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THEA 101-08

13 November 2018

Truly *No Exit*

The set for *No Exit*, designed by Scott C. Chapman, included two couches, a chair, a chandelier, and a flat with a fire place and a locked door. This minimal set is sufficient for the play because it adds to the hell that the characters are in by locking them in a small room and giving them nothing to do except interact with one another. The scene was small enough that it gave all of the actors enough space to move around to different areas of the stage instead of having to stay in one section or on their chair. The statue and letter opener were the only set dressing and props in the play besides the belongings of the three characters, and were the only things used or referenced in the play, which fit into the minimal set for *No Exit*. I think that the entire set did reflect the time period, but it was not what I had originally imagined the set would be like. Since the play takes place in Hell, I expected the set to be darker, when it was actually all white and the floors and wall were made of marble. I think that having the set more as a contrast to the image of Hell better reflected the time period and contributed to the world of the play, as each person’s Hell dealt more with their life rather than them being in the typical Hell.

The costumes designed by Leslie Cook-Day in *No Exit* were well executed and reflected the time period. Cradeau has a hat and is wearing a suit, which was common for men in the 1940s, when the play takes place. From the costumes, I was able to gather information about the characters regarding their occupation and social or economic status before those details were mentioned in the play. For example, Estelle was wearing a blue dress, heels, and had an animal fur draped across her shoulders, demonstrating that she is wealthy. However, Inez was wearing pants, a blouse, and a suit jacket, which showed me that she worked as a secretary, or had a similar occupation.

Many of the lighting and sound designs changed depending on who was talking, which helped to further convey each character’s story. Cradeau sat on the green couch, Inez on the red couch, and Estelle on the yellow chair. Chapman, the scenic and lighting designer, changed the color of the lights to match the color of the chair of whoever was talking. For example, when Inez was watching as her room was being used by someone else, the lights on the stage changed to red lights. Changing the lights to match the characters helped me to better imagine the scene or event that each character was describing. The sound designer, Jace Frank, used sounds specific to the scenes or events the characters were describing as well. Before any character began describing a different scene and before the lights changed, there would be a ding, which helped me recognize the transition from the room to the new scene that the characters were describing.

All of the design elements in *No Exit* were unified and worked together to create the world of the play or to help create the new scene or event that each character would describe, like Inez describing her room being given to someone else and Cradeau describing the scene with his wife. Because the set was so small and had few props and set dressings, the actors had to work harder to keep the audience engaged, and to truly portray their situations and the events that they were witnessing. This production was repetitive but interesting, and was a good production for Longwood University, as it was more difficult since there were only three actors on stage and the focus was solely on those three actors.

This paper was proofread, and I made the necessary corrections before turning it in. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_