A LIGHTING DESIGN PROCESS
FOR A PRODUCTION OF
STEPHEN SCHWARTZ’S WORKING

A Thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
The Degree Master of Fine Arts in the
Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By
Matthew Dale McCarren, B.A.

The Ohio State University
2008

Masters Examination Committee:

Mary A. Tarantino, M.F.A., Advisor
Daniel A.Gray, M.F.A.
Maureen Ryan, M.F.A.

Approved By

Advisor
Graduate Program in Theatre
Stephen Schwartz’s Working was produced at The Ohio State University Department of Theatre during the spring quarter of 2008. Included in this document is all of the documentation used for the implementation of the lighting design for this production.

The need to work forces humans to interact with one another daily and requires us to deal with the added stressors that being in contact with other humans creates. This theme is central to the story of Working and is a major point of emphasis for our production of Working. Chris Roche in his Director’s Concept states, “The construction of Working at first glance seems isolated and solitary, so many different stories – but very little unifying factor. I believe the common thread is the workers themselves. Who do we meet on a daily basis, and how does each of those domino-like moments affect the greater whole of our lives?”

In support of the director’s concept, the lighting design for Working aimed to create two separate lighting environments one of reality and the other of fantasy. The challenge was to then connect the separate environments into one seamless world where the line of reality and fantasy are blurred.
AKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank everyone who was involved with the creation and implementation of the lighting design for *Working*. Without your help and dedication the production would not have come close to being art. Special thanks to Matt Hazard, Jordan Kardasz, Greg Owen and Anthony Pellecchia for their continued support and friendship during this process and the last three years of grad school. To my production crew Corey Balogh, Amy Witherby and Jacci Ferguson, you guys are the biggest lifesavers and I would have lost my mind without your help.

I would like to thank director Chris Roche for his vision and dedication to creating a viable piece of art out of a piece of theatre that has its own problems. Thank you for allowing me the freedom to explore and express myself.

To my advisors and professors, the last three years have been a wondrous journey that truly surpassed my expectations as a student. Thank you Mary Tarantino for pushing me always and expecting nothing but the best.

To my parents, without you nothing is possible. Thanks for believing in me and supporting my continued monetary needs. Last, I would like to thank my brother Stephan McCarren. Thank you for being my brother and helping me through the last three years of grad school. Without you I would have never made it through or been able to pay rent. I dedicate my MFA to you. Thank you, love Matthew.
VITA

31 January 1977...........................................Born- Cincinnati, Ohio

2004..........................................................B.A. Theatre
| Wilmington College |
| Wilmington, Ohio |

2005-2008...............................................Graduate Teaching Assistant
| The Ohio State University |
| Columbus, Ohio |

2005..........................................................Lighting Designer
| *Icarus's Mother* |

2006..........................................................Scenic & Lighting Designer
| *Haiku* |

2007..........................................................Lighting Designer
| *Dead Man Walking* |

2007..........................................................Scenic Designer
| *Trojan Women 2.0* |

2008..........................................................Lighting Designer
| *Working* |

FIELD OF STUDY

Major Fields of Study: Theatre

Other Studies: Architectural Lighting Design and Dance Lighting
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST CHAPTERS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The Production Situation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Synopsis and Analysis</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Director and Designer Concepts</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Production Process</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Evaluation</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDICES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. The Director’s Concept</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Production Paperwork</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Tables</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Plates</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figures</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Rendering of Broadway scenic concept</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Research Image of Washington D.C. Metro</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Research Image for gear lighting</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Production photo of “Just A Housewife,” Act I.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Production photo of Roberta’ monologue</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Production photo of “All the Livelong Day,” Act</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Production lightboxes</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>Costume Rendering: Dolores</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>Costume Rendering: Rose</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>Costume Rendering: Candy</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>Lighting Research Image for band lighting</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

THE PRODUCTION SITUATION

The Ohio State University Department of Theatre’s production of *Working* was produced at the Drake Performance and Events Center in the Thurber Theatre. Thurber Theatre is a 600-seat Continental house with a 35’-0” proscenium, named after James Thurber, writer, artist, and humorist. A Columbus native, Thurber entered The Ohio State University in 1913. Thurber began his literary career on the staff of the student paper, *The Lantern*. After leaving OSU in 1918, Thurber moved on to write for the local newspaper *The Columbus Dispatch* and, in 1927, joined the editorial staff of the prestigious *New Yorker* magazine. Columbus and Ohio State remained central influences in Thurber's lifework and in his affections. His play, *A Thurber Carnival*, had its world premier in Columbus at the Hartman Theatre in January 1960. *Jabberwock*, a play by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee based on "improbabilities lived and imagined by James Thurber in the fictional city of Columbus, Ohio" opened this theatre on November 18, 1972, which proudly bears his name (OSU Theatre Department website).

The production team for *Working* consisted of producer Mark Shanda, director Chris Roche, stage manager Lindsay Beery, lighting studio supervisor Matt Hazard and
technical direction was handled by Chad Mahan, who also serves as the department’s scenic studio supervisor. The design team was comprised of Sarah Sugarbaker as scenic designer, myself as lighting designer, Annie Cleveland, a guest artist, served as the costume designer and Chris Zinkon as sound designer. The lighting design was supported by Jackie Ferguson, lighting programmer, Corey Balogh as production electrician, and Amy Witherby served as the assistant production electrician.

Thurber Theatre is a well-equipped proscenium stage with several new additions that made it the perfect location for this production of Working. In general, Thurber comes equipped with a hydraulic orchestra lift, a 33 line double purchase counterweight fly system newly refurbished by Tiffin Scenic Studios in December of 2006, 236 dimmers, stereo sound capabilities, two channel Clear-Com production communications and backstage monitor system with page capability. The stage itself has a proscenium opening that is 35'-0" wide by 22'-0" high. The stage depth, upstage of the plaster line is 38'-0" with the apron extending 3'-1" below the plaster line. The shallow thrust/pit elevator extends 7'-11" below apron and has several different height capabilities: (0'-0"), (-3'-5"), (-5'-8"), (-7'-7"). The wing space is fairly expansive with the stage right wing space at 35'-0" x 38'-0" and stage left wing space at 18'-0" x 38'-0. The grid is located 56'-0" from the stage floor, with a usable flying height of 54'-0".

The newly refurbished fly system consists of 33 double purchase lines with an average travel distance of 51'-2" with low trim set at 3'-0" and an out position of 54'-2". The battens are 42'-0" long and each batten is centered on the theatre’s center line. Of the
33 line sets, four have been designated as permanent electrics and are motorized and capable of supporting up to 2000 lbs of weight. Downstage of the proscenium arch, a newly installed motorized box truss spans the width of the proscenium and is capable of supporting up to 6000 lbs of weight. The soft goods inventory consists of ten pairs of black velour legs, 25'-0” high by 12'-0” wide (No fullness). Two pair of legs can be combined to create a full stage black curtain. There are five velour borders (no fullness); each border is made up of three 8'-0” high by 15'-0” wide panels, creating a finished border size of 8'-0” high by 40'-0” wide. Also included in the soft goods inventory is one cyclorama (sky blue) 31'-0” high by 50'-0” wide, two black scrims 24'-0” high by 42'-0” wide and one rear projection Screen 30'-0” high by 48'-0” wide.

The lighting inventory for the Thurber Theatre is substantial and several new additions have been made in the past three years. The theatre is a dimmer-per-circuit system that includes: (188) 2.4K dimmers, two 6K dimmers and the addition of an Electronic Theatre Controls (ETC) (48) 2.4K Dimmer Sensor rack which increases the total to (236) 2.4K dimmers.

Thurber is equipped with several lighting positions located throughout the space; these positions include four motorized electrics on stage, two permanent torm positions located directly upstage of the proscenium on stage left and stage right, multiple drop cables with SOCOPEX breakouts from the grid. Downstage of the proscenium is a newly installed motorized box truss located directly over the apron, two front of house (FOH) beam catwalks, two lighting coves, eight slot positions, four on either side of the FOH,
and multiple wall pockets and floor pockets located throughout the space. The control system traditionally consists of a Strand 520 Console; however this console was not used for this production. I requested to use the ETC Obsession console over the Strand because I felt that I was more familiar with the syntax of the Obsession and its capabilities. I also would not have to spend time teaching myself and my programmer how to use an unfamiliar console.

Thurber’s lighting inventory is varied and well maintained. The inventory is mainly comprised of conventional fixtures and is supplemented by several types of automated fixtures. Please see the attached lighting inventory located in Appendix B.

The director’s concept for Working was presented and discussed at the first production meeting held on the January 8, 2008, which took place 19 weeks prior to the opening of the production on May 15, 2008. On January 22, 2008 the preliminary scenic and costume designs were presented. Final scenic drawings were submitted at the February 5, 2008 production meeting, with construction to commence on the March 10, 2008, which provided approximately nine weeks of build time. The costume design for Working was slower to evolve due to the fact the guest costume designer Annie Cleveland was located in California and face to face meetings with Cleveland did not occur until March. Annie presented her initial drawings via email in early March and the design was finalized at the April 8, 2008 production meeting. The preliminary light plot and research were presented at the April 15, 2008 production meeting and the final light
plot was submitted to the lighting studio supervisor and production electricians one week later on April 21, 2008. The hang and focus for Working commenced on April 28, 2008.

The budget for lighting was $1,200 and was spent primarily on new equipment that included two Source Four 10 degree barrels, to be used for follow spots, and four new steel patterns for the Source Four Revolution fixtures. I also rented eight PAR 64 fixtures and a DF50 hazer as well. All color media for the production of Working was pulled from in house inventory. Please see the attached budget sheet located in Appendix B.

The technical process for Working began on Monday May 5, 2008. First dress was held on Saturday May 10, 2008 and preview was held on Wednesday May 14, 2008. Working opened on Thursday May 15, 2008 and closed on Saturday May 24, 2008.

The preceding is a brief summary of the personnel, scheduling, facilities, equipment and budget for the production of Working. The following chapter will discuss the Director’s Concept and the design approach. This chapter will explore the how and why of the design from the scenic concept, the early stages of costume development and the beginnings of the approach to the lighting design.
CHAPTER 2

SCRIPT ANALYSIS

In the introduction to his book *Working*, Studs Terkel defines work as a “search for daily meaning as well as daily bread, for recognition as well as cash, for astonishing rather than torpor; in short, for a sort of life rather than a Monday through Friday sort of dying. Perhaps immortality, too, is part of the quest” (xi). A lifelong quest for the means to support ourselves financially, socially, and mentally, paints a fairly grim picture as to why humans around the globe work virtually everyday of the week, twenty-four hours a day. Ever since humans were able to stand upright the need for work and for work to be done has persisted, whether it was hunting or planting crops; there has always been a need for work. Work throughout time has divided the social classes and forced humans to create niches to be filled from the creation of work. It has defined who we are as humans with last names like Smith, Weaver, Cooper, Brewer, Hatcher, and Miller. Work is what drives the mighty machine, makes the world go’ round; without it do we have a purpose? What would we do to fill the time? Would there be any recognition of our accomplishments? Without work there would be no art, no music, no need to create. The daily grind that we as humans endure and share as a culture creates in us a need to act out against the machine through forms of expression that have their roots intertwined
with the very soul of the working man. “The blue-collar blues is no more bitterly sung than the white-collar moan. ‘I’m a machine,’ says the spot-welder. ‘I’m caged,’ says the bank teller (Terkel xi). Working, the musical, attempts to grab the working struggle of many millions of souls, and thrust it into the limelight so that some hope of immortality, of recognition of a “job well done” can be acknowledged and the weary can rest their bent frames after so many years of a “Monday through Friday sort of dying” (Terkel xi).

Growing up on the West side of Chicago, Studs Terkel received a first hand education about the woes of the working class. Born into a working class family, his father a tailor and his mother a seamstress, Terkel would often hang out in the lobby of the rooming house his parents ran where tenants, dissidents, labor organizers and the unemployed would gather. Terkel’s experiences as a child would lead him to be the voice of the common man during his years as host of many radio and television programs. After graduating from the University of Chicago in 1934, Terkel spent time in the Air Force and the Civil Service before finding his true passion; radio. Beginning in the early 1940’s Terkel’s voice could be heard on the radio in soap operas, staged radio performances and reading the news on the WAIT news show. In 1944 Terkel received his own radio program on WENR, and one year later had his own television program called “Stud’s Place.” This would be the starting point for Terkel’s illustrious career as an interviewer and champion of the common man, and other radio and television programs soon followed such as the “Studs Terkel Almanac,” the “Studs Terkel Show,”
and later “The Studs Terkel Program.” Terkel published his first book in 1956, titled *Giants of Jazz*, which was followed ten years later by his first oral history *Division Street: America*. Published in 1974 as a bestseller, Terkel’s book *Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do* would become the basis and jumping off point for Stephen Schwartz’s musical *Working*.

Running for only twenty-six performances on Broadway before closing, *Working* became a side note in the already growing pantheon of works devised by Stephen Schwartz. Written in 1978 *Working* came upon the heels of Schwartz’s two huge Broadway successes *Godspell* and *Pippin*, and during the early 1970’s Schwartz had up to three musicals running concurrently on Broadway. *Pippin* and *Godspell* embraced a sense of escapism and magic; they were pure Broadway musicals that transported the audience away from their cares. *Working* was to be the antithesis of Schwartz’s previous works. *Working* was not escapism at all. In fact it was pure realism as far as the source material is concerned; *Working* depicted the lives of real people straight out of real life and it seemed that Broadway audiences were not ready for this type of musical theatre. Several of the people depicted in the show thought that Schwartz made a mockery of their lives and struggles and upbraided Schwartz and his team for even putting the show onstage. Nonetheless the critics awarded Schwartz the Drama Desk Award for Best Direction for *Working*. Since that time Schwartz has gone on to write Grammy Award and Academy Award winning songs for several movies and most recently adapted the book *Wicked* into one of the most popular Broadway musicals of all time.
From the beginning of our production process the design team approached *Working* as an homage to the disappearing blue collar “trade” industries that this country was founded upon and the shrinking working middle class that is slowly being eroded away by the ever increasing gap in America between the rich and the poor. A study of Americans and the increasing income gap completed in 2001 by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press found that:

“The economic gains the middle class have made seem to be very much threatened by the credit crunch and by energy costs. The number of people who say they have more debt than they can afford to owe has grown from a fifth of Americans in 1992 to almost three in ten in 2001. More than a third of those who have family incomes of less than $50,000 said they have credit card and loan debts that are more than they can afford. A fourth of people in the survey said not having enough money to make ends meet was the biggest problem facing them and their families. High prices were right behind that” (Associated Press 2001).

There also seems to be a downward trend in America in the amount of trade workers who belong to or work for formalized trade unions. Laura Baggs, Dramaturg for the Ohio State production of *Working*, found in her research that the majority of union workers in 1983 were miners, mill workers, and autoworkers. Today the majority of union workers belong to education or training unions, and public unions contain 37.4% of the workforce where industry unions only comprise about 7.5%. Conversely the number of people belonging to formalized unions has increased from 6.8 million in 1983 to 15.7 in 2007. Baggs also found in her research that the top 1% of American households has more money than the lowest 20% and that $1.6 trillion dollars in tax breaks for the rich had been put in place through 2010. (See Appendix D for the complete
dramaturg research.) With so much debt stacked against them, the American middle class has begun to disappear. Trade jobs and skilled labor positions continue to dwindle as it becomes tougher for the average worker to obtain a living wage that will support a family and the rising cost of energy and food. Terkel began to understand the plight of the common American worker in the 1970’s and it seems that his stories and interviews should have served as a warning sign as the country approached the new millennia.

When *Working* was originally produced in 1978 Stephen Schwartz and Terkel wanted to pay tribute to the underappreciated working men and women of America; the fireman, the waitress, the flight attendant, all whose jobs most people take for granted. Terkel’s book brought forward those struggles and gave them a voice. It is as if Terkel perceived the winds of change had already begun to blow. “As some occupations become obsolete, others come into being. More are being paid to watch other people than ever before” (Terkel xxi). This underlying current in Terkel’s book and in Schwartz’s music and lyrics is one of the key factors to making *Working* a piece that connects to our present day state of affairs. *Working*, the musical, still carries some truth and should be treated as a soap box for the endangered worker, who slogs through the mire of day to day work so that we the privileged few can enjoy our lives. As Americans face a presidential election, with an economy on the brink of a recession, an energy crisis and a country that increasingly turns it’s back on those whom were invited, we have forgotten the very principles on which this country was founded. Inscribed at the base of the Statue of Liberty, Emma Lazarus’ poem *The New Colossus* stands as a reminder to all Americans that the common man is the one who carried America on his back and helped
to form the nation we now live in. "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses
yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the
homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Another aspect of working that Terkel and Schwartz approach is that the notion of
work cages and destroys the human spirit, and enslaves us to our daily tasks. But are we
as a society starting to break free of those bonds, throwing off the chains of mediocrity?
Through technology are we making our lives better? Terkel comments, “In a world of
cybernetics, of an almost runaway technology, things are increasingly making things. It
is for our species, it would seem, to go on to other matters. Human matters.”(xxii). If
technology allows us to redefine work, what work will there be in human matters?
Terkel answers simply through the words of former UPWA President Ralph Helstein,
“Learning is work. Caring for children is work. Community action is work. Once we
accept the concept of work as something meaningful – not just as the source of a buck –
you don’t have to worry about finding enough jobs”(xxiii). As technology raises the
standards of living, there is an increasing divide in our country between white-collar jobs
and unskilled labor. More and more jobs require some form of higher education or an
understanding of some form of technology. As the demand for these jobs increases the
average skilled laborer is left behind to work jobs that only require menial labor and even
those jobs are being absorbed by the flood of migrant or immigrant workers that the
“system” can exploit. Even though written some thirty years ago, Working seems to
grapple with these issues at its very core.
The need to work also forces humans to interact with one another daily and requires us to deal with the added stressors that being in contact with other humans creates. This theme is central to the story of *Working* and is a major point of emphasis for our production of *Working* as it was for Schwartz. Chris Roche in his Director’s Concept states, “The construction of *Working* at first glance seems isolated and solitary, so many different stories – but very little unifying factor. I believe the common thread is the workers themselves. Who do we meet on a daily basis, and how does each of those domino-like moments affect the greater whole of our lives?”(Roche1). Stephan Schwartz makes it a point in the production notes of *Working* to say that “interrelationship of all the people is an underlying theme (*Working* v).”

With those ideas in mind, the production team approached the design for *Working* from the viewpoint that the interaction between humans on a daily basis would serve as the backdrop of our production. The idea of a daily gathering of people at the train station, like Union Station in Washington D.C. or in a subway terminal in New York City was developed into one of the main themes of Ohio State’s production of *Working*. With the idea that this production would embody the idea of hard work for little pay, the production team set out to design a show that would uplift the common man, celebrate and define the working class as the integral and lasting backbone to the continued development of America.

Roche’s director’s approach for *Working* was to place the piece in an environment that would be recognizable to most people and bring a sense of realism to the show,
something that Roche felt the Broadway production lacked due to the scenic design.

Sugarbaker’s solution was to create a larger than life set that depicted the subway environments of the Washington D.C. and New York City subway systems.

This design element would give Roche the ability to depict the experience of the everyday grind of the daily commute to and from work. Layered onto the subway environment are a series of gears that loom over the set and remind the cast and audience of the “machine of work” and the humanity of being cogs in a larger wheel. This element of the scenic design is very non-realistic compared to the otherwise realistic setting. This concept is a very Brechtian notion of theatre and is something I feel that Roche had hoped to create with the design of the show all the way through the action of the story.

Cleveland’s costume design also helped to uphold the notion of the common working man, with a palette comprised of denims, browns, grays, and textures of everyday work wear coupled with suits and ties, and bright pinks and furs that would help to establish a sense class, class divide and struggle, where key elements in Roche’s concept for the production.

The lighting for Working was derived from two separate worlds, one of fantasy and one of reality. The use of directional sources and a varied color palette ensured that the lighting design would be able to adapt to a large acting space and support the needs of the director in the creation of two worlds.

In the next chapter I will discuss the Director’s Concept and the design approach in depth. I will discuss specific design choices from the Director’s Concept, the scenic
and costume design and how these design choices affected the lighting design for *Working.*
CHAPTER 3

DIRECTOR’S CONCEPT AND DESIGN APPROACH

From the very beginning of the production process, the design team decided to approach Working from the viewpoint that all of the characters in the script might possibly have some sort of interaction with each other on a daily basis. We wanted to create an environment where a multitude of people were likely to have some daily interaction, such as a bus terminal, airport, train or subway station. After considering all of these possible locations we chose the subway station, an almost universal meeting place where the dividing line between rich and poor, young and old is blurred if even for one stop. Some version of the subway can be found in many major cities throughout the world and large portions of the population have had some experience with the subway. Whenever trains enter the station there is always a great coming and going of people. Hundreds of exchanges and interactions occur simultaneously in a frenzy of action and then all is quiet again until the next train comes. An informal dance happens each day as humans come together for the purpose of getting to work. The production team saw that these interactions and exchanges could carry forward to the job place as well. Unaware of the possibility that the person standing next to you on the subway may have built the building that you now work in, or answers the phone, or pours your morning coffee, adds an entirely new layer of human interaction onto the experience of the daily commute.
With those ideas in mind, director Chris Roche wanted to create a world for *Working* that embodied the notion that we all affect each other in some way. The original Broadway design for *Working* was not the “world” Roche wanted. It consisted merely of large letters spelling out the word “working” (see Figure 2.1) and the design of each letter was representative of some aspect of working. This world felt very abstract to the design team and we needed something a little more substantive if we were going to bring this piece forward in time and create a stage environment that would have and give meaning to the actors and audience. Roche states in his director’s concept, “…the common thread is the workers themselves. This piece is “classist” in that it asks the audience to respond to the daily toil of working hard for little compensation. I want to build on that” (Roche 1).

Roche wanted to be able to ground the production in a place that would seem familiar and set the tone of the daily grind. Adding to the multiple layers of the production was the possibility of seeing the backstage crew and technical crew “working” during the show. This led to the idea of bringing the follow spot, lighting and sound console operators down into the auditorium creating another environment that the audience could possibly explore and interact with as the show progressed.
Scenically there are four separate and distinct environments: the subway arches, gears, clock, and the subway platform area that exists downstage on the apron (see Appendix D for scenic ground plan). Upstage of the main set, Sugarbaker created three large painted flats that evoke a sense of the subway tunnels found in the Washington D.C. Metro (see Figure 2.2). The next downstage environment is the world of the gears. Sugarbaker designed four large gears that occupy the set just downstage of the subway arches in between the arches and the main set. The gears are highly textured with grooves and gashes to symbolize wear and tear, and have been painted to look slightly rusted. The gears symbolize the “machine” of work and impose a sense of the daily grind as the production explores the theme of man vs. machine and the human struggle to control the machine. Sugarbaker chose to incorporate the gear design into other set...
pieces as well. The upstage left entrance portal is shaped to the outline of a gear, and the
downstage center seating area is reminiscent of the cogs of a gear.

Moving downstage into the main acting areas, Sugarbaker created a multi-level
set that is reminiscent of subway platforms from many major subway systems complete
with advertisements, benches, a ticket kiosk, and stairways that descend into the orchestra
pit as if they were leading to another subway platform.

Sugarbaker’s scenic environment had the potential to be a lighting nightmare with
the use of almost the entire Thurber stage space from apron to back wall and proscenium
edge to edge, however this was not the case. Sugarbaker’s set is a wonderment of
textures and levels that provided me with an opportunity to create some dynamic stage
pictures.

As I started to approach the lighting design for Working, I found it difficult as a
lighting designer to find inspiration from the libretto and script. The show itself is a very
loose compilation of vignettes pieced together with monologues and it was difficult to
extract textual or character research. Schwartz’s introduction to the libretto is used best
as a starting point for information from the script, but the real meat and meaning of the
words in the script must be found in Studs Terkel’s book called Working, upon which the
musical is based. It is difficult to understand what “Mike” the ironworker is
contemplating in his monologues with out reading about who he was as a person or
“Tom” the firefighter whose back-story is almost as amazing as his life. It is these
idiosyncrasies that Terkel so eloquently writes about that truly define who these people
are and how the actor should treat them as a character. Schwartz lays it out clearly in his
production notes:
“It should be remembered that the words in the script are those of real people taken in an interview. The actors should avoid the temptation to over dramatize or comment on the material, particularly the more serious monologues. People tend to talk about themselves in a matter-of-fact way, with a certain degree of shyness and self-deprecating humor, and often the more terrible the story, the bigger the smile they will have when telling it and the lighter they will make it. The actors should avoid the temptation to over dramatize or comment on the material, particularly the more serious monologues” (Schwartz V).

This sums up my design approach in a nutshell: if the actors are asked to not comment, why should the lights? When Roche and I first began to discuss the lighting approach it was a very editorial and segmented - a direction I did not want to go. Our concepts were not connected; just loose interpretations of the scenes. I felt that our early discussions would have put a layer of commentary on top of complicated staging. Roche talked about two different worlds in his director’s concept, “a world of reality in juxtaposition with a playing space for fantasy and imagination” (2). At first these worlds were to be two very literal translations, the real world of the subway and a “fantasy” world that would exist downstage of the proscenium. This idea evolved quickly as Roche decided to place the fantasy world inside the actors’ mind. Roche asked, “How does the character perceive his or her world during moments of their particular song?” A prime example is the character ‘Rose’. ‘Rose’ was played as a teacher who is out of work and homeless. During her song we see her as a homeless transient living in the subway, but she “escapes” her reality through song. To help the audience perceive the “fantasy world” I chose to light it with more saturated colors (see Figure 2.4), spotlights to create a more dramatic effect, and moments of isolation from the set and the rest of cast. I envisioned the fantasy lighting as an environment of the mind’s eye. I asked myself when writing cues for specific songs, “Are the characters trying to remember the look and feel
of the experiences expressed within the lyrics of the songs?” One source of inspiration for the fantasy lighting came from one of Pixar’s latest movies, *Ratatouille*. In the movie Remy the rat often has moments of escapism where he gets lost in his own world and the lighting changes from reality into a more fantastical feel. Once Remy is caught daydreaming the fantasy abruptly fades back to reality. This kind of effect worked perfectly in regards to my treatment of the “fantasy” moments in *Working*. I wanted the audience to see that the fantasy moments were distinctive from the world of the subway, but that they were still connected in a way that transitions from reality to fantasy and back again became almost seamless and dreamlike.

During monologues the lighting was driven by the necessity to create some sense of reality. Fluorescent lighting, pale color tones and directional sources were all used to recreate the subway environment. In the subway environment I was able to layer on
other pieces of the design to create moments of reality, unique for each character and moment.

A source inspiration for my approach to the lighting design came from American composer Aaron Copeland’s “Fanfare for the Common Man.” I used this piece of music as my inspiration for the lighting of the opening number in act one. In the first movement of “Fanfare” there is a sense of new beginning and hope, possibly the beginning of a new day. With those ideas in mind I crafted the beginning of the show as if it was the beginning of the work.
day and the sun was rising. I did not try to recreate the reality of the directionality of the sunlight, but I did try and capture the feel as the sun creeps across the horizon. Although the lighting design was based on the needs and the action of the show, Copeland’s music did affect my design choices and some of the directionality of my sources of light.

I approached the lighting for each of the scenic environments as separate worlds. I planned to connect the environments through the use layering and effective cueing. It was my goal to create subtle changes in the separate environments that would connect them, creating a total stage environment.

To accentuate the design of the main upstage gears I used three systems of light; a system of down light hung directly over the gears, a system of hi-side fixtures on tail downs from the 3A Electric on either side of the stage, and a system of side light that came from boom positions on stage left and stage right. The color for this environment was saturated ambers and blues to enhance the Sugarbaker’s color palette.

In the main downsatge acting areas, I used a five point system to light this environment. Two systems of light were used to create the general aesthetic of the subway. A top light system of 8” Fresnels colored with Lee Color Correction Double C.T. Blue 200 and Rosco Diffusion 119 and a high side system that incorporated Rosco 09 Pale Amber Gold and Rosco 74 Night Blue. Along with the high side light and top light system I used a back light system of PAR 64’s, and a system of specials using ETC 36 Degree and Altman 6x9 ellipsoids. These fixtures were hung directly over the benches, chairs and some selected acting areas to allow Roche the ability to isolate performers when needed. To provide more flexibility in my color palette I chose to use
Wybron ForeRunner color scrollers in my backlight system, since the scrollers will allow me to shift between color palettes quickly.

The front light system for Working was used as the final layer of the lighting design. The directional onstage fixtures were used to effectively sculpt the actors out from the set. The front light was used to slightly enhance the faces of the actors and not flatten the scene into the set. The front light system used Rosco 53 Pale Lavender for its color media.

To create the sense of fantasy that Roche spoke about in his director’s concept, I used a system of side light mounted on four booms on each side of the stage. I incorporated 8’-0” and 6’-0” strip lights for this system of light and varied the color palette with saturated colors. To support the lighting plot I used three ETC Source Four Revolution automated fixtures. Each fixture comes with a 12 color scroller, shutter module and gobo module that supports up to three different patterns. To add texture to Working I used three patterns in the Source Four Revolutions, Rosco breakups “Pipes,” “Industrial Window” and Rosco graphic, “Clock Face.” The use of the Source Four Revolutions provided me with a flexible and powerful tool to put light virtually anywhere I needed it onstage as well as adding another layer of light and texture. I also used the Revolutions as a supplement to the front light system to reach difficult angles on stage and provide support in moments of the fantasy world though the use of textures and color.

To help bolster the feel and color of the subway arches I lit the upstage subway arches by mounting 6’-0” Ministrips at the base and created a fluorescent lighting feel by coloring them with Lee 202 ½ C.T. Blue and Gam Diffusion 10-70.
Incorporated into the scenic and lighting design are three very unique and distinct practical fixtures used to enhance the world of the set. The first was lighting in the stage floor that is reminiscent of the lights seen in the Washington D.C. Metro that flash to warn of oncoming trains. This practical was built using nine 75 watt flood lamps mounted under the stage floor, just downstage of the plasterline and capped with half inch thick Plexiglas. I used Lee Diffusion 253 Hampshire Frost to help make these light more like the ones found in the Metro.

The second set of practicals consisted of light boxes mounted on either side of the proscenium that represented subway line numbers and letters, closely related to those seen in the New York City subway system (see Figure 2.7). The lightboxes were wired with 40 watt incandescent light bulbs and each box received three circuits so that I control which one of the “subway lines” was visible to the audience.

The final layer to my design was the two followspot positions located in the back of the house on house left and house right. I brought the followspots down into the house and out of their traditional placements to incorporate them into the “scenery” so that the audience can see the followspot operators “working.” This is an aesthetic that Roche wanted to bring into the world of the audience. Another consideration for the followspot placement was due to the height of the set. At its tallest point the set reaches 14’-0” on
the far upstage left corner. In their traditional positions the followspots would be unable to pick up anyone acting on the 14’-0” level. The installation of a large truss pieces spanning the top corner of the stage right and stage left corners of the proscenium opening, made followspot operation from their traditional positions very difficult to accomplish. Instead of using standard followspot fixtures I have chose to use two Source Four 10 Degree fixtures lamped at 750 watts, each with a different color, Lee Full C.T. 201 and Rosco No Color Pink 33 respectively. I decided on two different colors because traditionally a followspot would have two to six color media choices and I wanted to be able to have some color choice with my limited instrumentation.

In his director’s approach to the costume design Roche stated: “Iconic costumes such as overalls and suits would be perfect. I also think the use of symbols of industry and corporation could be layered on top of the costumes” (Roche 2). Roche also hints at a layer of grittiness that the whole production should embody. With this in mind, guest costume artist Annie Cleveland grounded her approach to the costumes for Working in realism, meaning the ironworker looked like an ironworker and the waitress looked like a waitress, etc.
There is also a certain level of implied realism contained with the costume design. Roche speaks often of the “classist” environment he wants to create, levels of humanity, a distinct socio-economic awareness of the characters the actors are portraying. Through the costume design Cleveland was able to bring the issue of class and class struggle to the forefront of the production using “iconic” costumes to establish the rich from the poor, the upper class from the lower.

Cleveland’s color palette for the costume design ranged from denim, browns and neutrals to hot pink, bright orange, and sequins and consists of textures and patterns found in everyday work wear (Appendix D).

Although Cleveland kept the color palette for the costumes in fairly neutral tones, there were two possible trouble spots as far as the lighting was concerned. The use of a bright orange construction worker style safety vest and yellow hard hat for the ironworker and the costume of the waitress which was a very light pink and might have looked brighter, perhaps white under stage lights and cause a possible focus problem. I feel that Cleveland’s color palette and my own worked well together.
The final element of the design was to incorporate sound into the production. Roche speaks very briefly about sound in his approach but notes that sounds of industry and repetition of those sounds are key elements in supporting the show stylistically. The sound design affected the lighting approach in two ways; the band located onstage and their visual needs, and the creation of subway lights that evoked the sense trains either entering or leaving the station. To help bolster the subway environment we decided not use music stand lights for the band, which means that the visual needs of the band fell to the lighting designer. I designed a system of band lights using ETC Source Four PARnels that were focused over each musician and was controlled by the lighting console. Each instrument was colored using a Lee 203 ¼ C.T. Blue and Rosco 119 Diffusion to mimic fluorescent lighting found in subway stations (see Figure 2.11).

The other major sound element of Working was that of a subway train entering and leaving the station. To support the sound effect Roche wanted the subway lights mounted in the stage floor to flash and blink much like the lights of the Washington D.C. Metro. In support of this sound effect I designed an effect that not only incorporated the subway lights but included the lightboxes as well, which gave the impression of several different trains coming and going from the subway station.
The ultimate goal of the lighting design was to provide Roche with the ability to place actors anywhere on the stage and give them ample lighting. The secondary goal was to design two worlds of lighting, fantasy and reality, and create juxtaposition between the two while maintaining the subway atmosphere. The lighting design helped to unify the separate environments of the scenic, costume and sound design into one cohesive subway environment that allowed the audience to submerge themselves into the show and feel as if they where actually sitting in a subway station along with the characters portrayed on stage.

The following chapter will discuss the evolution of the musical Working, and dig deeper into the mind of the playwright Stephan Schwartz and the author of Working, Studs Terkel.
CHAPTER 4
THE PROCESS

As the lighting designer for Working I was involved with the show from a very early starting point. Director Chris Roche included me in his informational meeting about Working during the fall quarter of 2007 during which he discussed possible concepts for the show, audition and rehearsal times and spoke generally about the casting process of Working and introduced the design team. Roche invited me to participate in the audition process and I was able to attend the January 24 and 25, 2008 auditions, and joined in the casting meeting which was held on Sunday January 27, 2008. This was a very interesting part of the process. Although unique and unusual my inclusion in the casting portion of the production did provide me with some invaluable insight into how Roche was conceptualizing the look and feel of the show. My inclusion in the audition process effectively cemented the collaborative and cooperative environment that Roche had wanted from the start of the process.

The first production meeting for Working was held on Tuesday, January 8, 2008. At that meeting Chris Roche presented the Director’s Concept. The director’s concept was discussed by the production team and several revisions were made to the concept at
that time. Producer Mark Shanda and several other design tech faculty were concerned with stretching the set out into the audience, a convention Roche had originally wanted. Instead of expanded the set into the audience were it would become difficult to light, the possibility of exploring vertical space with the set was discussed and revisions were made to the concept of the show. Two weeks later at the January 22, 2008 production meeting, scenic designer Sarah Sugarbaker and assistant costume designer Lindsay Simon presented preliminary design concepts for *Working* and a revised Director’s Concept was presented. Sugarbaker’s initial sketch was discussed by the production team, and the construction of scenic elements such as the gears, clock, and advertisements were discussed as well as band placement on stage.

The final set design was presented on February 5, 2008 at our weekly production meeting. Guest costume designer Annie Cleveland was present and several costuming issues were discussed. On February 6, 2008 a meeting with Cleveland, Sugarbaker, Roche and myself was held to discuss the costume design in more detail. We talked about Cleveland’s color palette and about the possibility of adding some other textures into her design such as furs, leather, and bags for the actors to carry. Sugarbaker also discussed her preliminary ideas for the advertisements that would be placed on the set.

At the February 12, 2008 production meeting the costume design was finalized and the build schedule for the scenic studio was discussed. Scenic construction of *Working* began on March 10, 2008 which allowed for nine weeks of build time. Before presenting my preliminary design I attended the Saturday, April 12, 2008 rehearsal for
Working and took some very general blocking notes and discussed some of the transition sequences with choreographer Ed Luna. I presented my preliminary lighting design and lighting research at the April 15, 2008 production meeting. I discussed my research images and how they would correlate into actual systems of light, my ideas for boom placement, and issues about hang and focus were discussed due to the interference of the set with the electrics. During the week between my preliminary and final plot submission I attended two more rehearsals and met with Roche to help clarify and define what he wanted to see for the lighting environments for each song and monologue, and how transitions between the songs and monologues would work.

One week later at the April 22, 2008 production meeting I presented my final light plot to the production team. Boom placements were discussed again at length and changes were made to the down stage boom placement. Due to scenic and acting requirements, the booms located in the first alley would impede the flow of traffic as actors exited the stage. To remedy this problem the booms were moved to torn positions slightly downstage of the boom positions. Roche decided to not use the first alley way as an exit, which helped to remedy the problem.

Another major concern discussed at the production meeting was the focusing of the light plot. The electrics had to be trimmed at heights unreachable by the lifts and we would be unable to place the lifts onto the set, so the use of the focus chair or boatswain chair was discussed as well as the appropriate linesets needed to fly the chair. The focus chair takes more labor hours to use than traditional focusing from a lift. An additional
focus call was needed to complete the focus on time. We decided that an extra focus call would be added on Friday, May 2, 2008 from 8 a.m. to 12 noon.

Before presenting my final plot to the production team, the plot was presented to my advisor Mary Tarantino, the lighting supervisor, Matt Hazard and the production electricians on Monday April 21, 2008 at 5:30 p.m. Production electrician Corey Balogh and assistant Amy Witherby began the task of circuiting the plot that evening so that hang could begin on Thursday, April 24, 2008. Technical Director Chad Mahan was present at this meeting and it was decided by Hazard and Mahan that the lighting crews could begin work on Wednesday, April 23, 2008 so that lights could be hung over the set before most of the major scenic installation of the set occurred. This was extremely helpful since we would have been unable to reach the weight arbors on some of the extra electrics due to the height of the set.

On April 23 and 24, 2008 preliminary preparations were made for the start of the lighting hang on Friday April, 25 2008. I personally began to pull color from stock and several of the graduate lighting assistants began to hang the 1A, 2A, and 3A Electrics so that they could be weighted properly. Joining the graduate students at this time were several TH 221 Fundamental Lighting Design undergraduate students and production electricians (PE’s) Balogh and Witherby. Light hang for Working officially began on Friday April 25, 2008 at 1:30 p.m. Both PE’s were present and supervised the light hang, delegating job responsibilities to the TH 221 students. Overseeing the correct implementation of the plot was left to the graduate teaching assistants. By the end of the day Friday the entire front light system was hung in front of house (FOH) and the box
truss was well on its way to being completely hung and circuited as well. Several side projects were also begun on Friday. The crew began construction of the onstage booms and the installation of the stage left and right caliper booms was started. Hang ended on Friday at 5:30 p.m. and was to resume the following morning at 9 a.m.

On Saturday, April 26, 2008 the majority of the light hang for *Working* was scheduled. All lighting graduate assistants, lighting supervisor, and the production electricians were called, as well as several TH 221 students. The day was broken up into three, three-hour call sessions; 9 a.m. to 12 noon, with a lunch break from noon to 1 p.m., an afternoon call from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. and then from 3 p.m. until 6 p.m. Saturday was very busy and the PE’s broke the GTA’s and TH 221 into smaller crews to work on several elements of the hang at the same time. During the call on Saturday we ran into several circuiting issues due to the size and nature of Thurber and the plot. With the help of Hazard and GTA Anthony Pellecchia, production electrician Balogh was able to remedy the circuit problems and the rest of the day progressed without incident as far as circuiting was concerned. By the end of the day Saturday the majority of the electrics had been hung and most of the boom units and FOH positions were well on their way to being completely hung and circuited. During the call on Saturday we realized that we would not have enough cable to complete the circuiting of the FOH box truss or the followspots. To remedy the situation Pellecchia offered to see if Pickerington High School would be willing to let us borrow several of their 100’ cables to help complete
some of our longer runs. Scott Skiles, technical director at Pickerington High School was contacted and he agreed to lend us ten of their 100’ cables for which I was truly thankful.

On Sunday, April 27, 2008 I came to the theatre to get a sense of how focus might go and I also wanted to see if the lights would hit their planned focus areas. It is a good thing I did double check my work because I discovered that the entire system of front light hung from the first beam would be unable to make their shots due to the height of the set, but more importantly the FOH box truss and the instrumentation hung from it was impeding the shots. I went back and checked my centerline section and found that I had left the truss off of the section. I immediately called Hazard and explained the situation to him and he agreed that the system would have to be moved. During the work hours on Monday April 28, 2008 we moved the front light from the first beam back to the second beam. Luckily, most of the circuits we had used for those instruments had already come from the first beam, so we actually saved a small amount of cable. At the end of the day we were able to test the circuits and lamps (flashout) and a list of problems was compiled to troubleshoot during the upcoming work calls. The rest of the week of 28 May, 2008 was used to complete the circuiting and hang of the plot.

Several issues arose during the week of May 28. We found that the scroller cable runs put in on Saturday had been done backwards, meaning the ends of the scroller cable that needed to be plugged into the power supply were at the opposite side of the theatre. We also discovered that another power supply would be needed due to the fact that the scrollers were spread out over the entire stage. This took some time to remedy and was
not completed until around Monday May 7, 2008. Hazard and Pellecchia worked extremely hard to fix the scroller runs and I am thankful for their work on this part of the project. Digital multiplex cable (DMX) for the Source Four Revolutions was also run during the week with few complications. Also during the week I decided to remove several extra practicals from the design due to time constraints and cabling issues. The LED lights I was planning to use around the band and the fluorescent fixtures that were to be hung under the bridge were cut at this time as well as the fixtures hung in the slot positions house left and house right due impart to the lack of cable.

Two issues arose during the week between hang and focus. At the April 29, 2008 production meeting, it was brought to my attention by assistant costume designer Lindsay Simon that the costume for Meredith would be a very light, pastel pink. I acquired a fabric sample from Simon and discussed the possibility of dying the fabric down because I felt we might run into visual focus issues on stage and that the costume would appear virtually white under stage lighting. After conferring with Roche and Cleveland, the decision was made to tone down the costume to a deeper and more muted shade of pink that would not appear white when lit on stage. This was a great moment of collaboration for the production team. Although Cleveland was not present in Ohio when these changes were discussed, the design team was still able to effectively communicate with her the need for the change. The second issue that arose during the week was the placement of the stage left and stage right caliper booms. I initially decided to use preexisting positions for these booms, but discovered mid week that speaker placements on the
proscenium would greatly hinder the focus of the lights located on the boom and create large shadows. To remedy this problem I decided that the booms would be moved downstage approximately three feet, which would allow for a better angle of light across the apron. The movement of these booms took place on Saturday, May 3, 2008 during the focus call.

Focus for Working began at 8 a.m. on Friday May 2, 2008. The graduate lighting assistants were present along with lighting supervisor Matt Hazard, and two overhire students with previous lighting experience: Mike Hesmond and Jacci Ferguson. During the four hour morning call we used the focus chair to complete the focus of the 1A Electric and begin the focus of the 1 Electric which was reached from the electric lift. To expedite the focusing process Hazard decided to put one person in the lift and one person in the focus chair so that I could focus several fixtures at once. During this process Hesmond focused the majority of the 1 Electric from the lift while Ferguson focused the 2A Electric from the focus chair. This system worked and was carried into Saturday’s focus session as well.

During the afternoon call on Friday, the production electricians were present and divided the work crew and TH 221 students into groups to work on various tasks and focusing. The majority of the afternoon call was spent on focusing the front light system to allow the scenic crews as much access to the stage as possible. Several lights from the front light system needed to be moved to reach the 6’-0” level of the set. This task fell into the hands of GTA Greg Owen. He was able to lower some of the fixtures hung in
the second beam so that I would be able to focus them under some of the instruments hung on the FOH box truss. This concluded the focusing activities on Friday, May 2.

Focus call for Saturday, May 3, 2008 began at 9 a.m. I was suffering from a severe cold and found it difficult to focus lights that day. Several of the fixtures on the stage left and stage right caliper booms had to be rehung to avoid the speakers hung on the proscenium and several of my front light fixtures needed to be moved again due to scenic obstructions. The front light for the bottom of the upstage left stairs was eventually moved from the front of house all the way down to the third house left slot position to allow for the proper focus. Focus on Saturday was very long and tedious but the PE’s and Hazard were able to keep me on task and I was able to focus several systems of light simultaneously from the lift and focus chair. Focus took an extra hour on Saturday and lasted until 7 p.m. During the day Hazard was able to get several of the scrollers working so that I could have them to write cues with on Sunday. Lighting console programmer Jacci Ferguson was able to attend focus and start to pre-program focus positions into the console for the ETC Source Four Revolutions and create groups for several systems of conventional light fixtures. Due to my illness I did not stay Saturday evening to write cues. Ferguson and I looked through the systems and we worked on pre-programming the scrollers and Revolutions into color palettes and focus positions. The day concluded at 10:30 p.m.

Sunday, May 4, 2008 was to be the first day of cue writing. Ferguson and I began our writing session at noon. I found it very difficult to craft accurate looks with so
many of the scrollers not working since the back light system was a key element of my
design. I took several focus and technical notes during this time and after several hours of
frustration we concluded the session at 5 p.m. with approximately 30 cues written. The
technical rehearsals for *Working* were set to begin the next day with crew watch
commencing at 7 p.m.

On Monday May 5, 2008 the lighting crews and the GTA’s began to tackle many
of my focus notes taken during Sunday. One major note was to correct the color media
in the booms; several of the colors did not match and several lamps were out as well.
The scroller cable runs were attended to, and other focus adjustments were made. During
crew watch I met with the lighting console operator and followspot operators, all seemed
very competent and the lighting console operator was somewhat excited about her
position. After introductions Hazard gave the followspot operators some do’s and don’ts
while production electrician Amy Witherby went over the lighting console operator
checklist and responsibilities with the operator. Crew watch ended around 9:30 p.m. and
tech table followed. No major changes were discussed during tech table, but we did
decide to try to get through as many cues as possible during dry tech and not worry about
adding sound until first tech on Wednesday, May 7, 2008. After tech table, Jacci and I
began our second cue writing session. I found this session to be much more productive
and we were able to create cues for the entire first act. At this point I was behind in my
writing due to my illness, but I felt what we had written was a good starting point and we
ended the session at 2 a.m. The next day was our scheduled dry tech.
During the work call on Tuesday May 6, 2008 more focus issues were addressed and the battle with the scrollers and scroller cable continued. Boom color was corrected again and the ground row and the booms focused on the scenic gears were circuited and put into place for the first time. Dry tech began at 6 p.m. and Ferguson was present to help write and fix cues while we worked through Act I. Dry tech concluded around 10:30 p.m. and tech table followed. The production team decided to begin first tech where we had left off at the end of Act I and work through Act II. We also decided to add sound and wireless microphones for the first time. Roche and I had decided early on in the technical rehearsal process that he would give me space to create as needed during rehearsal. Roche felt that I had a firm grasp on how he wanted the cues to look, therefore I was given some artistic license to create on the fly. We decided as a team that the process of note taking and giving would be a discussion that Chris and I would have during the course of rehearsal, not after. This way of designing was very comfortable and easygoing and reduced a lot of the stress often created during tech tables when notes are being given from all sides. After tech table, Ferguson and I began to write cues for Act II and were able to flesh out most of the Act with the exception of “Cleaning Women” and “Something to Point To.” We concluded our session around 2 a.m. During the course of dry tech I began to notice that the cyc was starting to pull my visual focus and destroyed all depth beyond the upstage arches. The cyc when lit flattened out the upstage area beyond the arches and destroyed any sense of depth created by the arches. It began to feel as if the world of the show just stopped and many of the shadows cast from the set onto the cyc were unpleasant visually.
On Wednesday May 7, 2008, scroller issues were addressed again and a few more were successfully connected. The biggest chore was to refocus the entire front light system. I found that after watching the first tech rehearsal, the front light was choppy and full of holes. I decided to refocus the system and recolor it using Rosco 54 Special Lavender. At 4 p.m. I was able to get dark time on stage and I had the crew leave the cyc and RP flown out while I was writing cues. This created an interesting depth of field and I presented the idea of leaving the cyc and RP out to Sugarbaker, but received lukewarm support. I asked if we could look at the set without the cyc or RP flown in during technical rehearsal and Sugarbaker agreed. During tech we finished working through Act II and then started at the top of the show working through Act I. During this time I was able to fix timing issues of cues and work on editing and updating cues. We started and stopped to look at things during rehearsal and larger lighting issues were noted and saved for my cue writing sessions. Rehearsal concluded at approximately 10:15 p.m. and tech table followed.

The issue of the cyc and RP were the hot topic of discussion and after much debate, scenic advisor Dan Gray suggested that we strike the cyc, hang the scrim in place of the cyc and move the RP to the furthest upstage batten. This note was passed on to my PE’s and was to be done during work call the next day. After tech table Ferguson and I began our cue writing session. During this session we were able to finish writing cues for “Cleaning Women” and “Something to Point To” and then start to tackle the notes we had for Act I and II. We concluded our session around 2:30 a.m.
During the work call on Thursday May 8, 2008 the crew struck the cyc, hung the scrim and moved the RP to the last batten as requested. This solution worked well and added to the depth of the upstage area. The scenic crew had added a payphone to the set during work hours and the lighting crew wired a single 75 watt light bulb into the top of the payphone. Also at this time I added an LED fixture to the inside of the kiosk so that the screen would light up and change colors much like a real kiosk would. Roche liked both of these ideas and he asked me to write the effects into just about every cue in the show. Late Thursday afternoon I was able to get dark time on the stage and I started to work through my cue notes from the previous night with the help of Greg Owen as my console operator. Also added during the day were two more of the gears (out of four), located upstage of the set. I had pre-focused the lights for this environment but the focus needed to be adjusted so time was spent on adjusting the focus for the gears.

Second tech rehearsal went smoothly and we ran through the entire show stopping only to fix major flaws with the lighting or sound. During tech table we decided the scrim and RP movement were a good fix to the cyc issue and were kept as elements of the show. During my cue writing session I was finally able to start paying close attention to minor details and was able to work on several cueing issues and notes received and taken during the rehearsal.

I had minor focus notes for the Friday work call and spent most of the afternoon working on my cue orchestration, lighting notes and preparing for Saturday’s first dress rehearsal. During third tech rehearsal we were able to run through the show completely
and Ferguson was present so I was able to edit and update cues during the run which cut
down on the amount of notes I would need to work on later. After rehearsal I gave
Ferguson the night off and was able to do some work with the ETC Source Four
Revolutions on my own, using them to highlight certain moments and scenes,
concentrating mainly on cues that had poor front light.

Saturday, May 10, 2008 was the first dress rehearsal. I took several pages of notes
during the run and was also able to fix a few minor notes during the rehearsal with the
help of my lighting console operator Erin Asselta. After the run my advisor, Mary
Tarantino gave notes and we discussed specific cue orchestration notes as well. On
Sunday May, 11 2008 I met with programmer Ferguson to address the notes I had taken
on Saturday and make changes suggested by Tarantino.

During work hours on Monday May 12, 2008 I worked on updating my cue
orchestration and lighting notes. The scenic crew added the stage right and stage left
proscenium truss pieces and it was soon discovered that I would have to once again move
some of my front light for the 6’-0” upstage acting areas. These were minor adjustments
to the front light. Several of the fixtures for the upstage acting areas simply needed to
move towards center to clear the arches. The down stage lightboxes were completed and
lampred so during my afternoon dark time I began adding them into cues. Second dress
rehearsal was Monday evening and I began to take more detailed notes on cue timing and
other minute details. Tuesday morning I worked on my cue orchestration and then
worked through my notes during the afternoon work call. I worked mainly on tracking
the lightboxes and gears through the show and added more cues with the Revolutions for highlights and front light support.

At this point in the rehearsal process I was mainly concerned with cue timing and transitions and was able to concentrate on those issues during third dress rehearsal. I took very few notes during the Tuesday evening rehearsal and was given none by the director. Wednesday I worked on a few timing notes and added a point cue for the Revolutions during the Charlie Blossom monologue so that the Revolution would follow him from the three foot platform down to center stage on the apron. During the preview performance I took a few timing notes for the stage manager but felt that the design had come as far as it could before opening.

In the final chapter I will offer my evaluation of my design choices and the process for the creation of this production. I will analyze the production as a whole and discuss my own discoveries, successes, and failures.
CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE DESIGN

In this chapter I will discuss my evaluation of the production as an artist and lighting designer for Working. My discussion will cover reactions to the overall process, elements that worked well and did not, public reactions and critical response, and finally a summary of my experience throughout the process.

Admittedly I was not enthused to do the design for Working and it was a challenge for me to really get excited about the piece. In hindsight I thoroughly enjoyed my time spent on this challenge. I hope that my experiences and the challenges faced with Working will prove educational as I move from the academic design world into my eventual career. Although the piece has merit, I feel it is slightly outdated as written and could have used a grungier feel to the entire production to give it the extra kick that may have pushed the piece over the top. Today’s American theatre going audiences are very choosy about coming out to live theatre. I feel that when they do choose to come participate in live theatre, one must push the production envelope every time to capture their attention. I feel that our production of Working needed to be pushed further to that next level to truly hold the attention of the audience.
Overall I feel that the production team took on a very collaborative spirit. Open dialogue between the director and designers was evident from the beginning of the process. It was difficult at times to communicate ideas and thoughts over email to costume designer Annie Cleveland and it is possible that some of Roche’s core ideas were lost in translation. During the beginning of my process it was difficult to gain clear direction of the lighting design from the director’s concept due to the vagueness of details pertaining to the overall design concept. Through several one-on-one meetings, Roche was able to make his thoughts and feelings about the look and feel of the show more clear. Particular discussions on each of the musical numbers, monologues and transitions helped me to more clearly define what Roche needed the show to look like from a lighting standpoint.

The other designers collaborated to create a truly remarkable environment with great attention to detail, almost to a fault. I say to a fault due to my earlier discussion of the need to make the piece grittier. The set and costumes appeared very clean and orderly and lacked that “lived in/on” quality that I feel this piece really needed. The costume design effectively supported Roche’s ideals for the texture and look of each one of the characters, but again lacked a certain realistic quality in the costumes with the absence of dirt and grime that would accompany a true blue-collar worker. Sugarbaker’s set was truly beautiful and was right in line with want Roche wanted as far an environment that would allow all these characters to have one common through line in a show that has none as written. I would have liked to seen a little more distressing of the
set and that feel that it needed a layer of dirt, trash and general grime to truly complete
the overall texture and feel of a subway station. I feel Roche under-utilized the set by not
using the amazing verticality of the set during musical numbers, keeping a large portion
of the show and musical numbers contained to the down stage apron. Throughout the
course of the show many levels were left bare and unexplored.

Overall I feel like the design met the needs of the show, but was it art? I do not
know, and I hate that I can not answer that question with a definitive yes or no. I am
pleased with several elements of the lighting design. The lighting plot wholly met the
needs of the two separate worlds of fantasy and reality. I feel that the color choices made
to represent the two worlds worked especially well. The pale, neutral color hues of the
general subway scenes effectively set the mood and tone for the environment and were
effective at creating mood shifts and setting possible time of day choices in an
environment that would normally not experience shifts in time of day lighting. The
saturated colors of the fantasy moments were another success. The use of deep purples,
reds, and pinks gave me the ability to truly transport the cast and audience into those
moments when the character stepped out of real life and into a moment when the weight
of the world and their “job” was left behind. I was also happy with the lighting of the
gears. If only every lighting designer had some huge piece of textured scenery to sculpt
with light, it would all be too simple. Beginning with my research images all the way up
to my color choices for the ambers and blues, the lighting for the gears is the one true
piece of the lighting plot that I feel was the most successful.
The other piece of the lighting design that was effective and the most surprising was the Source Four Revolutions, I truly discovered their abilities as intelligent lighting. I mainly used the Revolutions to add color and texture to the design, but what I found they were most effective for was to add that extra touch of light, texture and movement when needed. I found myself using the Revolutions in very a discreet manner to add a little extra highlight on actors faces where the front light wasn’t able to add the emphasis that I needed. I also found that I could then move the light with the actor in cued sequences so that the highlight would follow with the actor throughout the entire scene. It was a very big eureka moment for me.

Cueing and the importance of effective cue writing sometimes get overlooked in lighting design. For this production I paid specific attention to how I cued this show and explored split fades and other timing issues vigorously so that the transitions from monologues into songs, and transitions from reality to fantasy and back would appear almost seamless. These transitions were successful. Another effective piece of cueing came with the creation of a base subway environment cue. This base cue was created with a general subway environment look using mostly top light and back light with the scrollers in a light green color. The base saved me time from having to recreate this general look over and over. From this cue I was able to build all the other subway environment cues adding or subtracting different elements to craft a unique look and feel for each scene. Building from this “stock” cue provided me with the ability to transition quickly between the real world of the subway during monologues and the fantasy world of the musical numbers.
Front light was the biggest disappointment and let down for me. The stage was so massive that I did not have the instrumentation to effectively create a system of front light. In my original design I planned on 26 acting areas from the first and second beams in the FOH. Due to my lack of proper section details it was necessary to move the entire front light system to the second beam forcing it farther away from the stage creating several holes and shadows. Some shadows were also created by the instrumentation hung on the front of house box truss and was another source of frustration when it came to the focus of the front light system. I originally used Rosco 53 Pale Lavender for the front light color, but found it to be too cold and pale for the musical and ended up switching the color to Rosco 54 Special Lavender which added the touch of pink I was looking for, but also cut my transmission from 64% down to 50% respectively and was probably the biggest drawback of the color switch. If the instrumentation had been available I would have double hung the front light system using the McCandless method of two lights for each acting area, and would have considered my color choice a little more carefully.

The other system of light that failed my expectations was the side light system from the 8'-0” and 6'-0” striplights. I’m not sure what I expected, but my experiment and homage to Tharon Musser (Broadway lighting designer known for her use of strip lights for side light) did not give me the punch or the directionality that I wanted. I also ran out of time to explore using the side light systems on their own without any other systems of light interfering. One of the main issues with the side light system was due to the nature of the lamps used in the strip lights, which produces a very diffuse light that spreads quickly once it leaves the lamp and fixture. The inability to control the direction
of the light was ultimately its downfall and I was reduced to using the side light to add
touches of color and mild directionality in cues, but overall a worthwhile experiment
nonetheless.

I don’t know that I would have done much differently other than try and create a
better system of front light. Instead of using money to rent PAR 64 fixtures that I
ultimately only used in two cues I could have possibly bought a few more fixtures that
would have helped to create a more solid front light system. Also I think I would have
used the 6’-0” mini strips for the side light instead of the strip lights for the simple fact
that they have more punch and a little more directional control of the light as it leaves the
instrument.

The overall response to the lighting design has been positive from staff,
professors and the director. Roche was particularly pleased with the subway lights, kiosk
and lightboxes and overall he remarked that the “design beautifully enhanced the
difference between the worlds of fantasy and reality.” Reviews from The Columbus
Dispatch and The Other Paper have strikingly different takes on the show. The Columbus
Dispatch review written by Margaret Quamme was lackluster at best. The review is
simply titled “Labored effort lacks humanity.” Quamme makes no mention of the
lighting design but is quick to point out that the production “flattens characters into types,
and denies them their humanity.” The Other Paper’s review of Working is generally
upbeat and positive but again there is no mention of the lighting design.
Ultimately this production fell short of my expectations as a musical. Although the end product was a visual treat, *Working* was a challenge for me to design. I have found that my ability to explore new ideas and challenge my way of thinking has led me to be a much better critical thinker and a better collaborator and designer. I have some regrets that my final piece of art during grad school is attached to *Working*, but I have learned a greater respect for the need for patience and the fearlessness to try new things even if they fail my expectations.
APPENDIX A

DIRECTOR’S CONCEPT
Chris Roche
Directors’ Proposal: Working

Synopsis: The musical Working is a 1978 piece of American theatre based on the 1974 Studs Terkel book of the same name. Terkel’s piece of non-fiction is a detailed account of American workers and their day to day lives. On the cover of his book below the title is a subtitle which reads, “People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do.” The music-theatre piece on which it is based is constructed through a series of monologues and songs which shed light on each individual’s personal story as a worker in the United States. Waitresses, prostitutes, masons, migrant workers, housewives, secretaries and more, tell the tales of their work-a-day lives. The musical composers of this show are such icons as Stephen Schwartz (Wicked, Pippin, The Bakers’ Wife, Children of Eden), James Taylor (Folk – Rock Superstar since the 1960’s, penning such top 40 hits’ as, You’ve Got a Friend and Fire and Rain), and Mary Rodgers, Susan Birkenhead, Craig Carnelia and Micki Grant. The original Broadway production was directed by Stephen Schwartz in 1978, as well as a televised 1982 production for PBS. While the Broadway production lasted only 24 performances, Working continues to be a popular choice for many regional companies around the country.

Concept: The construction of Working at first glance seems isolated and solitary. So many different stories- but very little unifying factor. I believe the common thread is the workers themselves. Who do we meet on a daily basis, and how does each of those domino-like moments affect the greater whole of our lives? There is a connected story inside each vignette. I believe that relationships exist between certain characters. For instance, the steelworker Mike who sings the Act Two song “Fathers and Sons” may be married to the waitress Delores who sings “It’s an Art”. I’m interested in mapping their relationship, as well as all the relationships, throughout the allotted time. We track these characters through visual focus. In Schwartz’s production notes he talks about a giant clock on stage that tracks time. How about a set that mirrors the construction of a clock, but uses small cubby-hole spaces where each character lives? Twelve raked rooms in a sphere like construction that are able to be moved through by each performer. Each room is something every home or office possesses: bedroom, kitchen, bathroom, office, garage, etc. Yet we watch each character move through each area as if it were their own.

Repetition is a major player in this show, as in the life of any worker. The beginning sounds of the opening number “All the Live Long Day” (Typewriters, Steam Engines, Hammers), should reappear throughout the entire piece. There is something unsettling and monotonous in these sounds. There is also something urgent, and fearful in the repetition of these sounds. There is also a funky electric guitar solo in the opening number. It has tense foreshadowing type of feel to it, and I’d like it to reappear a few more times throughout the piece.

There should be some sort of climax in the show. I believe it comes around the time of “Fathers and Sons” in Act 2, but I will wait to discuss that at a later date.
All of this being said, the overall theme of this play for me is “The More Things Change, The More They Stay The Same!” The life of the American worker has not changed so drastically in the last five decades. The middle class is shrinking. Minimum wage hasn’t been raised in eight years. We are at war. Yet there is great hope in this country for change, and it is the laborer that helps effect change. I want to take Working into the millennium. I don’t believe that each character must live in the same decade. The waitress could live in the 90’s and work at Hooters”? The stay at home mom could be a soccer mom from 2002?? The Steelworker could exist in the 1960’s. In an interview with Studs Terkel by Kira Albin in 1996 Terkel cites a poem by Berthold Brecht, “When the Chinese Wall was built, where’d the masons go for lunch? When Caesar conquered Gaul, was there not even a cook in the army? When the Armada sank, King Philip wept. Were there no other tears?” It is precisely this endless historical plight of the unsung worker that is important to Terkel in terms of non-specific timelines.

**Casting:** The score lends itself to both actors and singers alike. I think there may even be room for two dancers. Between the many monologues and songs in the show many people may have their moment to share and shine. I wonder if perhaps there is even an opportunity for a character to “split”. Someone for the monologue/Someone for the song. The monologue represents how life ACTUALLY is for the character, and song speaks to the INNER FANTASY/DREAMS of the character. No matter the case, there are sufficient roles for actor and singer alike.

**Design Ideas:** My ideas for design elements include a world of reality and repetition in juxtaposition with a playing space for fantasy and imagination. The Thurber is a big space, and I would love to utilize as much of it as possible. I would consult with each designer as to the best possible option in fulfilling this task. This production should be gritty, raw, honest and entertaining in its quest for the truth.

**Possible Scenic:** My first question is, “Is it possible to use materials in the building of the set that would help to make the Thurber more acoustically sound at a reasonable price?” I’m sure many have asked this, but you never know. I envision a set that is circular in construction, and raked upward. This would take up the majority of center and upper stage. This would be the world of reality. Down stage, and perhaps built out slightly into the first few rows would be the fantasy area. Most musical numbers and certain monologues would be played in this area. I believe squares and circles could be the dominant structures. Industrial, factory-like geometrical shapes.

**Possible Lighting:** Lighting is a key player in this production. Fluorescent Light is the predominant luminary for blue-collar workers. It reveals all!! This fluorescent light would be prevalent in the world of working class reality. In the world of fantasy and song Neon Light would be the device of choice. The use of neon is hopeful and theatrical in contrast to its fluorescent cousin.

**Possible Costume:** Iconic costumes such as overalls and suits would be perfect. If they could help to identify different decades that would be perfect. I also think the use of
symbols of industry and corporation could be layered on top of the costumes. For example: The double “A’s” with the eagle in the middle for American Airlines, or the Owl with the letter “O” as eyes on Hooters Restaurant paraphernalia. Nothing to specific, but corporate imagery could be an interesting layer of costume design.

**Possible Sound:** Pre recorded industry sound that repeats itself throughout the show is also a key player. I think the opposition of a live band with pre-recorded sound could be fascinating. The use of an exposed microphone in the fantasy area would also benefit a heightened nightclub feeling for performer and spectator alike.

**Choreography:** I don’t want to scare singers or actors with to much “dance like” type of choreography. Viewpoints as a method of movement could really be perfect for *Working*. I would hope to collaborate with Jeanine Thompson as the choreographer, and David Toro from the School of Music, as her assistant. The student from the School of Music would benefit from having someone from their own terrain to help them institute something like movement exploration. The more collaboration between The Department of Theatre and The School of Music, the better possibilities of a stunning final product. It would also be interesting to incorporate two “Dancers” into the production.

**Music Direction:** *Working* does not need a full orchestra. What it does need is a rock band, and a piano. For this reason, I believe that Theo Jackson and his band would be a great collaborator with Barbra Sahr on piano. They have worked together in auditions and callbacks, but not on a show together. It would be wonderful to have them as co-musical directors, much like we had for *Cradle Will Rock*. Both of these folks bring something substantial to the process, Barbara for the overall healthy approach to singing and, and Theo for a serious Rock Opera approach to the material. I think they would rock together!

Well, these are a few of my initial ideas for *Working*. There is still tons of stuff to explore, but hopefully this gets the ball rolling. Thanks Mark, and please let me know if you have any questions or need anything clarified. Have a good one.

Thanks-

Chris
APPENDIX B

PRODUCTION PAPERWORK
APPENDIX C

FIGURES
APPENDIX D

PLATES


