Alexis Wayland

THEA 101-02

8 October 2019

Light and Sound Led the Way

The sight of a boat floating across the open seas was the first thought that came to my mind when walking into the auditorium. The colors were the first thing to catch my eye; a bright red/ orange color was at the top of the stage while blues and greens were near the bottom. This along with the platform made up of eight wooden circles set the tone for the play. The platform was covered in rustic looking rope and barnacles to portray a ship. I saw two gobos being used; one was shining water-like patterns on the top of the stage which looked like waves, and the second was on the platform and created an old fish net pattern. As the play went on I realized that if I looked to my left I could see backstage; this really bothered me because I did not want to see the actors once they went off-stage because it made me focus on what they were doing rather than what the actors on stage were doing. I think Scott. C. Chapman, scenic designer, did an excellent job creating the set because to me it perfectly portrayed a ship and set the tone for the entire production. If I had to change anything about the scenery and set up, I would have put a bigger drapery to block the backstage and would have used the trap in the back wall more often, rather than one time, to create the illusion of the actors being in Prospero’s cell.

The use of a blue and green gel palate created the mood of being at sea or on a mysterious island, so I think the color scheme was a perfect fit. To me, the lighting was the best part of the play, it created focal points throughout, as well as magical aspects of Ariel and the spirits. Composition was frequently used and showed the importance of the person talking. For example, when Ariel put Miranda to sleep, Ariel and Prospero stepped to the front of the stage and the light was bright on them and dim on Miranda sleeping in the background. My two favorite points in the play were when Ariel came out with wings and her whole costume lit up, as well as, the lights that created the mouths of the dogs. The dark room and bright lights captured my attention along with the strobe lights that were used. I think Jace Frank, sound designer/engineer, did an amazing job on the use of sound throughout the production. To switch between acts, drums or a mystical twinkle noise was used along with the lights dimming. He incorporated sounds to characters; When upbeat music would play, I knew that the scene was going to be about Trinculo and Stephano, and when mystical music would play, I knew Ariel was a part of the scene. To me, the beginning of the play had good use of sound; it started off with an upbeat song and then quickly turned into a loud thunderstorm.

The costumes were terrible for this play; I only liked Caliban’s. First off, I do not think they depicted the 1890’s but looked thrown together at the last minute. On Sebastian’s coat the buttons were broken, Trinculo’s hat and wig fell off many times, and the mustache on Alonso’s face was very distracting because it looked unrealistic. Prospero’s cape was very distracting because it was huge and kept getting in the way of the acting. On the other hand, I loved Caliban’s outfit because the dreadlocks looked realistic, and the clothes were dingey and ripped up like a beast’s clothes would be.

Overall, I thought the production was put together really well; Bruce Speas, director, did a great job incorporating everything into the production. Personally, I thought that the lighting and its effects were the best part of the show; they kept me interested throughout the whole play. I think the design elements definitely pushed Ariel and Caliban into leading roles because their costumes created the character so well. I think the Longwood production of *The Tempest* exceeded my expectations. I would describe the production as successful and bright.