

Abraham and Isaac in Jerusalem
Lighting Script Treatment Version 2

The following is a lighting script treatment for *Abraham and Isaac in Jerusalem*. This document breaks down the play into the two worlds and individual moments, and then describes how I see the lighting design enhancing the story telling in a more detailed way. Research images are included to help suggest specific lighting moments, as well as a few full stage-rendering examples of what the set and lighting will look like in the Claire at the end of the document. I have placed specific questions in red throughout, but I am very open to suggestions, feedback, and questions throughout the whole document; please feel free to respond.

Lighting Overview for the Two Worlds (the Frame and the Play)
Opening Frame:

The play is set on the stage of the Claire Trevor Theater. The audience is “walking in” on a dress rehearsal for a play at an outdoor theater festival in Rova Square, in the Jewish quarter of Jerusalem, in late spring. The set consists of a square of Jerusalem stone, creating an open air, public space with plenty of seating benches, standing room and steps, as well as a large scaffolding that provides the backdrop for our play. The House Manager lets the audience in through the shop door of the Claire Trevor Theater and the Director, Stage Manager, and crew (including both sound and lighting board ops) will be fully visible and present on the stage before, during, and after the performance. I am also considering the option of adding in trusses above the three seating areas with which to hang lighting fixtures, specifically the festival house lights that create the feeling of being at Rova Square watching a performance. After studying certain research photos of different squares in Jerusalem, strings of festive bare light bulbs would also add a nice touch of festivity, accuracy, and sparkle to this outdoor evening of theater.

In order for this frame to make complete sense, the lighting needs to enhance the feeling of an evening in Jerusalem. The California sun will have just completely set by 7:30-8pm in September, and I see the lighting creating a beautiful, clear, warm evening inside the Claire. The main source will be a full moon (the actual moon at the time will be less than full, but still over half, providing some natural moonlight). The moonlight should be white, raw and powerful, almost oppressive, pouring in from the direction of the open shop door. The quality of the moonlight should feel as though we were in the desert: clear, bright, and weighty, casting pure and unforgiving shadows on the Jerusalem stone and exposing the environment of the Claire.



A well lit Jerusalem night, with the walls being lit by warmer architectural lights. It is a warm, clean and clear evening heading into night.



The moon in Jerusalem will be a bright, powerful, desert-full moon, casting light on everything, exposing secrets and adding a weight to the ancient city.

The other source of lighting that will add to our storytelling frame will be festival fixtures. The lighting should mimic an outdoor theater festival...the walls should be lit from the two streetlamps and outdoor lighting fixtures, helping to create the welcoming ambience. In addition to the electrics being lower and lighting instruments being completely visible as they would be at an outdoor festival, the trusses will have “house lights” and the strings of festival light bulbs hanging from them (an example of which is pictured below). Both the strings of light and trusses are shown in the renderings at the end of this document as well for further clarification. This will help create the almost magical atmosphere of an outdoor theater festival, solidifying the play’s framing foundation. The focus should always remain on the center stage, however we want the audience to feel as though they are apart of this rehearsal; the moonlight and light strings should bathe them dimly as well. Also, being that the Men in Black linger throughout the entire space, having moonlight light the entirety of the space will ensure that they are always slightly sculpted and visible. Adding down lights in darker shades of night blues will keep them shadowy and add to their “Men in Black” style and character. Being able to pick them out of the crowd with specials might be a convenient and fun way of drawing attention to them at specific moments as well, particularly when they are asked to sing to stall for the audience.

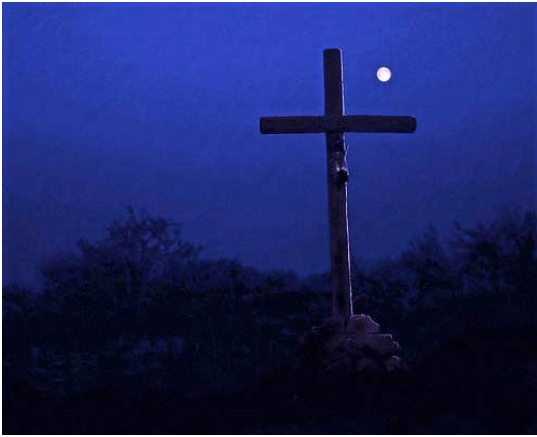


Light strings such as these (although not quite so many) will help create a festive atmosphere.

Abraham and Isaac-the Play

The other world in this play is the actual world of the magical biblical story full of emotion, depth, sadness and humor. It is in this world that lighting and sound should allow the audience to become fully entranced and captivated with the play. I will play with the addition of color bringing out the relationship between not only the father and son but also with Abraham and the heavenly world. This night should feel different from the real night that the frame world lives in. The addition of richer, deeper colors of blues and lavenders, as well as more sparkly moonlight will enhance the magic of the story. As we begin to delve deeper into the plot, the lighting should help to narrow down and focus in on the action on stage, which will help the audience connect with the heart of the play.

We also see God and an Angel speak on earth and lighting needs to play a key role in enhancing the angelic and heavenly power associated with these pivotal characters. Pure, heavenly back light and soft specials illuminating these heavenly beings should give them the look as though they are glowing from within. The night on the hill should go from being a sad, mournful and almost terrifyingly blue/black night to a vivid storybook illustration of a lush lavender night when all is well and mended. There is an innocence and trust among all these characters and the lighting should feel soft, holy and brilliantly colorful, helping to contrast the reality of the harsh, desert moonlit night of the festival.



The night of the play is richer, deeper, bluer, with the moonlight coming from a more diagonal back angle in a sparkly lavender color.

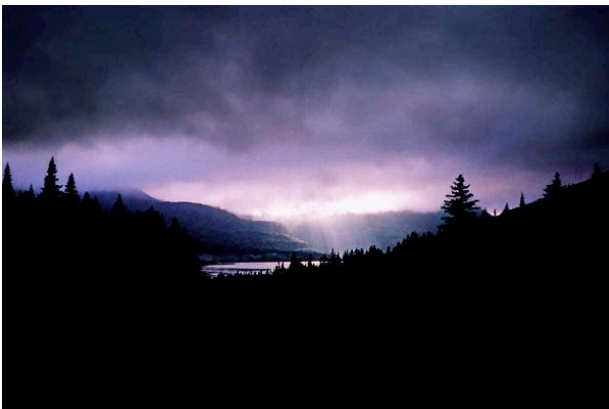
Breakdown of Key Beats:

(Page 1) The play opens with the atmosphere of the outdoor theater festival at night. We have powerful, raw, oppressive, desert moonlight pouring through the open shop doors, exposing the space. The audience and playing area is lit not only from the streetlamps, but also with visible “house lighting festival fixtures” that are hung on visible trusses, providing the framework of the festival. Strings of festival lights hung among the audience will provide a festival feeling as well.

(Page 2) As the Director addresses the audience, more presentational stage lighting illuminates the company. The audience remains lit as a very vital part of the opening frame. As the translators motion and explain the importance of the surrounding environment (churches, the wailing wall, etc...) the intensity of the lighting illuminating the space should remain clear and strong.

****QUESTION:** Since we have decided on going with an evening/night rehearsal, is the muezzin a call to prayer that only would be heard in the day? I think if we made the rehearsal an afternoon rehearsal we are risking the frame not making sense with the shop doors opening to full night. Thoughts?

(Page 5) Lights change. It is our first journey into the world of the play. We see a beautiful, rich night of blues and lavenders. The focus is on the entrance of Abraham and Isaac bathed in a sparkly, lavender moonlight that is much more theatrical and “pretty” than the desert moonlight of the festival. The director is still lit in a more presentational “special” as he is introducing the audience to the characters. The “houselights” turn off, and the light strings as well as the streetlamps could either be turned off completely or left on at very low levels, keeping the audience involved and the feeling of the festival alive and present but not stealing focus. The chorus will also be shadowed in darker shades of blue scattered around the playing area. They are the link between the world of the play and the world of the audience and frame of the story. The Director’s special fades out when Abraham begins to pray. As the translator interrupts we can play with either the visible house lights abruptly coming back on or simply allowing more of the moonlight to provide more focus to the translator. For the little interruptions, I do not feel the need to bring on house lights, just merely keeping the audience dimly lit should suffice.



The theatrical world lends itself to the ability of adding in color, particularly purples and pinks, adding magic and emotion to the storybook biblical tale.

(Page 11) God rises on the genie lift. God needs the most powerful and holy light imaginable for his rise up. I feel like we can really push the holy spotlight and halo-ish backlight for his reveal. The stage should drastically dim in comparison (while still keeping focus on Abraham below).

QUESTION: With the appearance of God, we could use haze to formulate actual “beams” of light producing rays of holiness behind him. It might be a really nice and slightly humorous addition for these California actors to be adding haze to their theatrical production, however, since we are not using scrollers or moving lights (or any extraneous devices that make noise other than the genie lift), we may want to exclude haze from the production and use strong, clean backlight instead. Thoughts?



We can either display individual rays of holiness, or one strong source of backlight for God’s light.

****QUESTION:** For the angel, I am also seeing a very strong and almost cliché-style of holy backlighting, perhaps a little softer and warmer than God’s rays of light. Where do we see the Angel in the space? Being that the angel descends and travels to speak with Abraham, I would love for the entire space to change with the angel’s arrival as she walks on earth. Perhaps the whole world is glowing in a soft warmer white/pink halo...or the angel is simply glowing beyond belief. Thoughts?



A warm, heavenly, powerful glow of light.

(Page 14) The Stage Manager yells: “HOLD!” The house lights should come up at varying levels, snapping the audience out of the play...and a “work light” look should come on over the stage allowing them to easily set up the “hill.”

(Page 17) The Hill is constructed. The lighting needs to become a little more theatrical with color and angle as the play reaches the climax. Focus needs to be on the hill...sparkly moonlight and maybe even a “hill-like” texture falling in and around the scaffold. A powerful backlight will create not only a neat shadow of the hill but will add to the importance of the hill and ascent. We will need to be sure that we can get light on the different levels of the scaffold, for it’s shape lends itself to shadows.



The Hill is the climax of the show. The lighting produces shadowy, dark textures that heighten the suspense while still keeping actors visible.

(Page 22) Isaac is saved. The night should reach its most beautiful and brightest quality yet. The world is once again in harmony and there is a peaceful sense of relief and love. And then the Acting Ensemble comes forth. The light strings should be glistening at this pivotal moment in the play, tying the audience in to the text being shared. The light on the stage should be bright, clean, honest, and presentational. Everyone should be well lit, as there is nothing to hide in this moment. When God concludes the ending, all focus should be on him in his halo of white light, with the rest of the ensemble in a beautiful side light tableau.

Renderings:

1. The first rendering is that of the entire stage of the Claire Trevor bathed in moonlight as well as being lit with warm house lights on trusses hung above each seating section, and strings of light bulbs that create a frame around the actual playing space. The view is from that of the shop door.
2. The second rendering is that of the actual playing space when Abraham and Isaac are ascending the hill and the angel appears to them. The color has become richly saturate and the focus is almost entirely on the stage, with the audience still visible so they feel apart of the action. The angel is strongly backlit. The Men in Black are free to mingle where they choose. In this rendering they are lit on stage right. The view is from the proscenium.



