

Brooke Dippold

THEA 101-07

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I Wish There was an Exit

The play “No Exit” by Jean-Paul Sartre made me wish there was an exit or an intermission. I believe the play could have been approximately ten minutes long and had the same effect on the audience. It was way too loud and the same thing happened repeatedly. The set design was effective, the costumes were a hit or miss, and the lighting choices were an overall disappointment.

Scott C. Chapman’s set design reminded me more of heaven than hell. There were couches and chairs to relax on with bright lights filling the room complete with marble floors. It seemed more serene than hell is believed to be. That supported the given circumstances of the play. At the end the Ryan Bultrowicz’s character, Credeau, exclaimed, “maybe hell is just the people you are with,” justifying the appearance of hell as a heavenly furnished place without medieval weaponry as believed. The mass of the pieces in the set fit the space well. They did not appear bulky and large for the space. The green and red hues of the couches were pale colors that complimented the brightness of the rest of the scenery and went well with the overall idea that hell was bright and cheerily decorated. The furniture was arranged well; there was enough negative space for the characters to move without running into things and not too much negative space to where the stage seemed empty. Curvier couches with backs would more accurately represent the world of the play, but the backless couches allowed for unobstructed sightlines.

The costumes of Estelle and Credeau, that were created by Leslie Cook-Day fit the world of the play. Inez's costume did not fit the world of the play or her body. Her pants were baggy and she was drowning in her blazer. The blouse was nearly consuming her. I didn't think Inez's pants were appropriate. I would have loved to see her in a skirt, but because she was wearing pants I thought she was a lesbian and that suspicion was later confirmed when she tried to kiss Estelle. The entire outfit could have used a good tailor or been recreated from the petite section to fit her body type better. Based on Estelle's velvet dress and heels I could tell she came from a wealthy family and she valued her looks more than anything. Her hat seemed more western cowboy than vintage chic. Estelle's hair and makeup was extravagant just like her personality. The bold red lip fit her well. Credeau's brown suit was well-fitting and supported the world of the play. He looked like a reporter before it was revealed that was his occupation. Overall, Inez's costume was lackluster, Estelle's costume was over the top, and Credeau's was everything it needed to be.

The lighting at the beginning of the play was bright and cheery like the hell disguised as heaven. The lighting designed by Scott C. Chapman enhanced the world of the play. When the characters were happy, then the lights were bright; when they were thinking about Earth and getting upset that their living friends were not acting in ways they had hoped, then the lights dimmed. As each character revealed the reasoning for being damned and experienced flashbacks or listened in on their living friends conversations a colored light produced through a gel highlighted the character. Inez's color was magenta and I feel that it represented her sin of lust very well. I do not believe that Credau's color of green accurately represented his spousal abuse and cowardice. I think blue would have been a better color based solely on personal preference.

Estelle's yellow lighting did not make sense to me either. She was a greedy murderer and I think red would have represented her better. There was a triangle pattern made through a gobo on the stage the entire time and I did not understand what the purpose of it was. Circles would have been a better fit in my opinion because they could be representative of the neverending loops that the characters are experiencing in hell.

In conclusion, the design elements of the play visually went together, I just did not like very many of them. The set design was more successful than the lighting as a whole. The lighting elements associated with Inez complemented her character well, but the lighting elements associated with Estelle and Credau were not as successful. The costume of Estelle was the most successful, followed by Credau and then Inez. I would describe this play as boring and an hour and fifteen minutes too long. This was not a successful production for Longwood University because of Inez's costume failure and the numerous lighting failures.