

Lighting for Scout Shows



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Introduction

This is the first edition of support to Producers and Stage Directors on the subject of lighting a Scout Show. Further editions will be produced in the light of experience from this edition. The publication of further editions will be notified in Scouting Magazine, Talking Points and the Activities Newsletter.

General

In these days of modern technology, people expect to see a high standard of presentation with respect to Lighting, Sound and Staging as well as a first class production. This can only be met if these features are given the necessary time and preparation in advance and at the set up of the show. Any of the three can badly let down the production if not done in a professional manner.

Preparation – The Lighting Rig

What is available will depend on the premises where the show is to be performed.

The School – Usually a small fixed system/rig with lights hardwired so they cannot be moved about. The electricity supply to the stage is often limited so the ability to add additional equipment is difficult.

Small Theatre – Normally this would have enough lighting equipment for a good coverage but it may be necessary to add "specials" and "effects lanterns".

Large Theatre – Will have a good range of equipment and effects that can be used.

A Standard Large Layout (Rig) consists of:

Front of House Lighting Bars and Booms

Stage 3 or 4 Lighting Bars

Side Lighting Bars and Booms (Ladders)

The Front of House bar(s) are normally made up of a number of "profile" spots although some "fresnel" lanterns are useful if the bar is close to the stage or if the stage is very wide, maybe to provide a colour wash.

The lighting bars – No 1 would again have a mixture of profile and fresnel lanterns to cover the downstage area with general lighting and "specials".

No 2 and 3 – as for No 1 but lighting further upstage areas.

Upstage bar – would consist of floods or a compartment batten to light cloths and the back wall or cyclorama.

Sidelighting – would consist of "par cans" or other types of lanterns required by the production. It is essential for giving depth and realism to the lighting set.

What to do before the Rig can be decided

Several weeks beforehand

Having looked over the script discuss with the Producer the special effects that may be required for the production. Talk to the Stage Director about the sets, cloths, and the colours to be used. Find out about the costume colours and type of show (musical, drama etc) in order to choose colour filter for the lights.

Next

Draw a plan of the rig showing where each light will be installed, what colour filter will be fitted, to which circuit it will be connected and what area it will light. Pass a copy to the "theatre" light technician as required so that any problems can be sorted out prior to the technical rehearsal.

Construction of the Rig

Although there is a general pattern of basic lighting layouts, unless the lights are wired directly to the control panel, you will be able to put them anywhere you like depending on the show and the

rules of the theatre. There will be a consideration for the time and effort to do it and the reluctance of some theatre electricians to alter their rig.

Colour

The variety of effects that can be obtained in a show obviously depends on the size and flexibility of the rig. It is important to choose colours so that a white stage can be achieved by mixing the colours and therefore not having lights with no colour in them. The colour filter (gels) are identified by numbers which vary from make to make.

General Colours

Lee number	Cinelux number	Colour	Lee number	Cinelux number	Colour
101	401	Yellow	122	422	Fern Green
102	402 *	Light Amber	124	424	Dark Green
103	403 *	Straw	126	426	Mauve
104	404	Deep Amber	132	432 *	Medium Blue
106	406	Red	136	436 *	Pale Lavender
109	409 *	Light Salmon	151	451 *	Gold Tint
111	411	Dark Pink	152	452 *	Pale Gold
113	413	Magenta	154	454 *	Pale Rose
117	417	Steel Blue	158	458	Deep Orange
118	418 *	Light Blue			

* colour tints useful for general "balanced" stage lighting

Set up day

Lighting, staging and sound cannot be done independently of each other, so before the day it is important that the teams have met on a regular basis to draw up a timetable of working in order that each team know when the stage will be available.

It is important to note that when lighting is being hung on the appropriate bars it is possible for

other jobs to be done at the same time but when the lights are being focused a dark stage will be required, and this will restrict other activities

Technical rehearsal

Before the rehearsal the director will have provided the various teams with a running order for the show and a complete script with the stage and lighting cues marked in. Although there will be an idea of what the lighting for each scene

should look like this will be the first opportunity to try it out. Bearing in mind there may be some 100-150 lighting changes in the show a lot of time will be needed for the technical rehearsal if you are going to produce the effects with which you are happy. A memory board will help to quicken the process as cue sheets will not need to be written out in full.

During the rehearsal the stage crew will set the scenes for each item of the show and the director and lighting designer will finalise the lighting for each scene. There will often be cast on stage for this so it will be necessary to bear in mind the costumes that are to be used.

Dress Rehearsal

Make notes on any changes to the lighting cues that are needed and arrange for a cue sheet for the follow spot operators.

Replot the cues at the end of the rehearsal in readiness for the opening performance.

Insurance

It will be usual to have to supply extra equipment if only to supply some special effects. This will have to be begged, borrowed or hired. Remember that this is valuable equipment which will be expensive to repair or replace if it is lost, stolen or damaged. Please ensure that adequate insurance cover is included in your budget and do not forget to actually arrange the necessary cover.

Other Considerations

Gobos – patterned transparencies for special effects eg Fleur-de-Lys.

Special effects – types available – hire.

Lighting equipment hire – budget availability etc.

Typical problems

Limited electricity supply – is there an alternative or additional supply available.

Faulty equipment – hire in additional items.

Special Effects Lanterns – positioning to get effect.

Stage scenery/curtains blocking out the lighting – reposition the equipment/staging.

Producer wants something the rig will not do.

Operation of the Lighting

Lighting boards – manual with or without presets/memory/computer operated

Follow spots – normally 2 at rear of theatre

Floor electrician – to move floods or effects and other equipment in place.

Competent people are required to operate the above.

Type of equipment

Profile Spots used to produce a hard edged pool of light. Can be squared off using shutters

Fresnels these will produce a soft edged pool of light or flood a large area of the stage

Parcans used to produce bright pools colour – non focusing

Floods as the name suggests they produce a wash of colour used for lighting cloths and cyclorama

Followspots for the back of the theatre to pick out and follow the main actors

Safety

Safety is the major consideration for lighting crews and, indeed, for everyone working in entertainment environments. All lighting and any other electrical equipment should be installed only by technically experienced and competent people.

Ensuring that lighting equipment is securely fixed, each individual lantern fitted with its own safety chain and correctly connected to the lighting installation, is essential. Care should be taken to ensure that lanterns are not placed close to drapes or scenery, thus becoming a fire hazard. At an early stage steps must be taken, by a suitably qualified person, to ensure that the electrical installation on the premises is of such condition and capacity to adequately feed the equipment required.

“Safety matters” are a vast subject requiring much more space than is available in this document. It is **strongly recommended**, therefore, that a booklet, published by the Health and Safety Executive, entitled “ELECTRICAL SAFETY FOR ENTERTAINERS” be obtained. This contains comprehensive electrical safety information applicable to Scout Shows. It is available from ‘good bookshops’, or direct from:

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