

Maren Taylor  
Lighting Design Research

### Abstract:

Designing for a theatrical production is a time-consuming process filled with research and lots of trial and error. This process was different from other shows. Because we decided to have the audience change sides instead of the set rotating, I essentially had to make two lighting plots for the grid: one for the front side and one for the backside. I also had a lot of lights on the set and made a ground plot for that. Before finalizing my design, I tested out different options on our classroom setup and using a photometric software.

### Background:

In the show *Noises Off*, we see a touring play being rehearsed and performed in three acts. The first act is the front side of the stage and we see the final dress rehearsal. The second act is the backside of the stage on opening night. The third act is the front side of the stage again for the final performance of the play. Usually, the set rotates between each act so we see the front and the backside of the stage. In our production, we decided to have the audience travel through the set for each act. This gave the audience a more immersive experience. The audience got to see the inner workings of a set and lighting. This ended up being the best option for our space as well.

### Research Process:

My goal for my design was to show the essence of theatre lighting. I used the picture of the gears as inspiration to show the inner workings of the theatre while still lighting the people well. I wanted the audience to feel what the lighting is like during the different stages of the process. With act one being rehearsal, I wanted to show the basics of lighting by having just white light. In act two, I wanted the audience to understand what it's like backstage with the backstage blues. In act three, I went back to white lighting for the front side of the stage but had a different cueing sequence for the start of the performance we see that makes it different from the first act.

A majority of my process was based on trial and error. I used our lighting setup in the theatre classroom to test out colors, angles, and intensity before settling on what I wanted and what would work best for the show. In order to determine the best type of light to use, I used a software called Vectorworks and used photometrics. I also used this software to determine the exact placement of the lights. After testing everything I could in the classroom and using Vectorworks, I tried it out in the actual theater and made adjustments from there. Another part of my process included changing three systems of lights' color the week of tech week, the week of our opening performance, because the actors looked orange. Even though I had tested everything, it was different when the costumes, set, and makeup all came together under the lights. This part of my process helped me be okay with failing and trying again. This process was beautiful, full of trial and error, and helped me grow artistically.