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A New Way of Light: Lighting What We Cher-ish

At rare moments, in the long quiet hours of light-rehearsals, a strange thing happens. We are overcome by a realization of the livingness of light. As we gradually bring a scene out of the shadows, sending long rays slanting across a column, touching an outline with color, animating the scene moment by moment until it seems to breathe, our work becomes an incantation. We feel the presence of elemental energies.

—Robert Jones

Though Jones was writing about the theater, every modern rock-and-roll enthusiast will agree with his words: concerts also put their fans in a trance, exciting them emotionally and enhancing their quasi-religious worship of the singers. Both the theater and the concert employ lighting to energize their audiences, yet the purpose and methods of the lighting designer in each medium are unique. In the theater, the lighting designer's main responsibility is to bring focus to the actor onstage, while in concerts, the lighting designer must visually engage and entertain the audience in addition to enhancing and complementing the music. Because the concert lighting designer's role is not limited to focusing on the actor or singer, and because concerts often employ more advanced lighting technology, the concert lighting designer has more artistic freedom in creating effects onstage. However, this freedom must be used carefully in order to create effects that logically enhance the music and the audience's experience. Patrick Woodroffe's lighting design for Cher's *Believe* Tour is an example for concert lighting designers to follow in producing a thoughtful, artistic, and effective design: by using dramatic contrast and purposefully engaging the audience's excitement, Woodroffe is able to make a creative statement about each song, rendering Cher's music more powerful and meaningful.

When Jones wrote The Dramatic Imagination, his purpose was to comment on how lighting for the theater can be effective; in particular, he noted the designer's role in emphasizing the actor's presence by creating an illusory atmosphere around him. In the beginning of his chapter on lighting, he states that the lighting designer's "first duty" in the theater is to the actor (114). Stanley McCandless, the author of A Method of Lighting the Stage, the first authoritative text on lighting methodology, too declares that "the actor is the point of emphasis in the stage picture" (96). In order to emphasize the actor's presence, McCandless and his contemporaries suggest that lighting should be dramatic, creating a mood and atmosphere to fit the actor's words and setting. The first page of McCandless' text directly invokes this artistic aspect of lighting: "In its brightness and darkness, its color and pattern, it creates an atmosphere that is inherently dramatic." In using the word "dramatic," McCandless meant that lighting should be purposeful, that it should logically support the action of the story. This is important because, as Rollo Gillespie Williams points out, lighting is powerful enough to enhance or diminish an actor based on how appropriately it is used (121). Thus, lighting design was historically conceived of as a tool for enhancing the actor's presence by manipulating his atmosphere.

The lighting designers of the early 20th century clearly defined this artistic manipulation, teaching that lighting should aim for illusion and theatrical effects rather than a reproduction of reality. Just as Ralph Waldo Emerson perceived the theater—"In our fine arts not imitation but creation is the aim" (qtd. in Jones 131)—so did McCandless envision its lighting: "it is not a factual presentation that is desirable on the stage; it is the representation of some effect that contains the essence of reality" (14). Being responsible for creating this theatrical "effect," the lighting designer became just as much of an artist as the actor, doing with "light-waves" what the actor does with "sound-waves" (Corry 11). However, none of the early lighting design writers

conceived of this “art” of creating lighting effects as more important than acting: the lighting designer *was* an artist, but only to the extent to which he or she enhanced the *actor* rather than made a statement for him or herself.

As lighting designers worked to find innovative theatrical effects and methods, they discovered many practical techniques for emphasizing the actor’s presence and the themes of the script. After deciding that lighting should be motivated by the content of the story, they started to employ “motivating sources” of light, lighting instruments that were used to convey the time of day, the setting, and the mood of the scene (McCandless 17). Designers also realized that lighting can gain abstract meaning by bringing focus to the themes of a play in addition to its action: “Lighting a scene consists not only in throwing light upon objects but in throwing light upon a subject” (Jones 118). One way that lighting designers throw “light upon a subject” is with color choices, using warm (red and orange) colors for happy scenes and cool (lavender) colors for sad scenes. Designers also throw “light upon a subject” by using contrasting colors to establish which characters are good or evil and which actions should be viewed as positive (bright and warm lighting) or negative (dark and shadowy lighting). Because the early designers saw how certain lighting techniques could shift attention to abstract themes, they stressed that the main focus of lighting should remain the actor and his or her words and that designers should be careful in lighting “subject[s]” more than actors.

In coming up with these rules and techniques, writers and designers found that the style of a production should also determine its lighting, allowing designers to mix different techniques to match each style of performance. Francis Reid, author of The Stage Lighting Handbook, one of the most popular modern student texts on lighting, mentions that designers should adapt techniques from various styles (theatrical, musical, dance) to achieve the complex, individual

looks required for particular shows (9). Choosing techniques that match the performance style is especially important for concerts, which differ logistically from theatrical performances and thus require a different mix of lighting techniques. For example, Patrick Woodroffe, Cher's lighting designer, argues that part of his success is due to the way in which he combines theatrical and concert techniques in all of his shows (Pilbrow 352). Writers such as Harold Ridge describe that in addition to a production's style, its level of abstraction can alter the rules for its lighting. For example, Ridge shows that for productions without a definite or realistic setting, the lighting designer can choose colors and effects to match the "spirit," or mood, of a scene instead of matching a specific location (132). The application of this rule to concerts, where songs often have abstract themes and are driven by their "spirit," or emotion, allows the concert lighting designer freedom to use a more unfettered style than in the theater, where plays often have concrete plots and settings.

This freedom in lighting style in the era of concerts defines a new role for the lighting designer. One of the most significant catalysts in creating this new role is advanced lighting technology, namely moving lights and automated color effects. Linda Essig writes in her text on modern lighting theory that throughout history, as lighting technology changed, so did the role of lighting design (2). She characterizes the role of the modern lighting designer as more proactive than in the past, "*design[ing]*"¹ and creating freely, instead of being bound to the actor and his or her story. For example, she gives the lighting designer the active responsibility of creating focus, controlling "how" and "what" the audience sees (6). Essig feels that lighting's focus can now be separated from the actor so that the designer can freely make creative statements about other elements of the show, such as its emotional and abstract themes. Other designers agree with Essig that modern technology inspires this new room for creativity: Abigail Rosen Holmes,

¹ Author's italics.

lighting designer for Cher's *Farewell* Tour says, "I suppose it sounds too obvious but [automated lighting] really did completely change the possibilities of what we do as lighting designers" (qtd. in "Looking Back"). Holmes is referring to moving lights and color scrollers, which give lighting designers many more options in creating looks and choosing colors: in addition to being able to move their light beams, automated lights can strobe, fade colors, and display various gobos, or patterns; even non-automated lights can be used in new, more flexible ways with color scrollers, which can change the color of conventional stage lights very quickly. Because moving lights can be used with many different parameters (color, pattern, position), lighting designers can truly "*design*," as Essig says, and create virtually any look onstage, finding the right look for every moment of the show. Thus, Essig and Holmes feel that lighting designers who use automated technology have much more freedom and can sometimes create more effective designs. However, the lighting techniques that result from automated technology—moving the beams, fading the colors, strobing—can often be non-theatrical, bringing attention to the lights themselves and away from actors or singers. In order for lighting designers to use modern technology effectively, they should only use it in situations in which non-theatrical lighting is required or would enhance the performance.

One such situation is concerts, which have specific logistical aspects that require different lighting than the theater. First of all, concerts are performed in much larger arenas (usually stadiums) to a much larger audience; this requires physically and metaphorically "bigger" lighting. Often, the arena does not feature a set—just an open stage with the singer and band. Thus, the first problem that concert lighting designers face is highlighting the singers and making them visible against the background. One way of solving this problem would be to use a theatrical technique, employing contrasting colors for the singer and background (Williams 144).

Reid, however, remarks that the majority of concert lighting designers take an approach that is radically different from the theatrical solution offered by Williams: “For most of the audience in a big stadium, the band are distant dots.... the prime need is an assault on the senses by every possible aural and visual effect that can contribute to creating and maintaining a rising tension” (Lighting the Stage 36). Thus, Reid points out that instead of trying to highlight the singer’s presence, concert lighting designers realize that they cannot make the entire audience see the singer clearly. Instead, they use large moving lights effects to give those in the audience that cannot see the singer something to look at. Reid discounts these effects as “assault[ing]” the audience with little meaning; however, his context as a theatrical lighting designer influences his judgment because the new techniques are clearly non-theatrical. Reid, nevertheless, brings up one of the most important goals of concert lighting designers: raising “tension” and excitement by engaging the audience with bright contrasting colors and controlled beam movement. Because people go to concerts for entertainment, it is important for the lighting to enhance the audience’s excitement by providing every viewer with something visually stimulating.

The second aspect of large concert arenas that gives the lighting designer more freedom to use non-theatrical techniques is the lack of set. This lack of set requires the lighting designer to define the space and visual image the audience perceives, and one method of doing this is with beam effects in the air; it is in this way that the concert lighting designer takes on the role of scenic artist. At concerts, the audience can actually focus on the lighting in addition to the singer; because some of the audience can’t even *see* the singer, they depend on the long beams of colored light to provide them with visual entertainment and a sense of setting. In his texts on theatrical lighting, Reid states his belief that “light means absolutely nothing until it hits something” (Lighting the Stage x); in concerts, light actually *does* mean something by itself

because the audience in the back of the stadium can see only the light and not that which it hits. Thus, the purpose of lighting changes from enhancing the actor's presence in the theater to painting the air with light in the concert. Just as scenic designers create and define the space in which actors perform, so do concert designers use light to define the space in which singers perform. When renowned lighting designer Jules Fisher started designing concerts, he found his role to be similar to that of a scenic designer because he used composition and beam effects in the air to create a setting for the singers (Pilbrow 237). Luc LaFortune, lighting designer for Cirque du Soleil's dance shows, explains his own love of lighting in the same way as Jules Fisher: "The thing I liked about rock-and-roll gigs was that there was almost no sets. I was fascinated by how lights could completely redefine space. You pretty much decide the *image*—the vision the spectator is going to have" (qtd. in Pilbrow 274). This is an example of Essig's proactive characterization of the modern lighting designer: LaFortune uses modern technology to create effects that define new perceptions of the music rather than simply emphasize existing ones.

Some lighting designers, such as Kevin Shaw, take this proactive role perhaps too far. On his website, Shaw explains his belief that the concert lighting designer is as much a "performance artist" as the musician onstage ("Rock and Roll"). This view of the concert designer is similar to Percy Corry's view of the theatrical designer (doing the same thing with "light-waves" as the actor does with "sound-waves"). However, many critics of modern lighting techniques disagree with Shaw's interpretation of the lighting designer's role. Paul Dexter, for example, believes that the lighting designer should not take such an active role and should only complement the production instead of define it: "First, avoid playing lights like music.... You are there to complement and add value to the performance, not become a member of the band"

(qtd. in Lampert-Gréaux). Perhaps Dexter's imperatives are a bit harsh, but he makes a valid point in insisting that the lighting designer not overwhelm the music but aim to complement it as much as possible.

A second aspect of concerts that determines different methods of lighting than the theater is its actual purpose: the concert, unlike the theater, is a place for fun, dancing, and singing-along, so the lighting designer's primary goal should be to engage and excite the audience. Modern lighting technology offers many tools to accomplish this goal, such as moving lights and color scrollers, which give lighting designers the capability to create any effect they imagine. Nevertheless, Reid points out that these effects need to be used with dramatic purpose, just like the theatrical effects described by McCandless and Williams: "unless they are deployed with great care, [these] effects can defeat their own aim. Flashing, chasing, and gyrating become so normal that we barely notice them. Stillness, by contrast, can be the more dramatically-arresting event" (Lighting the Stage 36). Richard Pilbrow, a lighting designer who has worked in both theatrical and musical entertainment, agrees with Reid in that modern technology can be extremely useful in engaging and exciting the audience, but only when used dramatically and for a purpose: "to enrich the visual and emotional atmosphere of the stage" (5).

The automated technology that is most debated about in terms of its effectiveness in engaging the audience and creating fun rather than distraction is moving lights: as Reid says, "moving lights are an area with tremendous potential for driving forward the art of lighting, yet also have the capability for creating havoc if we do not use them properly" (Lighting the Stage 90). In describing some of the ways moving lights can be used ineffectively, he cautions against moving lights effects that look like random, mindless movements, "as if the designer and the operator had been replaced by random-number generators" (Lighting the Stage 83). Instead of

seeing the new role of the lighting designer as proactive and creative because of the technology, as Essig suggests, Reid implies that the designer can often appear “random” and machine-like because of the effects he or she creates.

However, Reid and other lighting designers describe that when the light cues *are* purposeful and the effects *are* logical, moving lights can be very effective dramatic tools, giving the designer the ability to truly paint with light. Examining the many useful features of today’s moving lights—beam movement and texturing, the use of any color and pattern—Reid calls a design that uses them effectively “real painting” (Lighting the Stage 86). In this way, he agrees with Pilbrow in that advanced technology can give lighting designers freedom to create any color and produce anything onstage that they desire, fitting with Essig’s perception of modern designers as imaginative and free. Jules Fisher adds that moving lights are also effective when timed and used dramatically, noting that “the rhythmic timing of the lighting can be a powerful, emotional tool... [even] referred to in Stanley McCandless’s definition of lighting” (qtd. in Pilbrow 237). By referring to McCandless, Fisher shows that careful usage and timing of moving lights can be effective from both a concert and theatrical perspective.

Another important technique for “painting” with moving lights is contrast. When the lighting designer moves the light beams constantly and does not create contrast between static and moving looks, the effect of the movement is much less dramatic. Dexter, just like Reid, says that it is contrasting effects that define the “drama” of a show: one simple effect that stands out can be much more powerful than a string of complicated effects (Lampert-Gréaux). LaFortune points out that this is exactly what European lighting designers do, admiring how many of them use moving lights in mostly static looks; he finds that when they decide to make them move, the effect is much more powerful (Pilbrow 279). Thus, LaFortune suggests that in adopting more

contrasting techniques into their shows, American lighting designers can learn some lessons from their European counterparts. What Dexter and LaFortune agree on is that creating contrasting looks with moving lights can be very dramatic, making those looks much more powerful, but failing to use contrast and exclusively using the moving capabilities of automated lights greatly weakens their effect.

Cher's 1999 *Believe* Tour presents lighting that Dexter, LaFortune, Reid, and Essig (among others) would applaud as very effective—actively engaging the audience, enhancing the singer and her music, and purposefully using contrasting moving lights effects. In the article titled “Cher and Cher Alike,” lighting industry journalist Catherine McHugh describes the concert as “one of the most successful and visually stunning tours of the summer season.” Thus, it is also an important example because of the tour's and the lighting design's interrelated success, evidence that an effective and thoughtful lighting design can boost the success of a concert. Patrick Woodroffe, the lighting designer for the *Believe* Tour, contrasts his use of theatrical and non-theatrical techniques to arrive at a style that perfectly matches and enhances Cher's concert.

The first effective technique that Woodroffe employs towards this end is thoughtfully engaging the audience. He does this with lighting effects that emotionally excite them and cue them to dance and sing, creating anxiety and “rising tension” as Francis Reid says. The first song of the concert, “Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For,” starts with a long musical overture with the lights at a low intensity, a technique that increases the audience's anticipation for the music to come. [Figure 1]. As the chorus of the song starts, the moving lights sweep into the audience's eyes to enhance the excitement of the moment they have all been waiting for [Figure 2]. These sweeps effectively engage the audience because, as Jules Fisher emphasizes, they are



Fig. 1. Overture. Cher: Live In Vegas [Cher's Believe Tour]. Tour Dir. Dorian Sanchez. Apis Productions, 1999.



Fig. 2. "Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For" Chorus. Cher: Live In Vegas [Cher's Believe Tour].

timed logically: they come at the moment the audience's excitement is at a maximum. The effects that Woodroffe uses at the end of the show are similarly logical and dramatic, accentuating the audience's enjoyment of the music. These lighting effects are so flashy that people look up and notice them [Figure 3]. At the end of the show, the lighting does not need to be subconscious because the audience knows that the finale is the emotional climax of the show.



Fig. 3. "Believe" Finale. Cher: Live In Vegas [Cher's Believe Tour].

Thus, Woodroffe wants the audience to actively notice and be awed by the lighting in order for them to consequently be awed by their concert experience and by Cher. He uses the fact that lighting "decides" the audience's image of the singer, as LaFortune says: if the lighting is awe-inspiring, then so too is the singer.

A second way that Woodroffe directly engages the audience and brings them into the show is by shining the lights directly at them. When Cher performs the "Shoop Shoop Song," a classic barber shop song the crowd recognizes, she engages the audience by prompting them to sing along with her. Woodroffe does exactly what Cher does with his lighting [Figure 4].



Fig. 4. “Shoop Shoop Song.” Cher: Live In Vegas [Cher’s Believe Tour].

Onstage, Woodroffe uses very saturated purple beams of light shooting through the air, creating a romantic atmosphere around Cher. To engage the audience, he shines the same purple-colored lights at them as well, mimicking the look onstage in the stadium. Thus, Woodroffe lights the audience just as consciously and with the same techniques as he lights the stage, indicating that he is deliberately making the audience a part of the show. In addition, he places a large number of moving lights at the *back* of the stadium solely for the purpose of lighting the audience [Figure 5]. When these lights sweep over the crowd, the audience becomes the focus of the spotlight, the focus of attention. Because the show is for them and for them to have fun, at the moment when they are passionately singing along to their favorite songs, they deserve to be the



Fig. 5. Audience Lights.
Cher: Live In Vegas [Cher’s Believe Tour].

center of attention, and Woodroffe responds to this need. In what other medium of entertainment is the audience as much the center of attention as at concerts? In the theater, McCandless says the actor is the “point of emphasis,” so he never mentions lighting the audience; in concerts, the show exists to actively entertain the audience, so it is logical for the audience to share the spotlight

with the singer. Based on the crowd's reactions in the above figures, Woodroffe is highly successful in using this first technique of purposefully engaging and exciting the audience. In all the Figures 1-5 above, the audience looks happy—dancing and singing along to the music. The success of the concert can be attributed solely to this happiness.

Woodroffe's lighting, however, does even more than that to boost the concert's success. His lighting complements the music by matching its style and content, providing a dramatic contrast between the upbeat songs and the slow and thought-provoking songs, and giving the audience specific images and emotions to associate with each part of the show. Because each song's content and style is meant to invoke certain thoughts and emotions in the audience, the lighting enhances these feelings by displaying images associated with the themes of the song. Paul Dexter would applaud Woodroffe for this achievement because he delineates a unique look and effect for each part of the show, thereby successfully contrasting the different themes in the concert.

Woodroffe complements the content of Cher's music by using dark colors in static looks for the more emotional and melodramatic songs and bright, saturated colors in moving looks for the upbeat and high-spirited songs. This difference in color choice and in use of moving lights marks the logic of Woodroffe's approach to lighting: his technique is exactly what McCandless and Reid mean by "dramatic." The song "I Found Someone," for example, is about Cher being lonely and then finding someone to love; to reinforce this theme of loneliness and search for love, Woodroffe creates a look onstage that appears equally sad and lonely [Figure 6]. The bright follow spot picks out Cher from her dark background to indicate that she is the focus of the song. Because the lyrics are serious, Woodroffe realizes the importance of keeping the focus on Cher by minimizing distractions with the other lights. Thus, Woodroffe uses a look that fits



Fig. 6. "I Found Someone."
Cher: Live In Vegas [Cher's Believe Tour].

McCandless' characterization of theatrical lighting, keeping the focus on the singer and her words. Woodroffe further enhances the content of the song by shining ten non-moving, saturated blue backlights at the stage and one white-colored follow spot at Cher. Because she has only one light directly on her, she appears small next to the ten tall beams of backlight: this visual sense of smallness combined with the fact that no one else is onstage emphasizes the loneliness that Cher is singing about. Woodroffe enhances the content of happy songs, such as "Dov'è l'amore?" in a similar way. In this song, Cher is again singing about love, but here her lyrics have a Spanish and Italian twist and are happier than that of "I Found Someone." To point out this difference in content and to underline the new Mediterranean theme, Woodroffe creates a dynamic look with deeply saturated red and orange lights in the form of a sun [Figure 7]. The warm colors both establish the Spanish and Italian aura of the song and set a bright mood for the upbeat lyrics. Another aspect of the look that enhances the lyrics is the moving lights: the dancing beams of light reinforce the audience's perception of the song as happy and prompt them to dance along.



Fig. 7. "Dov'è l'amore?"
Cher: Live In Vegas [Cher's Believe Tour].

Just as Woodroffe uses lighting to emphasize the content Cher's songs, he creates looks that match the four different styles of music in the concert as well. The tour's set designer Mark

Fisher describes the varying styles of music that Woodroffe had to design for: “It’s a play in four acts—from a design point of view anyway.... We start off with a ‘Gypsies, Tramps, and Thieves’ retro dungeon look and then we go into a retro late 60s/early 70s scene. Next there is an unplugged section, and for the finale, we come back with a rave/dance and hip-hop ‘Believe’ section” (qtd. in McHugh, “Cher and Cher Alike”). Woodroffe responds to these different genres of music by employing static, cool-colored looks for slow songs and moving, warm-colored looks for upbeat dance songs. In using different color temperatures to regulate the mood of the songs, Woodroffe employs the techniques of the McCandless Method; it is no wonder that he describes his design as “very theatrical” (qtd. in McHugh, “Cher and Cher Alike”).

By employing lighting techniques according to the different styles of music in the concert, Woodroffe is able to achieve contrasting looks that effectively enhance and delineate each genre. The technology—moving lights and color scrollers—that he uses gives him freedom in making the transitions between these sections very artistic; Woodroffe uses his technology exactly as Richard Pilbrow proscribes: “for a purpose, to enrich the visual and emotional atmosphere of the stage.” In the transition between the songs “Half Breed” and “Gypsies, Tramps, and Thieves,” Woodroffe makes the moving lights crossfade from warm to cool colors to indicate a transition in song, theme, and mood [Figure 8]. This ability to make the moving

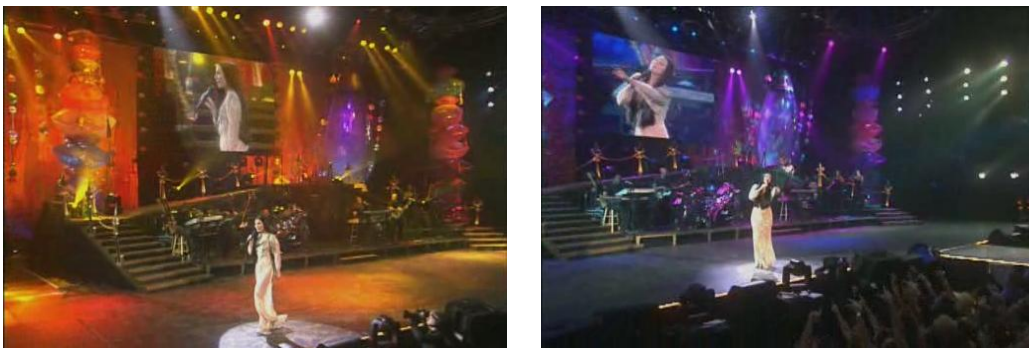


Fig. 8. Transition between “Half-Breed” and “Gypsies, Tramps, and Thieves.”
Cher: Live In Vegas [Cher’s Believe Tour].

lights and color scrollers fade from one color to another allows Woodroffe to visually underline the transition between the beginning of the concert—warm, energetic—and the beginning of the “Gypsies, Tramps, and Thieves” section of music—cool, mysterious. Woodroffe uses this same technique (instead of blacking out, letting the moving lights fade from one look to another) to mark the transition from the “Gypsies, Tramps, and Thieves” medley into the psychedelic 60s section [Figure 9]. While the colors for the end of “Dark Lady” are shades of red and the composition in the air is symmetric, the lights for “Take Me Home,” the first 60s song, form a



Fig. 9. Transition between “Dark Lady” and “Take Me Home.”
Cher: Live In Vegas [Cher’s Believe Tour].

psychedelic rainbow of colors and are asymmetric in the air, alluding to the chaotic fun and disorder of the 60s. Woodroffe, however, understands when a powerful contrast to these large full-stage looks is appropriate, such as in “After All,” the first song in the unplugged section of slow love songs [Figure 10]. The lyrics of the song and Cher’s costume establish a classic love-song atmosphere; Woodroffe’s lighting enhances this atmosphere by making it visually romantic as well:



Fig. 10. “After All.”
Cher: Live In Vegas [Cher’s Believe Tour].

the starlit backdrop, the deep blue backlight, and again the lone follow spot on Cher bring focus

to her and to her words. The element that strengthens this cue is its contrast to the full-stage, bright looks in the previous two musical sections: the lights are now dim and static, and as Reid points out, “stillness, by contrast, [is a] dramatically-arresting event.”

Thus, Woodroffe adapts his use of modern technology to fit the style of each song, making sure that each effect appropriately enhances the music. Even though Francis Reid might not approve of some of the rock-and-roll effects Woodroffe uses to engage the audience, he would applaud him for knowing how to shape his techniques towards each song, since this is exactly what he means when he says that lighting should match a production’s style. Woodroffe adapts his lighting effectively by using a deliberate and logical method for choosing appropriate techniques. Peggy Eisenhauer, lighting designer for the concerts of Andrew Lloyd Webber, says, “It’s more exciting as a designer to do different things rather than meld the styles into just one type of look.... Although the different styles borrow from each other, you should be conscious of it as a designer—defining your impulses helps to sharpen them” (qtd. in McHugh, “Mood Swings” 9). Woodroffe achieves exactly what Eisenhauer considers to be an effective design: “conscious” and deliberate incorporation of different techniques for contrast.

Patrick Woodroffe’s design for Cher’s *Believe* Tour shows that lighting can enhance the audience’s concert experience and express the feelings of the lyrics, the music, and the lighting designer; his design also points out how careful and calculating the concert lighting designer must be in choosing which effects are appropriate and when. Concert lighting design is in a continuous struggle between theater and rock-and-roll, and it is the successful designs that strike a balance between the two, enhancing the singer and music while actively engaging the audience with large effects. The authors of the historical lighting texts—McCandless, Reid, Williams, Ridge—envisioned the lighting designer as an artistic magician, creating illusions instead of

reproducing reality; concert designers, with the help of their modern technology, have realized these historic dreams to an extent unimagined by the original dreamers. Linda Essig was right: the role of the lighting designer has become more proactive, creative, and free, and this role will continue to change as lighting technology and the medium of popular entertainment transform. The future will present new challenges for lighting designers, requiring them to find new methods and alter old ones; however, lighting designers should never forget their past, but instead use it to guide their future.

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