair of fake Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter legs to the catwalk. These legs would move across the catwalk prior to Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter’s entrance and would create the illusion that he was entering from an elevator. Technical Director Michael Layton jumped at the idea and began wondering how he would make robotic legs. Earl seemed to go along with him, stipulating that if they looked bad, he would cut them from the show.

The scene shop seemed to be a bit nervous about the scenic challenges that had yet to be resolved and wanted me to get the final designs to them as soon as possible. We would not meet again until after winter break when these designs were due, so my Design Assistant Mitchell Orben and I planned to meet over the holiday to finish. The shop had also requested that I take a tour of our storage area and see what we could pull from stock to help accommodate some of the budgetary concerns.
December 6, 2006

My Design Assistant Mitchell Orben and I went over to storage to see what we had in stock. It was rumored that at one time, the theatre department owned a spiral staircase which may now be in storage. While in search of the spiral staircase, Mitchell and I came across many items that we could incorporate into the design. One item we discovered was an old winged back chair that had a deteriorating red fabric. We thought that this would be perfect for the Narrator area and even discussed the idea of ripping off one of its legs and replacing it with a pile of books.

From a donation to the department, we found approximately six bolts of old, red fabric in varying shades. If we needed to sew our own tableau curtain, this might be exactly what we needed in order to create it. The only problem I could foresee was the amount of time that would go into this project.

Mitchell and I took some measurements of some of the stock platforming to see if they could be used in the show. We also found some aluminum truss that I could incorporate into the design to use as lighting positions. Other items we found in storage included a set of gothic railings that worked for the catwalk, as well as other safety railings that we might need. We also found an old chaise lounge that we could use in the design for the “Cleopatra” moment in the floorshow, if we reupholstered it. Another discovery we made was the existence of an old wrought iron chandelier. We thought that it would have been fantastic to incorporate into the design, but I could not figure out where it would go on the set.
December 7, 2006

I found out where that the missing spiral staircase was thrown away earlier in the year when props storage was cleaned out. As a result, I ended up pricing a few spiral staircases online and found one that was affordable. After consulting with Technical Director Michael Layton, he went ahead and ordered it. Since the spiral staircase had been in the design since the beginning, he decided that it wasn’t going away and I needed to factor it into my budget.

Since we did not have enough matching fabric to make a set of tableau and archway curtains, I realized that we had enough fabric to make a curtain that was inspired by the punk rock mentality. I imagined a curtain that was once grandiose and throughout time, had become more deteriorated. The characters inhabiting this castle would not have found a matching color to patch it properly, but would grab anything they could get their hands on in order to repair it: be it safety pins, hand stitching, or glue. With our six different colors of red fabric, I designed the curtain to be made out of the primary color that would then be patched together with the remaining colors to finish the design.

The idea for the curtain fit into previous conversations about my first research image and changed the look of the show. Instead of beautiful new curtains displayed in this castle, I planned on having curtains that were ripped-up. The major obstacle that remained was with the curtain’s design and implementation. There was a challenge in presenting a specific design for the curtain, because we were combining materials that we were pulling from stock. We did not know how much fabric we had, or the amount we needed to create the design. It was too large and required too much time from the scene shop, to complete all of the other design elements that I needed.
I brought up the idea to Michael and Professor Zachary Stribling and they offered to create a position in the show for a Scenic Craftsperson. This person would be in charge of specialty craft projects for the show and it would take the place of their spring semester scene shop assignment. I discussed the position with my Stagecraft class today and found a strong response. It appeared that one of my students, Nikki Blue, wanted to be involved Rocky Horror so much, that she wanted to personally take on this assignment. I shared the idea with Zachary and Michael and they granted her the assignment without question.

December 15, 2006

School was out for the semester and I spent the day creating the model box for the show. I decided to build a three-eighths inch scale model after I realized that one-half inch is too big and one-quarter inch is too small. The model box went together easily.

December 16, 2006

I started drafting my archways in AutoCAD. My goal was to get everything drafted so that I could print and paste them to pieces of model making material prior to cutting them out. Overall I was happy with their look and decided to stop working on them until after the winter holiday.

December 20, 2006

Two shows that I had worked on earlier this year were in consideration to tour to Americus, Georgia and perform at the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, here after referred to as KC/ACTF. The play Anna in the Tropics, for which I had designed the
scenery, was selected to perform in late January before traveling to Georgia. The play Don Juan Comes Back from the War, for which I designed the lighting, had been selected as an alternate; however, this show would not be performing unless another production canceled. This meant that I was going to have to travel out of town for a week when the construction on Rocky Horror was beginning to speed up. I was thankful to have an assistant to help answer questions during the time of my absence.

January 5, 2007

I met with my Design Assistant Mitchell Orben at the University Tech Center and began work on the model. He was enthusiastic about helping and I decided that it would be best for him to work on some of the smaller detailed items while I finished the overall scope of the show. I asked him to work on the design of the car and the set dressing for the laboratory. I informed him that we had a functioning Jacob’s Ladder to use for the creation moment, but we needed other set dressing for the laboratory.

I spent the day figuring out spacing and came up with a few new realizations. I needed a second story stage right in order for the spiral staircase to have a landing. If we had a raised area, it could provide many more blocking opportunities and make the set more dynamic. It also provided access to a stripper pole stage right that we could use as a fireman’s pole for Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter’s entrance. I designed this platforming with round legs, which provided the same silhouette as the stripper poles.

I was happy with the direction that the model was going, but with updating the drafting, applying the paint treatment, and solving all of the design challenges, the model was taking much longer than I expected.
January 6, 2007

Assistant Scenic Design Mitchell Orben’s design for the car was not coming out as I envisioned. I did not know if I was an effective communicator in explaining how I wanted the car to look and I felt that he was making it more complicated than it needed to be. I asked that he work on the set dressing for the laboratory and created a props list while I kept working on the model. I also requested that he make a transportation box for the model to insure that the model would not be damaged.

I continued to paint and cut out model pieces throughout the day and wished that I had chosen a one-quarter inch model. I felt that the model was starting to look clunky and not as polished as I wanted it to be. It was also taking much more time due to the size and scope of the design.

I created a rendering of the curtain that I was going to submit to Scenic Craftsperson Nikki Blue (Figure 13). I did not think we had the technology to make the curtain tab out, so instead I included a permanently tabbed curtain from the theatre’s stock inventory. The tabbed curtain would remain open for the entire show and could create the picture frame I was looking for.

January 7, 2007

Assistant Scenic Designer Mitchell Orben had not finished the dressing for the preliminary laboratory, the design for the car, or the model transportation box, but managed to get the props list completed (Tables 3-5). I had finished the model and it seemed too large (Figures 9 –11). I should have made it one-quarter inch instead of three-eighths inch. It showed
the detail and presented the size and scope of the movement that I wanted, but it did not show the amount of refinement that I was looking for. I planned on taking pictures of it that evening to create renderings to show at the next meeting (Figure 14).

I had cut the catwalk from the design. After working in model format, I realized that it caused too many sightline issues and would not work as a permanent fixture for the show. This also cut the idea of building robotic legs, but in the end I felt that it would have been too time consuming. This decision would also help in keeping the show under budget.

January 8, 2007

I emailed my drafting and model pictures to Technical Director Michael Layton with a list of the scenic requirements that were not shown in the model. This included the science fiction gadgets we planned on buying for set decoration. I still had no idea what this decoration would look like or how the characters would interact with it.

He responded by telling me that I had a $4,500 dollar budget and that he would look at getting the preliminary budget sheet to me by the first production meeting/design due date. Michael seemed incredibly enthusiastic about the show, but I was getting a little worried about his involvement. He started questioning why I had cut the catwalk and chandelier out of the design and I explained that there was not any room for the chandelier above the stage and that the catwalk was creating too many sightline issues for the other moments in the play. Michael wanted me to reconsider my decision to cut the catwalk and figure out a way to resolve the sightline issues. I was excited at Michael’s contributions and wanted him to be involved with the other effects that I was trying to create, so I told him that I would try to find a way to incorporate them back into the design. After looking at the catwalk a little more, I realized that I could have
it flown in for Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter’s entrance, but it needed to be flown out for the remainder of
the show.

Michael stated that he wanted to have it in the show more and that we would have to wait
and see how much of a sightline issue it created. I had decided to let him explore this, but my
sightline issues were apparent in both the model and the drafting. If he could find a way to keep
the catwalk on without any sightline issues, I would let him. As far as the chandelier was
concerned, I needed to think about where it would go.

January 16, 2007

Classes resumed and people started their work in the scene shop and I stopped by to
speak to Technical Director Michael Layton about his plans for the week and he had already
begun building the show. The lumber and steel orders had arrived and Michael was busy
delегating construction tasks to the various carpenters and shop students.

This was a bit of a shock to me, considering as of yet, we had not had a meeting that
approved the final design. I thought that we had a presentation this week, but apparently, the
calendar that both Costume Designer Harmony McChesney and I had led us astray. There would
not be an actual design presentation, but merely a date that stated that designs were due. The
design presentation would be at the first production meeting in February 2007.

Michael showed me his construction drawings for the design and he changed a few of my
archways in order to make them fit into the theatre. Most of the scenic alterations were to the
stage left laboratory wall, where they needed to be installed into the theatre’s architecture. It
appeared that the drafting I was given was not accurate and he needed to make adjustments in
order for the archways to fit into our theatre. He kept the same design concept as the previous
wall so I was not too concerned. He had also begun working on the numerous staircases on the set. The two staircases that led from the center stage platform to the band platform were a little intricate in their design and he wanted to get them figured out as soon as possible.

**January 22, 2007**

I received an email from our Stage Manager Hannah Kugelmann in regard to the miscommunication with the production calendar and design presentations. She and Production Manager Kevin Rose had scheduled another design meeting for tomorrow which would serve as the design presentation before production meetings were to begin. It would give Director Earl Weaver and Choreographer Tim Ellis the opportunity to see the final designs so they could begin thinking about the blocking and choreography needed for the show. This made me feel better, due to the large number of changes that I had made while making the model and beginning the construction, which might affect some of the ideas that Earl originally had. It would also make me feel more comfortable knowing that everyone approved the design.

**Design Presentation**

**January 23, 2007**

I had a design presentation with Costume Designer Harmony McChesney and Director Earl Weaver. Choreographer Tim Ellis and Lighting Designer George Jackson could not make it due to the meeting being announced at such short notice. George had been absent from many of the meetings lately and I was concerned that his voice was missing from the design. I had left
many areas onstage where he could place lighting instruments, but I wanted to know what they
were soon because they would contribute to making the show rock-n-roll.

Earl loved the model and everything that I had changed. He thought the idea of adding
the second level stage right was perfect because he was going to request that I consider adding a
second story at the meeting. He loved the idea of the curtain and the addition of the numerous
stripper poles onstage, but was a little let down that I had cut the above stage catwalk. I
explained the possibility of not having the catwalk as a permanent fixture, but instead making it
appear only for Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter’s first entrance. For the rest of the show, it created a
sightline problem, so I needed it to be flown out. This presented me with another dilemma in my
design. In order to make the catwalk believable, then it needed to remain static; having the
catwalk fly turned it into an elevator.

I also showed Earl where I added two naked statues to the design. I wanted to reference
the religious statues that I found while researching gothic architecture, but wanted to incorporate
them into the punk inspiration from my initial research image. I thought that the inclusion of
these statues would help in providing the phallic look that Earl had originally requested. I even
included a phallic that would act as the freeze ray lever toward the end of the show. The
technical crew was curious how I planned to construct these statues, and after I offered a few
suggestions, I passed the engineering over to my Design Assistant Mitchell Orben to guide in
their construction.

My Paint Charge Cynthia Dean was present at the meeting and we began discussing the
overall feeling of the show. I explained that I was looking for a gritty, textural, lived-in world
that was once beautiful and once the characters began inhabiting it, they did not have the means
to maintain the space. Time and dirt had run down this world and it needed renovation. I told
her that I wanted texture mixed in with the paint treatment for the walls and that it needed to have a sharp and gritty feeling (Figure 1).

She was concerned with the paint treatment on the floor that I presented in the model. The floor treatment took up the majority of the stage floor and consisted of a tile pattern of thirty inch multi-colored squares. She loved the look of the floor and the various layers of dirt that it showed, but felt that it required a lot of line work and thought that she needed some help in laying out the pattern when the time came. I informed her that if I were not available to assist her with this, then Mitchell would be.

Our next scheduled meeting was on February 12, 2007. Earl had requested that I post my pictures of the model online so that he and Tim could reference them. I planned on having Mitchell act as my voice in the shop over the next few weeks since I would be preparing for KC/ACTF.
CHAPTER 4: THE PRODUCTION PROCESS

The Production Process Journal

Scenic Construction

January 26, 2007

Technical Director Michael Layton organized a build schedule that was very tight in its time management for the construction and painting process (Tables 6 – 8). His goal was to be finished with the build three weeks prior to tech week so that actors could be on the set earlier. This gave us an additional two weeks to install and troubleshoot all of the moving scenery and science fiction items that the design required. These included the robotic legs, the laboratory gadgets, and the moving platform we were planning to use instead of the elevator. Paint Charge Cynthia Dean was anxious to get started since she would be painting the entire set by herself, and had been busy preparing paint samples for the walls. After finishing a few samples, we found that adding sawdust into the paint created the gritty texture that I was trying to achieve (Figure 26).

The walls had been coming together quickly (Figures 23 and 24), and the catwalk was almost completed and Michael wanted to have it finished soon so that he could begin working on the robotic legs. I found out that we did not have enough stock railing to pull from storage, so he created a mock railing out of one by one lumber and Styrofoam for a modified design. This construction was preferable because the metal railing added too much weight; however, this solution was not accurate to the design because he enlarged the separation between the vertical supports. This caused the Styrofoam decoration to look gargantuan when compared to the metal
railing. Due to the tight build schedule, correcting this problem would not be possible (Figure 25).

My bridge research showed a large number of metal rivets with their construction, so for my scenic design, I incorporated these rivets onto the entire set (Figure 28). When the construction process had begun, there had yet to be a solution as to what material we were planning to use for the rivets and how we would adhere them to the set. Metal rivets or bolts would have been too costly for my limited budget, so instead we assigned two students the task of cutting up one-half inch pieces of ethafoam. When stapled to the scenery, the ethafoam created the look of metal rivets. This solution looked fantastic and saved a great deal of money in my budget. By the end of the day, we had a seven-gallon supply of rivets to apply to the walls (Figure 27).

Scenic Craftsperson Nikki Blue had assembled a team and had begun working on the curtain and Michael had transformed his craft and electrical workroom into a sewing studio so that they would have a clean space to work in. Once they had their entire materials ready, the crew started laying out the various bolts of fabric and calculating the necessary measurements (Figure 29).

January 29, 2007

Production Manager Kevin Rose contacted both the props crew and me about a motorized wheelchair he had found for Dr. Scott. Originally, we planned on using a standard wheelchair, because we thought that a motorized wheelchair would be too costly; but after Kevin did some research, he managed to find a used motorized wheelchair that was reasonably priced. This was a great addition to the show, but I worried about how it would affect the painted floor.
It could cause scratches in the paint treatment, and if Dr. Scott drove it too fast, she could easily get out of control and crash through a piece of scenery. I was also concerned that the wheelchair might break and we might not be able to afford a new one.

I met with Earl and talked about our need to shoot live video during the show. There were three times in the play where characters referenced a video monitor and originally we planned on having a separate area backstage to record these moments. As an alternative, I suggested that we could pre-record these scenes, since they played the same footage every performance. If we had these moments recorded, then we could layer in science fiction effects and eliminate any potential problems with recording live video. This included actors missing their entrances and technical issues of syncing the camera to the onstage monitor.

Earl approved and we scheduled a date to film the scenes closer to performance to assure that the costumes would be completed in time. I discussed this idea with my Design Assistant Mitchell Orben, who latched onto it with great enthusiasm. He aspired to be an Art Director in film and has had numerous experiences working on film shoots. Mitchell informed me that he would put together a film schedule after he had found a shooting location. Stephen Ricker, one of my students, told me that we could use his video camera and editing equipment for the shoot.

January 30, 2007

Professor Zachary Stribling sent me a picture of the preliminary layout for the curtains that Scenic Craftsperson Nikki Blue and her crew had put together. After studying it, I realized that they understood the basic design of the curtains, but were reserved in their disintegration of the fabric because the curtains still looked too new. Nikki had been successful with safety pinning and patching pieces of fabric together, but was reserved with her distressing. To
illustrate the design I wanted, I stopped by the theatre and began ripping up and shredding the fabric in her layout. From this demonstration, they began to understand the look I was trying to achieve and set to work distressing for the rest of the afternoon.

January 31, 2007

I had a long conversation with Professor Kyle Becker about my schedule for his Advanced Scene Painting class. The work load was quite heavy, and he suggested that I should tailor some of his assignments into my scenic design. One of his class assignments was a translucency project where I needed to paint a light box as if it were a glass surface. Since one of my early design inspirations was to include a stained glass window into the floorshow, I thought that I might be able to supplement this assignment. I felt that a stained glass window would be complementary to the design since we were introducing a gothic inspiration into our concept for the show.

February 2, 2007

In the shop, the build was on schedule. I was amazed at how quickly the construction of the set was progressing and how little I was assisting with the build. I shared my idea with Director Earl Weaver of adding a stained glass window into the floorshow and found him hesitant to include it. He felt that for our production, we might be overusing stained glass windows in the design since I planned on having one in the opening scene. I explained that it was something that we could cut from the design if it did not meet his standards. He allowed me to pursue the project for my class assignment, but wanted to see a sketch before he made his decision to put it into the show.
February 3, 2007

I spoke with Director Earl Weaver about my designs for the stained glass windows. For the opening of the show, I was using an image of a stained glass window that showed two priests getting intimate with an alter boy. Not wanting to offend people, I told Earl that I would change the image once I found an appropriate alternative. As I thought about the play more, the image of the two priests seemed to fit into our design concept. It combined the gospel and gothic approach that we were adapting with the sexual perversion found in the show. I asked Earl what he thought about keeping the original design and he agreed that it would be a perfect inclusion.

I also showed him my design for the floorshow stained glass window and with his approval I could now proceed to the next stage of its design. He still had not decided whether he wanted to include it into the floorshow, but he liked the direction that I was going. Considering how limited the window was with its construction, it would be challenging to paint. In order to create a translucent effect, the paint needed to be thinner and the bracing needed to be minimal. To avoid any issues with the translucency, I was going to attempt to use fabric dyes instead of traditional scenic paint. Professor Kyle Becker seemed to doubt the effectiveness of this technique, but he encouraged me to try.

February 5, 2007

Another change happened in the department’s production assignments. Kevin Rose was no longer acting as the theatre’s Production Manager and for the rest of the semester Professor Zachary Stribling would be filling in.
Choreographer Tim Ellis and I discussed the look for each scene so that he could begin thinking about dance movement. Toward the end of our conversation, he wanted to know if I had a lineset available downstage to fly in tambourines for Eddie’s song “Hot Patootie.” I told him that we did not have any available linesets that far downstage, but there might be a possibility of adding one above the apron.

February 6, 2007

I looked at the lighting position over the apron of our stage and discovered that I could rig the flying tambourines from there and contacted Lighting Designer George Jackson and his Assistant Eric Furbish. They were concerned that rigging the tambourines from there might hit lighting instruments during the show. After explaining that they would be far enough away from hitting any of their lighting instruments, they agreed that I could fly them from there. I then brought the idea up to Technical Director Michael Layton, who at this point, was cautious to add any more scenery into the build because our time schedule and budget were rapidly depleting. He asked me to consult Head Rigger Ryan Emens about creating the effect and after meeting with him, he had a few ideas to research.

February 7, 2007

I was in Americus, Georgia at KC/ACTF all week and received daily updates from my Design Assistant Mitchell Orben. The installation of the walls was successful, and construction had begun on the second level, down stage right. Paint Charge Cynthia Dean had been painting all week and had applied a base coat to the majority of the archways. Also, progress with the main curtain had been coming together, but was taking more time than expected.
February 12, 2007

We had our first production meeting for the show and it felt like such a long time since we have had any group contact. The scene shop finished the installation of the downstage walls, platforming, and equipped the spiral staircase. Due to the shallow nature of the staircase, actors needed to duck under the second level platform to avoid hitting their heads. The installation of the first stripper pole was completed and so that people could slide down from it, Technical Director Michael Layton spent the latter part of the afternoon securing it to the set. When I visited the shop, I noticed that downstage archways were not symmetrical to themselves. I pointed out this error at the production meeting and Michael explained that at this point, they did not have the time to fix such an unnoticeable error.

Statues were a big part of the meeting today. My Design Assistant Mitchell Orben has had numerous meetings with Production Manager Zachary Stribling, Technical Director Michael Layton, and Professor Kyle Becker to brainstorm ideas on how to engineer the statues. He investigated different mannequin and Styrofoam companies to see how much they would be if we purchased them. With time running out, Zachary was concerned that we had not made a decision on how the statues would be built. Mitchell suggested that we look at a fellow student’s portfolio who had requested to carve the statues out of plaster and I was not sure if I could trust such an important element to someone whose work I hardly knew.

Sound Designer Martin Wootton requested to meet with me and discuss onstage speaker placement. He was incredibly enthusiastic about the sound of the show and wanted to place many speakers onstage. Martin wanted to make them a part of the scenery just as we had done with the lighting instruments and I was concerned with how this element would impact my
design because it never occurred to me that they would be seen. Knowing that we needed a strong sound for the production, I agreed to meet with him later in the week.

The first rehearsal for The Rocky Horror Show took place. We started the rehearsal with a design presentation to the cast. Everyone was ecstatic to see each of the designs and we could not wait to get started. I stuck around afterward and listened to the cast read through the script with the new musical arrangement.

February 13, 2007

I met Sound Designer Martin Wootton onstage and noticed that he had prepared for our meeting by pulling a few of his old speakers from storage. These speakers did not necessarily sound great, but had a look he thought I might like. I let him place them where he felt they would have the best audio and we were going to shift their locations from there. He placed them downstage left and right, which upstaged the laboratory and Narrator areas and I immediately felt that they were out of place. I voiced my concern and we shifted them around the stage a few more times.

After agreeing on a position, I had a gut instinct that kept telling me that their placement conflicted with my scenic design. I did not want to let Martin down, because I knew how enthusiastic he was about this scenic element, but its current position simply would not work with the show. Technical Director Michael Layton came onstage and assisted us in finding an appropriate placement, upstage of the center platform. I told him that stacking these three speakers vertically on each side of the platform, reminded me of a boom-box. To me, this location made more sense, because the band was going to be performing right above them.
Michael then asked me about the blast-off platform and wondered if I still wanted it to move upward at the end. I felt making the platform move upward was a fantastic idea since it was one of the first effects I wanted to implement into the design. Michael informed me that he could not make the platform move straight up, but could design a ramp that moved the platform upwards in a diagonal direction. I encouraged him to pursue this option and both he and Head Rigger Ryan Emens started working on it.

Ryan had also been experimenting with the tambourine rig. He showed me a crank that he constructed out of plywood and explained how he would run tie-line across the apron pipe that would suspend the tambourines. We did not want the tambourines to be down for the entire song, but wanted to make them magically appear in a split second. The ability to get them to the stage floor on cue was paramount. Ryan assured me that the engineering of the crank would make the tambourines fly in quickly and in unison.

February 16, 2007

There had been a great deal of production work completed this week. My assistant Mitchell Orben and I met with Lighting Designer George Jackson and his Assistant Eric Furbish to discuss where to place his onstage lighting instruments. George was extraordinarily excited about this production and was full of ideas after starting his light plot. First, we discussed the possibility of adding chasing Christmas lights to the archways. By adding lights to the inside of each arch, he felt that we could enhance the floorshow by creating a different look. I thought that this was a fantastic idea, but was concerned with how visible they would be when they not illuminated. I did not want the audience staring at the archway lights for the entire show in anticipation for them to light up, because they differed from the ethafoam rivets. Also the scene
shop would have to drill numerous holes into each archway in order to install them. Before approving of such a drastic change, I requested that George and Eric draw up a sample so I could see what they would look like. Production Electrician Mathew Brandt agreed to conduct this test by painting the holiday lights with flat black spray paint to see if he could make them resemble the rivets.

George then asked where we could place all of his moving lights. He wanted to mount two onto the stage floor in front of the Narrator and laboratory areas but I felt that they would interfere with actor movement. The cast would already be struggling with moving around footlights and ducking a spiral staircase, so I felt that having the moving lights placed here would not work. George also wanted to mount two moving lights to the truss of the false catwalk. Considering the catwalk was not functional, I asked George to rethink that placement as well. I was concerned that the weight and movement from these lights might cause the catwalk to swing back and forth, making it too distracting. Also, since the catwalk was still a sightline concern, I was not sure when the catwalk would be in.

We moved on, and George told me that he wanted to blind the audience at various moments throughout the show. He mentioned that a great deal of rock-n-roll shows relied heavily on flashing the audience with light and that he wanted to achieve the same effect in his design. To accommodate, we discussed adding strip lights to two areas of the stage. One would be placed underneath the center staircase that would both work as set dressing and create the desired blinding effect. The other addition would be across the top of the band platform. He also planned on using these lights for the show’s finale and hoped they would help create the effect of the castle blasting off. I jumped at the opportunity of adding this light to the set, but was concerned with its placement. Adding strip lights onto the already cramped band platform
would block many entrances and exits. After discussing this more, we decided to attach the strip lights to the front facing of the platform, which would be out of the way for the majority of the actors. The only two that it would affect would be Magenta and Riff Raff, who would be riding the moving platform.

The final effect that George wanted to discuss today, involved cutting two rectangular holes into the front facing of the center stage platform. He wanted to place lighting instruments behind these holes that he would use to blind the audience. In order to cut these holes out, I needed to figure out a way to incorporate them into the scenic design. Our scene shop had a sheet of diamond-grated expanded steel that I originally wanted to place somewhere on the set. I discussed the possibility of filling these openings with the expanded steel, but worried that the lights would not be as effective with the obstruction. George felt that the expanded steel would work even better, considering the amount of haze he planned on using in the show. The diamond-patterned break-up would cause the light and to split into multiple shafts that would be visible through the haze.

We discussed all of these lighting additions with Technical Director Michael Layton, and he agreed to help facilitate most of them. He would not drill the holes for the archway lights, but agreed to cut the rectangular openings into the center platform, add the expanded steel, and assist with installing the strip light onto the band platform. Our conversation then shifted to the placement of the chandelier. We had decided that it was entirely too large and heavy to be included into the scenic design, but discussed hanging it over the audience to use as a type of house light. This concerned me because the bottom of this two hundred pound chandelier had a set of sharp spikes that would be placed over the audience for the entire show (Figure 34). I decided to wait until the production meeting and get feedback from the rest of the design team.
Scenically, the installation and painting of the downstage walls had been completed (Figures 30 and 31), but the interiors of these openings remained unpainted. Since the curtains cover the archways for the majority of the show, I was not too worried with their detailing; however, I needed to decide on a design so that the audience would not be staring at a black wall.

There was a test hang for the punk rock curtain and overall, it looked great. It turned out to be heavier than I expected which worried me with how we planned to use it during the floorshow. We wanted the curtain to raise and lower with each character’s entrance during the floorshow, and the added weight may make the transitions look choppy. It also felt odd that I had designed the center of the curtain higher than the two off stage sides, but because the drape needed to wrap around the center platforming, it was the best solution.

After consulting with the shop, I met for the evening’s weekly production meeting. We discussed all of the lighting additions with the production team and everyone agreed that they would work. They thought that moving the chandelier was a great idea, but was concerned with its interference with the house video monitor. Since the musical director was so far upstage, he planned to give music cues to the actors through the television monitor at the back of the audience. The addition of this chandelier might block the monitor for the majority of the performers, but this caused little concern because Earl felt confident that everyone would know the music well enough prior to opening. A later date will be scheduled to test hang the chandelier.

The shop installed Eddie’s trap door and Michael warned everyone to be aware that the hinges were raised higher than the stage floor. Michael suggested that anyone who went through the trap door should stop by and see how to use it to assure safety. They also needed to be aware of how heavy the trap door was because the shop framed it out of steel.
February 19, 2007

Choreographer Tim Ellis requested dance numbers on the front of the stage. The purpose of dance numbers was so that the actors could line up across the stage accurately with every performance. I did not approve of this addition because I felt that the appearance of numbers painted on the floor took me out of the rock-n-roll concept. I knew that in some musicals, dance numbers had proved quite useful, but for a rock opera, we needed to figure out another solution.

Instead of dance numbers, I requested that we use the footlights that were across the front of the stage, because they would be spaced evenly across the apron. We compromised by deciding to use the footlights as markers, but add dance numbers behind them. It would be something the actors could see, but would remain hidden from the audience.

February 26, 2007

It had been a week since I heard anything from the shop, so I checked in on them today to see how the construction was going. Technical Director Michael Layton had removed the rectangular sections from the center platform and placed pipes inside to hang lighting instruments. It was a shocking to see these elements removed and I hoped that it would work after I had cut them from the design so easily. The expanded steel had yet to be added, so I still felt nervous with how the finished product would look.

I checked in with Production Electrician Mathew Brandt who had put together a sample for the archway lights. The bulbs appeared slightly larger than the rivets, but painting them black helped in alleviating the problem. He plugged a strand of lights into a wall socket and I noticed that were much brighter than I thought they would be. Mathew told me that he could add
more paint to the light bulbs, and that he doubted that Lighting Designer George Jackson would ever have them programmed at their full intensity. I decided to proceed with this course of action and the archway lights should be finished by next week.

My Design Assistant Mitchell Orben was still working on a solution for the statues and Production Manager Zachary Stribling was concerned about getting them completed in time. I told them that if a solution had not been made by the following day, that I would cut them from the show and would design a painted flat to use instead. Mitchell did not want to have the statues cut, so he agreed to do more research and present everyone with a solution by tomorrow.

The shop was installing the drape that I planned to use for my tableau curtain and I spent the rest of the day assisting them with its look. I could not alter this curtain because it was part of our theatre’s inventory; however, I could keep it permanently tabbed open by tying it off to the batten. Michael and I discussed different options of what would look best for our production and found a few dilemmas. The curtain was not as full as I hoped, and it was creating a sightline problem for the upstage lighting. If we tabbed the curtain out too far, then the audience would be able to see the numbers on the electric. If we did not tab the curtain out far enough, then it created a sightline issue for the upstage action and interfered with the upstage moving lights. We decided to keep the curtain tabbed out to its furthest position and would later create a valence to hide the exposed dimmer numbers.

February 27, 2007

I did not hear from my Design Assistant Mitchell Orben for the majority of the day and decided to cut the statues. In their place, I spent the afternoon researching and designing the images that I wanted Paint Charge Cynthia Dean to apply in place of the statues. The shop
seemed happy with my decision to cut the statues and Cynthia liked the potential of adding this design element to her portfolio.

February 28, 2007

I heard from my Design Assistant Mitchell Orben and he was shocked that I cut the statues from the show. He began regurgitating construction techniques that we had discussed for months in order to keep them included and again, brought up the possibility of having a fellow classmate sculpt them out of plaster. Since I wanted the statues to look like polished marble, I had avoided constructing them out of plaster because I felt they would have turned out too rough. At this point, I decided to give him the benefit of the doubt, knowing that I had another design option if I needed to cut them from the show again.

Chantry Banks, the actor playing Eddie came by the shop and looked at how to operate the trap door. He was concerned with the stairs beneath it being too steep, and requested a ramp for easier access. Since I was negligent in thinking about the movement underneath the trap, I told him that there would not be enough room for a ramp. If I had not added the lighting instruments or the moving platform beneath it, then there might have been enough space.

I attended a designer run and was ecstatic to see how the actors were using the set. The singing was powerful and the chemistry in the cast was undeniable. During the run, I helped Director Earl Weaver with the look of the car scene. I requested that we add in some stage action from the offstage Ushers. Brad and Janet were lingering in the same spot on stage for so long, that it began to get boring. To liven up the action, I suggested that we should use the other Ushers as moving scenery behind Brad and Janet while they remained stationary. Earl loved the idea and began to stage it. He blocked one Usher to walk behind Brad and Janet carrying a
“Now Leaving Denton” sign, followed by another with a rain cloud. The final two came on together, carrying the tree that Brad backed the car into and the lighting bolt that started the thunderstorm. I wanted to include this bit since creating my design concept, but I had been afraid to suggest it because I did not want to make it seem that I was trying to direct the show. This addition completely changed the feeling of the scene and reinforced the concept that the Ushers were manipulating Brad and Janet.

I spoke with Lighting Designer George Jackson about how he planned on lighting Brad’s song “Once in a While,” and he told me that he was approaching it with a somber feeling. He felt that since the song was the only serious one in the show that it needed to have a different look. I agreed that this song was different from the others in the show and mentioned that because of this, it was usually cut from other productions. Since it was so different and felt out of place, I asked if we could include a mirror ball into the scene to give it the same cheesiness as the rest of the songs in the production. In creating my design concept, I listened to this song numerous times, and tried to figure out a way to make it relevant. After seeing how Director Earl Weaver and Choreographer Tim Ellis staged the song with the inclusion of multiple sight gags, adding a mirror ball would make the song more comical. George agreed to try it once we got into tech week.

I paid great attention to how Dr. Scott was getting on and offstage tonight, because I was concerned with the limited amount of space she had to move her wheelchair. There were only two places to enter from, and I was glad at how effectively she was using them. After watching her performance, I was thrilled that we decided to use a motorized wheelchair for the show instead of a standard one. I saw the actor playing Dr. Scott spin around in an office chair during
rehearsal and the choreographed movement was hilarious. I hoped that the wheelchair would be just as responsive as she was making her stage movements.

March 1, 2007

I made the decision to head to the South Eastern Theatre Conference held in Atlanta, Georgia. Held every year, this conference presented numerous theatre workshops, as well as a large job fair primarily based for summer employment in the theatre arts. This conference was happening just before spring break and would put me away from school March 7 – 11, 2007. My Design Assistant Mitchell Orben and I planned to attend this conference and we decided to spend the week afterward finishing up our scenic notes.

Mitchell and I were planning to meet Lighting Designer George Jackson, Production Electrician Mathew Brandt, and Technical Director Michael Layton at Skycraft, a local electronic components store. There, we planned to purchase the scientific components that we intended to use for the set dressing and the laboratory creation box. For our production, the laboratory creation box was what Riff Raff manipulated when bringing Rocky to life. Michael agreed to loan us his programmable logic control box, hereafter referred to as a PLC box, to facilitate these science fiction effects. The PLC box was capable of programming numerous sequences into a series of levers and switches that would create the desired effect.

March 2, 2007

I met the group at Skycraft without my Design Assistant Mitchell Orben. Something had come up and Mitchell was unable to meet us until later. I wanted his input on buying some of
these materials, since he was helping with the set dressing for the laboratory. I did not want to waste everyone else’s time, so I decided to move forward without him.

In my scenic design I drafted a three foot by four foot flat that would be adapted with the addition of levers and pulleys. We started with a budget of one hundred dollars and had an hour to shop and discuss the sequencing that needed to be added to the flat. Technical Director Michael Layton, Production Electrician Mathew Brandt and I went aisle by aisle and grabbed numerous items that we thought would work. Unexpectedly, it seemed that all of the pieces that we were grabbing were well out of our price range because they were all functioning. What we needed was the appearance of these gadgets, not necessarily the gadgets themselves.

As a result, we ended up picking up the items that we could not build, such as LED lights, pieces of plexiglass, gauges, etc. and would build the other items in the shop, such as pulleys, levers, and dials. After we spent some time discussing and pulling these items, Lighting Designer George Jackson showed up to share a few of his ideas. Overall he wanted to add a few more lights to the design, but was concerned that he would not have any control over them. If we used the PLC box that Michael was providing, the effects would be completely in control of the actor. George wanted to make sure that we installed an on and off switch to assure that the lights would be turned off after the scene.

Mitchell showed up as we were checking out and began questioning why we left a large number of items on the shelf. He felt that there were certain pieces of equipment that we could not go without and I had to explain that we simply did not have the budget to add anything more. The items he was requesting were way out of our budget and we needed to find another solution.

With Michael and George both present, we brainstormed a solution that would work for everyone. Upstage, above the laboratory archway, we decided to add a small grid where we
could add lights and other pieces of science equipment to help with the set dressing. Mitchell wanted to design a large ray gun that could lower on a hoist during the creation of Rocky. I felt that a ray gun might be a little too much for the scene, considering we planned on having two functioning Jacob’s Ladders, a light-up plunger and a functioning laboratory creation box.

Michael did not mind these additions, as long as he did not have to rig any of the set dressing or lighting instruments. I told Mitchell to make sure that George had the first choice with placing of his lighting instruments and to proceed with his ray gun design. I originally asked Mitchell to help with the set dressing for the laboratory, and this provided an opportunity for him add something to the design.

Later that afternoon, Michael had both the archway and proscenium curtains installed, but they were not yet functional. He designed a motor to electronically control move the curtains in a show earlier this year and I used this idea as inspiration when designing the curtains for our production. The actors would begin rehearsing onstage next week, and Michael had planned on providing them a space to rehearse, but many of the functioning items, such as the curtains, were not going to be available until the first technical rehearsal.

Toward the end of the day, we brought out the flat that I planned on using for the base of the laboratory creation box and began laying out the various items we had purchased to make sure that we had enough (Figure 35). At first glance it looked a little scarce, but I was sure that adding paint and dimensioning to it would help make the box look more complete. I told Michael that I planned on working out a sketch and sequencing of the effects over the weekend and the he should have something to begin working on by Monday.
March 3, 2007

During the light focus, I stopped by the theatre to answer any questions that Lighting Designer George Jackson might have had concerning the scenery and the trim heights of a few of the linesets that needed to fly during the show. Having the curtains in place helped him a lot with his design questions relating to his color and texture choices. I ended up going to lunch with the focus crew and spent the rest of the afternoon sitting in the audience sketching out ideas for the laboratory creation box (Figure 8).

After finishing my sketch, I began testing the motorized wheelchair. I tried to enter through the laboratory door stage left, and thought that it felt a little cramped to get on stage safely. I almost drove the wheelchair off of the apron and the actress playing Dr. Scott was going to need some practice before perfecting this entrance. She would probably need offstage assistance with getting the wheelchair placed correctly and would need someone to open the door for her when it came time for her to come onstage. I also discovered that Dr. Scott’s upstage entrance was going to be difficult to navigate as well. She would probably end up moving the tabbed curtain with her exit because she needed to make a ninety-degree turn in order to get around the center platform safely.

March 5, 2007

In anticipation of the actors’ arrival that evening, I helped with eliminating a few scenic safety concerns. The majority of the scenery that the actors touched was steel, so we had to make sure that there were not any sharp edges protruding that they could cut themselves on. The shop applied padding to places that we felt actors could hit their heads and cleared the majority
of the backstage to ensure safe entrances and exits. We also hoisted the piano up onto the band platform.

Technical Director Michael Layton and I discussed my design for the laboratory creation box. He told me that the sequencing I requested could be done, but would require a lot of time to program; because of that, we could not add anything to the sequencing once the box was completed. I had to be sure that these particular effects were the ones that I wanted. We went over the sequence, step by step, and decided that it would work.

That evening, we had a production meeting prior to rehearsal and discussed the recent scenic changes. I talked about the progress of the statues, which transformed from three-dimensional sculptures to a three-quarter bas relief so they could be attached to the walls. We then discussed the schedule for the film shoot. My Design Assistant Mitchell Orben told us that we needed to give a forty-eight hour notice to the film department to guarantee us a spot on their soundstage. After talking to Harmony and the costume shop, they believed we could schedule the shoot right before tech week began, on March 19, 2007. I asked Mitchell to meet with Director Earl Weaver and discuss the basic look of the shoot and I left it up to him to provide the Art Direction since he had the most experience with it.

I then brought up another issue I discovered during rehearsals. When watching an earlier run through, I noticed that Riff Raff was unrealistically pulling the sonic transducer out of thin air, and since this prop was too large to hide on the actor, we needed to find a location on the set from which to pull it. To solve this problem, we talked about adding a hidden shelf to the stage left laboratory wall that would conceal this weapon. Michael wished that he had known about this earlier, because this involved cutting a hole into a finished set piece that was already
cramped for space. He felt that after he cut a hole into the wall that it would not look like a hidden compartment, and that set dressing and paint needed to help conceal it.

The actors were onstage for the first time tonight and Michael was at rehearsal to give them a walk through of the set. Instead of having a run through, the rehearsal was primarily used as a rough spacing of the musical numbers and marking the locations of when the actors were on different levels of the set. It was fantastic to see them rehearse on stage and I was glad that they were able to shift over from the rehearsal hall so early. There was still a lot left to do in terms of set dressing and painting, but I thought that the heart of the show was starting to present itself. I noticed how much Earl had blocked the actors on the band platform which solved the concern I had been having about the flying catwalk. I decided that I would have it flown in for Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter’s first entrance, but it needed to be flown out for the rest of the show. There was too much action taking place upstage that would have presented too many sightline problems if we left the catwalk in.

March 9, 2007

I was in Atlanta, Georgia at the South Eastern Theatre Conference and it was nice to be away from the show; however I kept contemplating all of the work that I could accomplish if I was back in Florida. I received a report from the last production meeting. The majority of the meeting discussed the blast off sequence in relation to the band arches. Despite attempts to communicate it, Sound Designer Martin Wootton was unaware that the arches in front of the musicians flew out at the end of the show. He was concerned that the force of the arches flying out would hit the musicians’ musical instruments and Martin did not want to hear any complaints. This was an important aspect to my design and I was glad to hear that Zachary and
Michael planned to test fly the arches before making the final decision. It was an interesting dynamic working with a Sound Designer who was as interested in participating in the scenic design as Mr. Wootton was.

March 10, 2007

Technical Director Michael Layton updated me that he and Master Rigger Ryan Emens test hung the chandelier and made sure that it would work. It was extraordinarily heavy, but once in place it would not move an inch. They sent me a few images to show me how it would block the house monitor that displayed the conductor before taking it down to adjust their cabling and finish all of the necessary wiring that was required to make the lights work.

March 16, 2007

Spring break began Friday, March 9, 2007 and Monday, March 12, I devoted a great deal of time to working in the scene shop. Technical Director Michael Layton had finished the preliminary look of the laboratory creation box and we went step by step through the sequencing. He made a few changes based on the functionality of his PLC box, but the sequencing worked with the scripted lines.

Design Assistant Mitchell Orben had been busy building the ray gun for the laboratory; however, I did not like his design. The scrapped together elements he had found in the scene shop to build it resulted in a poor outcome. If it did not improve I would need to rethink its inclusion.

The sculptor was nearing completion with the statues and they were not matching my vision. They were designed to look like polished marble, but were currently looking like rough
cement. Due to the time crunch in getting these completed quickly, it might be necessary for me to accept this outcome.

I had been assisting the props department with their work list because there was still a lot to do and I felt that they were falling behind. Very little was completed and the majority of it did not match my design. I shared research and documentation with both Beth DeCarlo and William Boles, but the results had been disappointing. I was concerned that I had not communicated my design well. During Beth and William’s absence over spring break, I decided to take on some of the prop construction.

Paint Charge Cynthia Dean was meeting with me tomorrow and we were going to layout the floor grid pattern. It was a large floor so I expected that it would take the majority of the day. My hope was that Mitchell would be finished with the ray gun and could assist us with the floor. Lighting would be writing cues all day, so the layout of the floor would need to take place during frequent shifts in light levels.

March 17, 2007

I needed to cut the ray gun that Design Assistant Mitchell Orben was working on (Figure 39). The aesthetics did not align with my design and he had created it so large that we would not be able to hide it when we needed to. I asked him to put the project aside and help with painting, but he adamantly wanted to revise the ray gun.

Paint Charge Cynthia Dean and I decided to split layout of the floor and she was moving much quicker than I was, because I was to continually checking on other projects. Mitchell would call me into the scene shop to see his new ray gun designs and Lighting Designer George Jackson would call me to the back of the theatre to view some of the lighting looks he created.
Beth had also shown up to present me new props that she had found. I looked at these items and felt they were finally heading in the right direction, but still needed a lot of work.

Cynthia had finished laying out her side of the floor and was waiting for me to finish mine. Due to the constant interruptions, I asked her if she could assist with laying out my side of the floor since she was waiting for me to finish mine before moving on. She felt that since she had finished her half she was not planning to finish mine. Frustration got the better of me and I lost my temper. After taking a break, I apologized to Cynthia for my tantrum, and made sure that I would apologize to the artistic staff in the coming week. She accepted my apology and agreed to continue laying out the floor while I spent the rest of the afternoon helping props.

Tech week was getting closer and I think the stress of what I needed to accomplish started to get the better of me. The layout of the floor, finishing up props, and getting the rest of the set decoration completed before the end of the week were large tasks that remained. I recognized that my temper got out of control because I tended to become too absorbed in my projects. I spent so much time trying to please everyone with my decisions that I ended up bottling a lot of frustration that exploded. This unprofessionalism was inexcusable, and where I felt bad at acting out as I did, I was glad that I recognized this about myself. In the future, I planned to not take such personal investments in my projects and communicate more effectively with my design team. To quote what UCF Theatre Professor Mark Brotherton often said, “This was a play, not a serious.”

March 18, 2007

I asked my Design Assistant Mitchell Orben to focus on the more important set dressing still needed for the laboratory rather than continue his work on the ray gun. We needed a place
to store Rocky’s barbells that he used during the song “I Can Make You a Man,” as well as other scientific gizmos to help establish the laboratory. He designed a few shelves out of the remaining expanded steel and began attaching them to the wall.

Before leaving today, I designed and completed the sonic transducer gun. This prop needed the false shelf, so having it ready ahead of time would let us know what size to make the opening. I made it from an existing water pistol and added gadgets, phalli, and knobs. It was my favorite prop so far and looked exactly how I envisioned it would.

Choreographer Tim Ellis attended the music rehearsal this afternoon and made a major announcement. Director Earl Weaver injured his back and needed emergency surgery that has left him bed-ridden and incapacitated for several weeks. This included all technical rehearsals and possibly every performance as well. Tim was going to take over the remaining rehearsals while he received advice from other colleagues from the department. I did not have the same working relationship with Tim that I had with Earl and I hoped that he would not make any major changes to the design.

March 19, 2007

This was our first rehearsal without Director Earl Weaver and all of the principle characters could not attend, because my Design Assistant Mitchell Orben and I scheduled the film shoot for that evening. Costume Designer Harmony McChesney had been frantically trying to get the costumes finished all weekend and we were still missing a few of the actor’s wigs. Since this was the only time that we could shoot the scene, we would have to proceed with what was finished.
In a redeeming fashion, Mitchell pleasantly surprised me by his organization of the film shoot. He emailed everyone the schedule for the day and worked all afternoon at the soundstage putting the design together with set pieces he pulled from storage. Stephen Ricker was ready with his video camera and I ended up directing the scene. I thought Mitchell would have taken over due to his experience, but all eyes turned to me when we needed to progress with the shoot.

While filming, Stephen showed me a few of the editing effects he had on his computer and we talked through the design of the scenes. The film shoot went smoothly and Stephen told me that he would have a rough edit for me to look at soon.

March 20, 2007

This afternoon, Stephen Ricker presented me with a DVD from the film shoot and I did a test run with it on the onstage video monitor. The scenes that Stephen had put together were perfect. He considered them a rough edit that we could improve upon, but after I saw them, I thought everything would work just the way it was. In reviewing the video, I discovered that the T.V. monitor I designed into the show had a color balancing issue. This caused everything that was supposed to be in black and white to come out bright pink. Sound Designer Martin Wootton who had taken on the task of hooking up our video had offered to fix it; but I felt that it fit into the aesthetic of the show, so I asked him to keep it the way it was.

Technical Director Michael Layton showed me the finished laboratory creation box (Figure 36) and demonstrated the sequencing. It worked exactly how I had planned it to and it provided a convincing effect. Michael agreed to stick around and show the actor playing Riff Raff the order in which to press everything.
During the rehearsal, Lighting Designer George Jackson showed me some of his light cues. He and his Assistant Eric Furbish worked hard on programming over spring break and the show looked fantastic. It was going to be a difficult show for the Stage Manager to call accurately, but I was sure that it would be fantastic.

March 21, 2007

The scene shop was full of uncompleted objects that still needed to be added to the set. The statues were ready to be placed and painted, but I was still concerned with how they looked. I should have addressed my concerns a few weeks ago, but at this point I did not feel that I could cut them from the show.

The Jacob’s Ladder was also ready for paint and needed to be added to the laboratory creation box sequence. It looked fantastic once it was running and provided a powerful spark. The actors needed to be aware of the electrical spark when acting out the scene to make sure they were safe. To make sure there would not be a problem with this, Technical Director Michael Layton had sealed the electrical prongs into a glass case, so that actors would not accidentally hit it.

The robotic legs were not yet functional and Michael was devoting a lot of time to getting them finished. I was not sure if we would be able to see them, because Lighting Designer George Jackson and his Assistant Eric Furbish did not have any available instruments to light them. Production Manager Zachary Stribling and Michael Layton performed a test fly of the band arches today to see if there would be a problem with them hitting the musicians or their instruments. They agreed that there would not be a problem with flying them out, but spotters
needed to assist when it was flown back in and planned on adding blocks to the band platform to assure musician safety.

March 22, 2007

We had the final rehearsal before the official start of tech week and we had been introducing finished scenic elements and props. Riff Raff ran the sequence of the laboratory creation box for the first time and I discovered that the placement of the Jacob’s Ladder did not work in the sequencing. I had added it to the final knife switch to spawn the creation, but in actuality, the blocking dictated that Rocky got up before the knife switch was ever thrown. I emailed Technical Director Michael Layton and requested that he change it so that it would come on earlier and then turn off when the final knife switch was thrown.

We had been using an oversized remote control as a prop for discovering the scenes on the T.V. monitor and we needed to find a location to store it on the set. After talking with Props Master Beth DeCarlo and my Design Assistant Mitchell Orben, I decided to rig the back of the remote control with magnets so that we could attach it to the wall.

Paper Tech

March 23, 2007

Lighting Designer George Jackson and I met with Stage Manager Hannah Kugelmann in the kitchen of the University’s Tech Center to go over Paper Tech. Paper Tech was simply recording specific cues (lighting, sound, fly, etc.) into the Stage Manager’s book so that they know when to call them during the show. In my experience at UCF, Paper Techs had typically
taken between one and two hours, depending on the number of cues that were the show. Our paper tech took close to five hours.

It was interesting to hear all of the light cues that George had written. Our production was only an hour long without an intermission, but he had pre-programmed well over two hundred lighting cues before we had gone into tech week. In addition to his lighting cues, I was including multiple fly cues, as well as moments when the electronic curtains needed to raise and lower. I was excited to see how all of this would look when it was all put together, but I had a feeling that the weekend was going to be a long one.

The evening’s rehearsal was the last one scheduled before cue-to-cue tomorrow. The run crew was present to observe what we refer to as “crew watch.” It gave the run crew the opportunity to see the show before they added their technical contributions. George was running a lot of his light cues during rehearsal and impressed everyone with how they looked. It was the first time I had seen his lighting look for the floorshow and I liked how effective the archway lights were.

It was in seeing how George had lit the floorshow that inspired me to change my design. The Rocky stained glass window (Figure 57) was originally going to be placed behind Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter, for his “Cleopatra” moment, but the lighting upstage was so incredibly dark, that the window would not have the chance to be illuminated; I felt the lack of translucency would have made it look out of place. I could have asked George to change the lighting for the scene, but he had built his cue so well, that any changes would have destroyed his lighting look. I felt that if we substituted the mirror ball for the stained glass window, it would be more effective. With the amount of haze that George was putting into the air, we would see each beam of light from the mirror ball to stunning results.
Having cut the stained glass window from the floorshow, I needed to find another place to include it. Musical Director Kip Taisey had rewritten the music to Rocky’s song “The Sword of Damocles,” to have a gospel feel and I was curious if I could fly it in during this song. Choreographer Tim Ellis had staged a moment during this song where the Ushers headed up to the steps of the center platform and clapped their hands as if they were in a gospel choir. It was at that moment I wanted to fly in the window. Scenic Advisor Vandy Wood, George, and Tim all loved the idea and wanted to try it during tech.

Technical Rehearsals

March 24, 2007

Although I had been nervous about working with Choreographer Tim Ellis, I found the exchange of ideas between Lighting Designer George Jackson, Tim, and I was an incredibly productive process. I slipped in a few ideas to help choreograph the scenic transitions that Tim was trying to create and I began to feel more successful with the design of the show.

For example, we were spending far too much time getting the car unit on and off of the stage. There was a lag in transition time and it was not working. I suggested that since we had the church stained glass window covered with a drop cloth at the opening of the show, we could cover the other scenery onstage as well. This would reinforce the idea of a science fiction laboratory since many of the films I researched often featured drop cloths before revealing either medical experiments or monstrous creations. If we did this, the laboratory creation box, naked statues, television, Narrator’s chair, and car seat, could all be onstage at the opening of the show and slowly become revealed as we arrived at new areas. This idea worked with the flow of the
show and solved a lot of the concerns that had been plaguing me since the actors took the stage.

These new drop cloths would add new blocking for the Ushers; I had asked my Design Assistant Mitchell Orben to work on them so that they would be ready for tomorrow’s rehearsal.

I think the reason that the rehearsal went so well was because we started with the items that we anticipated would give us the most trouble during tech. With the difficult moments out of the way, the simpler ones would run smoother and we would not be spending the majority of the week trying to figure them out. We teched the blast off sequence first, since it had the most technical involvement. Tim gave George and me his trust in creating this moment, because he did not know what we discussed with Director Earl Weaver. The moment was quite involved: four items needed to fly simultaneously (the flying catwalk, the band arches, the cyc, and the main drape), along with the addition of fog, sound, lighting, moving archway curtains, and a moving platform. At the same time, three bodies were lying onstage which needed to be dragged off and two actors had to prepare for their ascent on the moving platform.

Our first attempt was somewhat successful, even though the actors playing Magenta and Riff Raff were a little shaky on the moving platform. Everything flew out at once and the main curtain hit the deck with the final drum hit. The overall look of this moment had everything I wanted to include from its design, but I felt the order that in which it occurred did not work. Instead of flying everything at once, the production team discussed the possibility of flying each item one at a time, in conjunction with the ascent of the moving platform. The platform’s movement would begin when Riff Raff started to sing his final note, and as the actors moved upward, the catwalk would fly out. This would be followed by the band arches, then the cyc, with a beat between each cue. Once the cyc had cleared the stage and before the final drum hit of the song, the main drape would then fly into the stage deck capping off the crescendo. We
reset the scene and ran this new sequence three times with each attempt getting better and better. The actors were becoming more comfortable on the platform, the people flying the scenery had more grace to their movements, and Hannah was getting better at calling the cues.

The lighting for the blast off sequence was very different from how I envisioned it. I was expecting the moment to darken as the castle ascended into night, but George took a different approach with his design. The lighting mimicked that of the space shuttle launch pad just before a nighttime liftoff. He bathed the stage in bright white light that built in a crescendo with the music. The overall look of set and lights caused goose bumps to form on the back of my neck.

After successfully teching this, we moved on to the next difficult moment in the show, the floorshow. This was the “Cleopatra” moment and required a lot of curtain movement. As each character prepared for their solo in the song, the curtain would rise to reveal the character transformed into their new self. They would move downstage as the curtain flew back in, so that the next character could prepare for their entrance. Once all four actors were in place, the stage would be set with the mirror ball, chaise lounge, and feathered set dressing for Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter’s “Cleopatra” reveal.

Once we rehearsed this, I realized that having the curtain rise and fall constantly was too clunky in its presentation. I felt that this left little suspense for the “Cleopatra” reveal and the moment felt jarring as the technician lacked the grace to fly the curtain in consistently. Instead of flying the curtain for each character, we decided to leave it down for the start of the scene. We would then assign two backstage technicians to part the curtain in the middle as if it were a tableau curtain, revealing the actor inside the opening. Once the actor was through, the curtain would then fall and we would prepare for the next character to enter. After all four actors were downstage, the curtain would then fly out revealing the “Cleopatra” moment.
This new idea gave more time to set-up the appropriate set dressing for Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter’s entrance and allowed the mirror ball to be flown in more slowly. If the mirror ball came in too quickly it would shake, causing rays of light to bounce up and down during Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter’s song which would be incredibly distracting. Indeed this moment was so different from what was presented in the movie that Earl would have been proud. Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter was revealed like a God being fanned by his slave boys and it provided a powerful image to the scene. It showed the height of Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter’s dominance right before his servants strip him of his power.

The rest of the day went by easily as we moved cue to cue. Most of our adjustments dealt with timing and Hannah simply needed to work out when she called her cues. For the majority of the afternoon, Mitchell had been busy preparing the drop cloths in the shop and assisting with the smaller prop notes. Paint Charge Cynthia Dean came in towards the end of the day and she and I spent the evening finishing the floor. Cynthia and I seemed to be getting along better than we were last week. To apologize for my outburst, I told her she could add a personal detail to the hidden compartment that we had added to hide the sonic transducer, which she greatly appreciated. I also told Mitchell that he needed to add his own touch to the set. The trap door that Eddie popped out of was ugly on the underside and I asked if he could design a stencil to make it look like a refrigerator. He was excited about this task and he spent the evening designing a biohazard graffiti symbol that included a punk rock inspired gas mask. Mitchell had shown incredible focus this week and I was starting to trust his judgment more and love the ideas and commitment he was now exhibiting.
March 26, 2007

I was amazed at how quickly the tech process was progressing because there had not been any major speed bumps to report so far in relation to actor and designer interaction. Choreographer Tim Ellis was so incredibly easy going and I felt that Lighting Designer George Jackson, Stage Manager Hannah Kugelmann, and I were trusted enough to solve major issue without concern. The majority of the day had been devoted to running the show. We stumbled through it in the afternoon, added in the new technical moments, and had a full run through after dinner.

I thought that the work we did yesterday created a beautiful show that was going to flow close to perfectly on opening night. The challenges that I was worried about in the previous weeks were resolved when new issues began presenting themselves. This being the first technical rehearsal with the musicians present, we quickly found out that the band members were unaware that the archway in front of them flew out as a part of the blast off sequence. A few of the musicians had attached personal items to the back of the band archway and one nearly had a heart attack when the flying arches lifted her personal items to the grid. As a result, she nearly quit the show. We were able to resolve these issues for the next rehearsal, but the musicians were not pleased that we did not tell them about this problem ahead of time.

I was also surprised during this rehearsal at the new design for the floorshow’s “Cleopatra” moment. The introduction of Columbia, Rocky, Brad, and Janet worked as we planned during cue-to-cue. But when the “Cleopatra” moment was about to be revealed, the onstage television blipped on and began airing video footage of the old RKO radio symbol with accompanying radio beeps which was taken directly from the film. This was quite a surprise since all of the video effects had been part of my design and I had not provided nor approved this
clip. Everyone was laughing so hard that the entrance was completely upstaged and the look I created yesterday was gone. We did not see Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter lounging in his chaise, but were staring at a video monitor that was referencing the movie. This was a problem because, from the very first design meeting, Director Earl Weaver and I agreed that we did not want to replicate the floorshow from the film. Choreographer Tim Ellis was ecstatic about the effect but I had to explain why it could not be in the show.

I approached Martin at the end of the run and did what I could to disguise my frustration. He explained that he needed to work out a few elements with the symbol as to when it should disappear from the screen and I had to explain that because of Earl’s wishes, I could not have the RKO image in the show. My Scenic Advisor Vandy Wood was incredibly proud that I had stayed true to my design concept, despite the pressure from others to change it.

First Dress Rehearsal
March 27, 2007

There were only a few notes that I needed to work on prior to the next rehearsal. For the set, I needed Technical Director Michael Layton to re-program the PLC for the laboratory creation box. After Rocky was brought to life, the lights on the laboratory creation box continued to blink ferociously for the rest of the scene. There was a comment made from an audience patron that he could not look at the half-naked woman onstage because there were blinking lights down stage left. Michael fixed this error and added a kill switch, so that one of the actors could turn it off when they exited.
Paint Charge Cynthia Dean and I tackled a minimal amount of notes this afternoon. She applied her logo to the hidden compartment for the sonic transducer and applied the logo my Design Assistant Mitchell Orben had created to the bottom of the trap door. We then added the words “Cryo Freeze” to the sides to explain that Eddie was being stored in a refrigerator (Figure 55). The audience may never see or read this detail, but I wanted to include it to make the design feel more complete.

Cynthia spent the rest of the afternoon distressing the walls and floor which added a more lived-in quality. She also added a material known as “Diamond Dust” to the parts of the set I wanted to stand out as having Punk and Glitter rock influences. This also helped imply that some of these items were forged from a “metal not from this earth” (O’Brien 37), as referenced in the script. Cynthia added the Diamond Dust to the all of the phallic symbols on the stage, the Jacob’s Ladder, and the laboratory creation box.

Mitchell spent the afternoon finishing up the set dressing for the laboratory by adding a few items to the newly installed grid hanging from the laboratory’s ceiling. There had been a running gag of Mitchell and me wanting to hang a jar of pig’s feet from the set, as a homage to the jar that Production Manager Zachary Stribling had hanging in his office. With Zachary’s permission, we ended up taking his jar and hanging it in the lab along with a chain and a few hoses with the assistance of Head Rigger Ryan Emens. Focused on this set dressing, Mitchell had taken charge in a way I had yet to see from him. He was so committed in his tasks that I understood why he had difficulty focusing on multiple tasks.

Props still had many notes to finish before tonight. Props Master William Boles had been busy finishing up Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter’s set dressing for the floorshow, but I did not think he understood the design. He had taken umbrella stands and dressed tall flowers out of them.
causing them to look like a couple of dead chickens. I gave him some notes to fix them and encouraged him to keep trying.

Tonight was the first dress rehearsal and was the first time since the film shoot that I had been able to see any of the finished costumes. Costume Designer Harmony McChesney had done a fantastic job and her design had added a polished look to the show. I noticed that the wigs that were chosen for Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter and Rocky had changed drastically from the last weeks film shoot, but I did not think that this would be noticed in the video.

I took only a few notes during rehearsal, because I had already known the majority of them before we had begun. The remote control that was attached to the wall kept falling off whenever people bumped into it, so I planned to ask the shop to add more magnets to it to fix the problem. We were still missing props for the car scene, and the umbrella stands for the floorshow’s “Cleopatra” moment still needed some attention. I have yet to see the robotic legs onstage and I fear I may have to cut them from the show if we could not tech them tomorrow because it would be unfair to ask Stage Manager Hannah Kugelmann to add a new technical element on opening night. Other than those notes, I felt scenically, we were ready to open.

Final Dress Rehearsal

March 28, 2007

The shop was very busy with notes and Technical Director Michael Layton wanted to get the robotic legs finished so that I would not cut them from the show. The majority of my notes dealt with touching up paint because the front apron, masking flats and footlights needed to be painted black. I also needed Michael to hide the cabling that he had run to operate the archway
curtains. I also requested to see if he could add some lights to the front of the phallic ray guns. These guns needed to light up when the actors fired them and I had added a blue LED light to the front of them in order for them to do so.

I felt these notes needed more attention than the robotic legs because they would affect the actors during the evening’s rehearsal. He accommodated my notes by assigning them to shop students and he spent the rest of the afternoon working on the robotic legs. He could not get them finished by tonight’s rehearsal, but had requested that I not give up on them yet.

Rehearsal went without error tonight. Director Earl Weaver stopped by before we began to wish everyone well for the opening tomorrow. He did not have the energy to stay for the rehearsal, as anxious as he was to do so, but was with us in spirit. Having him stop by made me feel confident that what we had put together was everything he had requested and that he would have loved every second of the show.

We had a small audience during rehearsal tonight who absolutely loved the show. I kept expecting a major mistake to happen during the run, but things were creepily falling into place. I have tickets for tomorrow’s opening night and have scheduled a brief audience with Michael and Stage Manager Hannah Kugelmann early in the afternoon to look at the robotic legs. This meeting would decide whether the legs would be in the show or not.

Opening Night

March 29, 2007

Our scheduled meeting ran longer than I expected. The legs were now functional, but there was never any lighting designed onto that area of the stage to see them in action. It was too
late and unfair to call in Lighting Designer George Jackson or his Assistant Eric Furbish to change the look of the scene. I approved them for use in the show, knowing that they could only be seen by people who were really looking for them. Technical Director Michael Layton was upset that there was not enough light on them, but due to the time constraints of getting them into the show, it was an obstacle that could not be avoided this close to opening.

The performance went beyond all of my expectations. People in the audience were cheering so loud that at times it was difficult to hear some of the action on stage. During the show I noticed that my focus was not on the stage, but on the audience as I watched them experience the show for the first time. Their laughter, exclamations, and joy gave me goose bumps. I was especially proud when everyone cheered at the castle blasting off at the end.

I was thankful the show was up and running and that I accomplished an ambition that had been growing internally for close to seven years. I was proud to have worked with the creative team that I had felt that I had grown artistically, as well as personally in this experience.

Post Production

April 16, 2007

The show was closed and I went to strike merely as an observer. It was difficult to see the stage return to its emptiness. The run of the show did extremely well. We received reviews from two newspapers, both expressing their joyful experience and both urged everyone to drop what they were doing in order to go and see the show. We had a few nights where the cast had to perform two performances in one evening. One show started at eight o’clock and the second
began at ten-thirty. I found myself at many of these performances, sharing the same experience I had opening night.

The ten-thirty crowds tended to be more of the die hard Rocky Horror fans and I noticed many of the same people at multiple performances. Just as if they were seeing it in a movie theatre, people would come to the show dressed in different costumes and gave large amounts of gratitude to the actors onstage in both applause and excitement.

I received a touching email from Earl today thanking everyone for his or her hard work on the show. He stated:

Last May, when I was asked to direct "The Rocky Horror Show," [sic] I very reluctantly agreed. I didn't really want to direct the show, and I didn't think it was a very good choice to showcase the talents of our students. What in the world would I do with that show that hasn't already been done? And, would anyone really come see it? But, I forged ahead. And, after finally getting to see the show in its full form this past weekend, I am so very glad I said "Yes."

Please accept my sincerest thanks for all the hard work and dedication all of you have given to this project. Having had the opportunity to work with everyone on the team, it has reminded me that it's not the final result that matters the most -- it's the people you create it with…

…I also want to thank Gary, Harmony, George, Michael, and the whole tech team for extraordinary design work. What you created for this production was incomparable. There are not enough adjectives to spew that can do justice for the
quality of work you gave us. I am in awe of your talent and so very privileged to have had the chance to work with you.

Thank you to all the loving, supportive faculty colleagues for being there for all the students when I went down for the count with my back surgery. It was comforting to me knowing all was good with the show, because you were there to help in any way you could. (Weaver)
CHAPTER 5: DESIGN EVALUATION

The show was now finished and I was forced to shift my attention to the next project. In working on The Rocky Horror Show, I became aware of many issues that I needed to work on. I struggled to have my creative voice heard and regrettably expressed my frustrations inappropriately. I found that I lacked confidence when I had design elements challenged and I let many people dictate my design choices.

By completing my scenic design, I fulfilled an ambition that I had wanted to achieve for many years, and much like Richard O’Brien, I struggled in bringing the creation to life. Despite the challenges that I had working with the production team, I felt that my collaborations with the artistic team proved successful. I feel that the problems resulting from my poor communication could have been avoided, and with this reflection, I have recognized my strengths and weaknesses as a Scenic Designer.

Financial Analysis

The production budget for The Rocky Horror Show was $4,500, which factored in the construction costs and painting materials. The final amount spent for the show was $4,181.35 leaving us under budget by $318.65. I saved a lot of money in my budget by visiting storage and utilizing stock materials. Donated items, such as the curtain fabric, also saved money and contributed to the overall design (the quote given for purchasing a new curtain was over a third of my total budget). I learned that in a production of this magnitude, if I had not incorporated stock materials, I would have been massively over budget or would have fallen short in the
required production value. For example, Technical Director Michael Layton and I budgeted only $100.00 for the scientific gadgets that I wanted to use for set dressing and the laboratory creation box. Without the loan of his PLC, a number of the scientific effects would have been missing in the design. Indeed, once we visited the electronics store, we discovered how seriously we had under estimated the budget for these elements.

If I had turned in a more detailed design for the scientific elements when I turned in the design package, the budgetary concerns would have manifested much sooner. Since I had left this element unanswered, the positive outcome was that the design evolved to surpass my expectations. In the future, I need to be more vigilant with presenting the shop my final designs and make sure that they fully understand that some design elements need to evolve organically.

-- Working With The Directing Team --

Director Earl Weaver

This was not my first production with Director Earl Weaver. We started the design process for The Rocky Horror Show while finishing up our first collaboration on a production of William Finn’s Falsettos, for which I also designed the scenery. Earl was extraordinarily detailed with his preparedness and knew how he wanted to stage the actors with the very first design meeting. In terms of the look and extra details involved, he trusted that what I designed would not disappoint him.

While designing The Rocky Horror Show, I felt that my lack of confidence stemmed from the added pressure of living up to the director’s design expectations. From working on this production, I appreciated the challenge that Earl had left up to me because I habitually
questioned all of my design choices and worried about whether I was making effective decisions. I was often insecure about my designs and I frequently sought the approval of others. Working with Earl I began trusting both my designs and myself more. This production caused me to let go of my concerns of inability and focus on voicing my design decisions effectively.

Throughout the production process, our mutual trust grew and as opening night approached, I became more comfortable with Earl and found that I could introduce new ideas and suggestions without fear of rejection. In future designs, I feel that I can approach my director with more confidence in my decision making ability and trust my design choices more fully.

Music Director Kip Taisey

I had never worked with Kip prior to our collaboration on The Rocky Horror Show. This was the first musical I had designed that required more than one musician, so I consulted with Kip about his needs for the production and accommodated him in each respect. This resulted in a strong working relationship. Kip had described a gospel inspired musical arrangement for the show which provided a strong influence for my gothic design and I had to trust his verbal descriptions of what the music would sound like. Designing the scenery without hearing the gospel arrangement was a huge risk, because I would not hear the full arrangement until tech week.

The music was just as important as the script, and for our production, the design concept dictated that the music needed to be the primary focus. If Kip had not decided to alter the musical arrangement, I might not have noticed the impact of the musical element and could have
designed a set that was contradictory to the music. In the future I know to incorporate all elements of the script into my design whether it is textual or musical.

Choreographer Tim Ellis

From early in the design process, I frequently consulted with Tim about what he needed spatially to choreograph the show and we collaborated by creating a large playing space to match the large number of actors cast. In the process of working with Tim, I realized that I needed to think about the dance movement when designing the set. If I had not left any room downstage in the design, the actors would not have been able to effectively execute their choreography. In order to address this concern, I provided a large area with as many different levels as possible to allow for various dance movements and interesting stage pictures.

Throughout the production, Tim and I worked together to add elements to the scenery that not only helped his dance movement, but also helped the design for the show. He brought the idea of including the tambourines to Eddie’s song “Hot Patootie,” which enhanced my design with the inclusion of spectacle. Once we started technical rehearsals, he and I collaborated with solutions to scenic challenges and directing transitions. Through this process, my collaboration taught me how to look at designing scenery for choreographed movement. In previous designs, I rarely thought about the space needed for dance and plan to give more focus to this component in the future.
Stage Manager Hannah Kugelmann

Before working on The Rocky Horror Show, I had never designed a production that required a lot of scenic transitions because most of my previous designs invited unit sets. Since unit sets require a limited amount of change, I rarely had to choreograph scenic transitions or visualize the movement between scenes. With the design for The Rocky Horror Show, I not only needed to figure out how the multiple scenes would seamlessly move, but I needed to trust Stage Manager Hannah Kugelmann to facilitate it correctly.

Since I have had issues with trusting others to be true to my designs, I was surprised by Hannah’s accurate execution of the multiple cues I gave her. In working with Hannah, I learned to let go of my concerns and trust others to do their job because I did not need to micromanage every cue she called. In the future, I have learned to trust my design enough to delegate its facilitation. As long as I accurately express my intentions, I can trust that the production and directing team will find a way to make it work.

Working With The Design Team

Assistant Scenic Designer Mitchell Orben

The Rocky Horror Show was the first show that I worked on where I had access to a Design Assistant. I had a number of misconceptions about how to utilize Mitchell efficiently. As a result, the two of us went into the design process without an understanding of what needed to be done. As we got closer to the opening of the show, I realized that the majority of our short comings spawned from a lack of communication on both of our parts. The fact that I did not communicate his obligations to the design process left him organizing projects that I knew would
eventually be cut from the show. If I had communicated what was most important in these projects, many of our misunderstandings probably would have been avoided.

I learned a lot about my own design process by working with Mitchell. Communication and a lack of confidence were major shortcomings, but primarily I discovered that I tended to give Mitchell the challenges that I did not know how to solve. The engineering of the statues, the design of the car, and creating the set dressing were big pieces of the design that, in the beginning, I did not know how to solve.

In the future, I hope to recognize these issues and use my assistant more efficiently. While it was great to share ideas with an assistant, it was ultimately up to me to provide the finished design. I also hope that I will be able to speak up sooner when I realize that tasks are getting out of hand and not living up to my standards.

Costume Designer Harmony McChesney

Harmony and I have worked together on numerous projects in the past few years as fellow graduate students and have developed a strong working relationship. From our initial conversations to the final dress rehearsal we were in constant communication. Since this was a science fiction musical whose central character was a transsexual, shoes became a major concern. We collaborated on making sure that Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter and the other actors were able to walk safely around the set. A few times, I had to change some of my design materials to address these concerns. This included making sure that the platforming did not have any metal grating so that high heels would not get caught in the opening mesh.
The amount of trust Harmony and I have in each others work was paramount to everything we worked on and The Rocky Horror Show was no exception. The ease in which we shared ideas provided a strong and cohesive work experience. Throughout the design of this show, we could describe how particular moments would look and we easily developed our designs with each others in mind.

During the years that Harmony and I have worked together, I feel that our reputation in the department has grown to enormous expectations. The ability we have to share ideas has strengthened our education and our friendship. My hope is that in the future that I have the luxury of finding the same type of working relationship with others that I have had with Harmony.

*Lighting Designer George Jackson*

The Rocky Horror Show was the first production I worked with George and he demonstrated why his reputation was so strong in our theatre department. He was incredibly easy to work with and he communicated his design efficiently and without fault. George and I had moments during the show where we both needed to make sacrifices to our designs to benefit one another.

With our concept being that of a rock-n-roll show, our success at working together well to recreate this effect was critical. His concept demanded the use of multiple moving lights on the set; however, a few of the places he wanted to put them presented a problem. The locations were not discussed prior to character blocking and the places where George wanted to install the moving lights conflicted with the actors’ ability to move around the set without obstacle. If I had
communicated with him more when creating the design, we could have solved many of these types of issues much earlier in the process.

The collaboration between George and I proved successful when the show opened. We relied on each other to create the multiple effects warranted in the design. The blast off sequence, floorshow, and musical numbers all worked effectively because George and I were collaborating with one another. I do feel that in the future, I will communicate with my designers more so that I can consider their needs in creating my finished design.

_Sound Designer Martin Wootton_

My relationship with Martin throughout my experience on _The Rocky Horror Show_ provided many opportunities for personal growth. He was incredibly enthusiastic about working on this project and provided his vociferous input. At times, his approach felt insistent, but our collaboration provided a positive outcome to the production. Many of the science fiction effects he designed for the show added a new layer to the overall production, but my inability to involve him in the design presented a problem when I needed to find a location to place his onstage speakers.

Our collaboration resulted in a new approach to how I work as a Scenic Designer and I learned how to work with people who share different opinions. When presented with the problem of airing the RKO video, I was able to stay true to my design ideas. My hope is that in the future, I have the ability to stand up for my designs just as effectively as I have done in this production.
Props Designers William Boles and Beth DeCarlo

William and Beth were two highly organized individuals early in the production process. They provided me with a “props bible” that displayed progress reports and design images of the proposed props for the show. As time went on, many of the props were neglected and caused me to worry. I feel that my communication with Beth and William and vice versa could have been stronger throughout this process. Construction of many props were left to the last minute and at that moment, it was too late to make any drastic changes. In spite of a slow start, the result was very effective and worked very well with the overall design.

In working with William and Beth on this production, I realized how much I micromanaged their work because I was concerned with their ability to get it finished in the allotted time. If I had communicated my intentions to them more clearly before getting into the construction process, many problems could have been avoided. My goal is that in the future, I can communicate my intentions to my props designer more clearly, and spend less time micromanaging every step of their work.

Working With The Production Team

Production Managers Kevin Rose and Zachary Stribling

Having started the production with Kevin Rose as Production Manager, I learned a great deal about how I needed to make sure that major elements of my design were facilitated correctly. In the production process, Kevin provided the motorized wheelchair, one of the more crucial elements, however other the items I requested fell short in their success. We required a runway early in the design process and due to the lack of follow ups between both of us, it was
ultimately cut from the show. Working with Kevin as a designer presented a different working relationship than I was used to. He was an employee with the university, just as I was and because of this, I had the ability to trust that everything I requested was being taken care of. From working with Kevin, I learned that I needed to give trust to people that I was working with when it was warranted. I tend to be an incredibly trusting person by nature, and am often naïve when collaborating with people who hold a higher position than I do.

When Zachary Stribling became acting Production Manager, many of my concerns changed. Zachary served as Technical Director for the majority of my shows at UCF and there was a large amount of trust between us. Zachary brought me questions on how my design would logistically work and we answered these questions before they caused concerns. There were questions about the flying catwalk and the ability for it to work effectively and there were concerns with the band arches being able to fly out safely. He was diligent in making sure that the production stayed on schedule and voiced his opinion when he felt that the production was getting out of hand. Zachary proved successful in assisting with the facilitation of getting the show presented under budget on time. In the future, I hope to think more about the logistics of my design before presenting the shop with a huge challenge. I do not necessarily need to have the final solution, but I should have an idea of how my challenges will be solved.

Technical Director Michael Layton

Michael and I collaborated on previous productions and developed a strong working relationship prior to our involvement with The Rocky Horror Show. From these productions, I developed a trust that he would work diligently and I never doubted his ability to finish his work
in a timely fashion. Not once did I feel that the schedule he created would fall short in its promises and he was able to complete the majority of the construction way ahead of schedule. The fact that I could provide Michael with everything he required in the design package, helped us communicate and get the show finished on time.

At times, however, Michael’s enthusiasm with his projects would sometimes challenge my design concept. I let him commit to a number of projects that I had wanted to cut from the show. For instance, I insisted at multiple times that he was devoting too much time to the robotic legs when I knew that they were going to be ineffective in their inclusion to the show. If I explained that the scene did not demand this technical element, then he might not have committed the latter part of tech week trying to include them into the show. The fact that lighting was unaware of their inclusion prior to opening was a major lack of communication on my part. I was concerned that cutting this element from the show would have upset Michael who adamantlly wanted to finish them, but I needed to step up as a Designer and realize that they were not necessary. Learning from this issue, I plan to assert my design voice whenever these types of problems arise. I also plan to tactfully communicate my concerns without worrying about whether I am hurting someone’s feelings.

**Evaluation of the Design Process**

I know now that my design process presented many issues before I was ever granted this particular design assignment. My experience with the University of North Carolina and Greensboro’s production in 2000 convinced me that I already knew what was needed in order to
provide the University of Central Florida with a Scenic Design. I reference the David Evans quote from my introduction of Chapter 3:

The world revolves around creations. They are as fascinating to us morbid creatures as ends. Of the two, creations are rather more difficult to pin down and appreciate accurately because, as Doctor Frank ‘N’ Furter was to find out, creations are usually unpredictable and notoriously accidental, and trying to recreate creations precipitates a succession of casualties, the first and most mortal of which is often the truth itself. (Evans 23)

I was trying to recreate an earlier design and wound up hindering the preliminary design conversations.

As a result, Earl and I never went into a great deal of detail concerning themes, ideas, and character motivations. He stated that he wanted a rock-n-roll show and I began adapting my preconceived ideas to accommodate it. Because of this, my design process lacked the amount of analysis that I would have liked to have. Since I was so familiar with the show, I felt that it was unnecessary and I could not have been more mistaken. During the design process I was deficient in my ability to employ my assistant effectively and as a result, our communication faltered early in our process. I believe that my inability to solve particular design challenges prior to turning in the design package left too many questions unanswered. Since I did not know what some of the organic design elements would look like, I ended up constantly adding more items to the design as time progressed. I allowed other people to contribute elements to the design (whether warranted or not) and I became frustrated with my inability to manage the overall design.

I do not however feel that the design was a failure. I succeeded in communicating ideas quickly through sketches and accomplished the task of working on multiple projects at once. I
figured out how the design would move as the first stage in my process, and as a result, I was able to foresee issues with the functionality of my design early on and solve them quickly.

For future productions, I plan to use the design process more effectively. Figuring out the world of the production is much more important that figuring out how to recreate an experience for others, as I originally set out to do. I plan to tactfully make my design voice heard and make sure that I am communicating effectively in stating my design intentions.

**Evaluation of the Production Process**

Looking at my production process in hindsight, there is a great deal that I can benefit from. At times during the construction, I remained timid and bottled up my concerns and frustrations, and as a result, my inner problems and assumptions erupted into frustrations that were voiced inappropriately. If I had communicated my concerns in a tactful way instead of keeping everything bottled up, I could have expressed my creative voice more effectively.

Another issue that I had during the process was in leaving some of my design choices unresolved. Whenever I was confronted with a design challenge that I did not know how to fix, I tended to pass it off to another person. This would often result in my frustrations with the design not evolving as I intended. Since the majority of these challenges were given to my Design Assistant Mitchell Orben, I ended up placing a lot of the blame on him.

With this production, I tended to not be worried about the little things, which at times were the most important part of the design. Instead, I was extremely vague and provided too many options for the production team to choose from. When describing the look of a particular scenic element that I wanted the production team to facilitate, I had a propensity to list what it
would not look like, instead of what it should. If I had provided them with the details of what I wanted the scenic element to look like, a lot of these issues would have resolved themselves.

The fact that I left some of the organic elements unfinished when the construction process began presented me with a double-edged sword. Many of the pieces that were included into the design, such as the PLC box and flying tambourines, were beneficial and became exciting new ideas to the production, where other elements, such as the robotic legs and RKO video, served as hindrances in completing the show as I intended. It was frustrating to figure out where to draw the line in these instances. If I had said yes to one inclusion, I found it difficult to say no to another. If I had resolved these issues by my preliminary design due date, then some of these issues would have never occurred.

Through this production process, I learned how to be less concerned with how my design was fabricated because in the past, I had always been active in the physical construction of my scenery. This may explain why I had become comfortable leaving some of the design elements unfinished. I was used to having a presence in the shop, seeing any issues or complications with construction, and making split-second decisions about how to resolve it. With this production, I limited the amount of time that I was present in the scene shop and only stopped by to observe progress and receive updates.

On paper, the production process went well. The schedule that Michael had created proceeded without any issues. The shop worked well on this production and the primary issues I had came from my inability to provide effective communication.
Evaluation of the Scenic Design

I struggled with getting the design implemented for The Rocky Horror Show, but I believe that I fulfilled my design requirements. The production team set out to create a rock-n-roll show that was in constant interaction with the audience, and we were successful with each performance. In terms of the overall scope of my design, I succeeded with many aspects, found few faults, and I can look at my design more critically. I recognize the areas that were successful and the areas that were less effective in their implementation.

Looking in retrospect at the design, I felt that as much as I struggled to provide enough space for the actors and dancers, I did not pay enough attention to the amount of room needed for other elements. I placed the musicians for the show over eight feet in the air and allotted a limited amount of space for them to spread out their instruments. If I had communicated this earlier instead of basing the design on assumptions, I could have found out what they needed to work efficiently. I was also concerned that we saw the musicians the entire show. I had set out to celebrate the music and keep the musicians a visual element, but in the scenes when they were not playing their instruments they became distracting. I should have provided some sort of masking device so that in the intimate scenes, I did not keep looking at them.

Another area that lacked attention in terms of spacing was with the flying scenery. In order to provide Lighting Designer George Jackson enough room for his lighting instruments, I compressed a lot of my design into an extremely tight space. The battens in the Mainstage Theatre were extremely close together and I placed multiple pieces of scenery on them that limited their movement. The design required numerous locations and to bring the scenery closer to the audience, I stacked as much as I could as far downstage as possible. An issue arose with
flying in the punk rock curtain because it would consistently get stuck on lighting instruments as it flew in to the stage floor.

I did not pay attention to the amount of room that Dr. Scott required with her wheelchair. Having a motorized wheelchair was decided later in the process, after blocking had begun, and I never looked at how much space a motorized wheelchair actually needed. Dr. Scott only had two places that she could enter and exit from onstage, and both of them required assistance from backstage personnel. She had to make frequent ninety degree turns and often bumped into scenery when she entered and exited. It was the concern I had when we acquired the motorized wheelchair, but I never asserted myself in bringing up the issue to the production team.

Another element that I did not feel was successful in the design was the amount of attention that certain scenic elements were given that did not look the way I wanted them to. In my thinking about the design, I had originally wanted to include an elevator. That element went through many transformations first by becoming a catwalk and eventually a flying catwalk, and then a flying catwalk with motorized legs. What I ended up creating was a glorified elevator, which did not work with the design. Since it was so broad in its length, it had moments where it looked ridiculous and much of the audience did not understand what it was. I was trying to make it feel like Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter was entering from above, but instead it looked like we were flying in a piece of scenery. The amount of attention that was paid to creating this visual element was lost and the robotic legs that Technical Director Michael Layton had spent so much time on were never seen.

I also felt that my concerns with the downstage apron in the design ended up causing more trouble than was warranted. I was worried that the audience would see the dance numbers that Choreographer Tim Ellis wanted to include, and I spent a large amount of time making sure
that the lining and paint treatment on the apron was perfect. What ended up happening in performances was that patrons in the first row were blocking the rest of the audience members from seeing all of the design elements on the floor. I had painstakingly spent a number of conversations on getting the look of the footlights accurate and only the first row of audience patrons were able to see the work I had put into it. While I am glad that they could appreciate their inclusion, I wish that I had been able to foresee this issue earlier in the process.

While I felt that certain elements in my design required more attention, I do not feel that the design was a failure. In fact, a number of the goals that I set out to accomplish went beyond my expectations. There were certain inclusions that I added to the design that I did not know would be as effective as they were. When Choreographer Tim Ellis approached me to request the flying tambourines, I felt that they would not have come out as successful as they did. The cue brought them in so quickly and it worked so effectively that it became one of my favorite moments in the show to watch.

I was surprised with how well the punk rock curtain came out. In my attempt to make the curtain out of donated materials, I had no idea that the end result was going to be as effective as it was. Scenic Craftsperson Nikki Blue and her team worked diligently in making the design unified and it surpassed all of my expectations.

With assistance from George Jackson’s lighting, I felt that I did complete the look of a rock-n-roll show. I was surprised at the way that this was achieved because in my design conversations with George, I had no idea that his aesthetic was going to impact the scenic world as much as it did. It enhanced every element of my scenery and illustrated or design concept fluently.
While I was surprised with a few of the moments in the show, I felt that I was successful in creating new experiences for the audience. In my design conversations with Director Earl Weaver, we wanted to surprise the audience with Eddie’s entrance. Most of the fans of the show knew when Eddie entered, but with our production, did not know where he entered. We wanted to surprise the audience at multiple moments in the show, and having Eddie enter from a hidden trap door in the center platforming provided a moment of excitement. It presented a new approach to the show that many audience members were not expecting.

I surprised the audience with a new approach to the floorshow. The archway lights that I was reticent to include provided a new and exciting look once we arrived to the floorshow. I avoided every element that was present in the movie and illustrated a new approach to how Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter was portrayed as the powerful and seductive ringleader. I gave the audience a fresh interpretation that worked with the concept of our production.

I felt that I was effective in designing the multiple science fiction effects. Whenever Riff Raff operated the laboratory creation box, the infusion of props, lighting, sound, and scientific effects culminated in a surprising spectacle. The audience was transported to Dr. Frank ‘N’ Furter’s laboratory and witnessed how Rocky was brought to life. The same effect was created when the space ship blasted off at the end. The collaborative efforts from scenic, lighting, and sound created the visual climax and surprised the audience with Riff Raff and Magenta’s lift off.

As much as I planned to accurately design the scenery for Richard O’Brien’s The Rocky Horror Show, the production went beyond all of my expectations. On my journey to implement the design, I encountered revelations of areas that I needed to work on, as well as the areas in which I excelled. With the lessons this production taught me, I plan to approach my future
designs differently, but maintain the same excitement and commitment that I brought to this production.
APPENDIX A: VISUAL RESEARCH
Figure 1: Rivets and Paint Treatment
Figure 2: Bridge Arch
APPENDIX B: CAST LIST
CAST

The Narrator ................................... Amanda Wansa
Slave Boy ...................................... Michael Navarro
Slave Boy ...................................... Dane Wagner
Frank-N-Furter ................................. Spencer Morrow
Brad .............................................. Robert Stack
Janet .............................................. Andrea Dunn
Rocky ............................................ Steven Gatewood
Riff Raff ......................................... Justin Sargent
Magenta .......................................... Emily Mara
Columbia ......................................... Melissa Nay
Dr. Scott ......................................... Sara Barnes
Eddie .............................................. Chantry Banks
Usherette ......................................... Samantha Freistat
Ushers ............................................. Terrance Alfaro
Lacey Angerosa
Donovan Carey
Khristy Chamberlain
Brittany Dobbs
Matthew James
Taylor Jeffers
Erika Lyon
Javier Ortega
Piper-Rae Patterson
Andrew Slane
Kelli Sleigh
Madison Stratton

UNDERSTUDIES

The Narrator .................................... Kelli Sleigh
Frank-N-Furter ................................. Matthew James
Brad .............................................. Javier Ortega
Janet ............................................. Piper-Rae Patterson
Rocky ............................................. Andrew Slane
Riff Raff ......................................... Terrance Alfaro
Magenta .......................................... Erika Lyon
Columbia ........................................ Khristy Chamberlain
Dr. Scott ........................................ Madison Stratton
Eddie ............................................. Donovan Carey
Usherette ........................................ Brittany Dobbs
### Table 1: Action Chart Page 1

<table>
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<th>PROLOGUE</th>
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<td>Int. Castle - Heating Duct, Elevator, Labarytory - Operating Room, Mechanical Box, Deep Freeze Room, Axe</td>
<td>Laboratory - Operating Room, Mechanical Box, Deep Freeze Room, Axe</td>
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BRAD X X (Video) X X X X X
JANET X (Voice) X X (Video) X X X X X
FRANK 'N' FURTER X X (Video) X X X X X
RIFF RAFF X X X X X X
MAGENTA X X X X X
COLUMBIA X X X X X
ROCKY X X (Video) X X X
EDDIE X (Video) X X X X X
NARRATOR X X X X X X
SLAVE BOYS X X X X X X
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Figure 6: Preshow Preliminary Sketch

Figure 7: Full Stage Sketch Draft 3
APPENDIX F: THE SCENIC MODEL
Figure 9: 3/8" Preliminary Scale Model 1

Figure 10: 3/8" Preliminary Scale Model 2
Figure 11: 3/8" Preliminary Scale Model 3

Figure 12: 3/8" Final Scale Model
APPENDIX G: FINAL SKETCHES AND RENDERINGS
Figure 13: Main Curtain Rendering
Figure 14: Full Stage Scenic Rendering
APPENDIX H: DRAFTING
Figure 15: Preliminary Runway Design Groundplan
Figure 16: Preliminary Runway Design Section
Figure 17: Final Groundplan (reduced scale)
Figure 19: Front Elevations 1 (reduced scale)
Figure 20: Front Elevations 2 (reduced scale)
Figure 21: Front Elevations 3 (reduced scale)
Figure 22: Front Elevations 4 (reduced scale)
APPENDIX I: THE BUILD SCHEDULE
## Table 6: Proposed Build Calendar January

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*Note: The table shows the proposed build calendar for January 2007, with specific tasks planned for each day.*
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Table 7: Proposed Build Calendar February
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March 2007
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APPENDIX L: COPYRIGHT APPROVAL
July 5, 2008

Shannon C. Brown
1011 Downey St. Apt. 4
Laramie, WY 82072

Dear Shannon C. Brown:

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This image to be reproduced is referenced in a journal entry found in the third chapter of the thesis and is visually represented in “Appendix A: Visual Research.”

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Sincerely,

Gary David Alexander

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By: Shannon C. Brown
1011 Downey St. Apt. 4
Laramie, WY 82072

Date: July 10, 2008

Figure 61: "Rivets" Copyright Approval
July 1, 2008

OVVC
e/o Brittni Lipscomb
1205 Capitol Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Brittni Lipscomb:

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This image to be reproduced is referenced in a journal entry found in the third chapter of the thesis and is visually represented in “Appendix A: Visual Research.”

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Sincerely,

Gary David Alexander

PERMISSION GRANTED FOR THE USE REQUESTED ABOVE:

By: Brittni Lipscomb
e/o OVVC
1205 Capitol Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Date: 7/5/08

Figure 62: "Bridge Arch" Copyright Approval
LIST OF REFERENCES


References of Visual Resources

(Figure 2) Brit-lipy. Bridge Arch. 2006. Deviant Art. 23 October, 2006.


(Figure 1) Ravenclawyoshi. Rivets. 2006. Deviant Art. 23 October, 2006.