

scale. The size of the tools grows proportionately, but our aim remains to create quality portraiture with interesting and varied backgrounds. It is perhaps in this format that there is the greatest opportunity to do very elaborate lighting or indeed very simple lighting; each can work effectively if well executed.

Using a cyclorama as a background provides many staging opportunities as well as pitfalls. We can create a neutral background which is primarily non-associative, that is, the background merely provides a background staging element or setting against which we set off our show. As an alternative, shading can be spatial—used to create a sense of depth—creating an artificial horizon which can have the effect of sharply defining one area from another, if that is the desired effect. Oftentimes there is the need for the projection of patterns on the cyclorama, but we should do this with care.

Considering all the camera angles from which a projected pattern will be seen will help prevent embarrassing situations, such as a cut between two different cameras which shows the pattern as quite dissimilar from one shot to the other. One must consider the visual effect of differences in depth of field from shot to shot, for example, staging the set far enough away from the cyc to permit

evenly-saturated illumination of the cyclorama without having light spilling onto the set area. Staging the body of the set too close to the cyc is a common problem and can be avoided if the staging is properly thought out. Poorly-planned staging has a way of cascading, influencing in greater proportion each facet of the technical production, whether it be lighting, camera or sound.

Some of the problems that crop up when scenic elements are staged too close to the cyc are: 1) contamination of skin tones by the overhead cyc lights; 2) dilution of any color or patterns projected on the cyc caused by spill from keylights, either direct or reflected off the studio floor; 3) shadows of the actors or set pieces on the cyc, which is visually distracting.

One scenic element that it seems is almost obligatory in area staging, particularly game shows, is the inclusion of some decorative form of lighting like a marquee, strip lighting or flashing bulbs. Unless the intensity and visibility of these sources is controlled, they can overwhelm and prove so distracting that they totally obscure the content of the rest of the shot. Once again, careful planning beforehand and diligent control during set-up, rehearsal and production will lead to satisfactory if not exemplary results.

In conclusion, there are many elements that come together to form a television program, among them staging, lighting and camera work. The keys to good execution of all of these three disciplines is: 1) preparedness; 2) knowledge; 3) experience; 4) an eye for detail. These tenets form the foundation upon which the smallest or the largest production can be successfully mounted.

In this brief article, I have illustrated some of the production problems that can arise during a production which are usually attributed to lighting. Lighting can't solve every problem. On occasion it is direction or staging that must make a change or make an accommodation for the good of the production. By the same token, a lighting director must be skilled enough and disciplined enough to recognize when he or she can make a contribution or defer to another craft. After all, good pictures are everyone's aim and a degree of respect for each craft helps to create a harmonious situation where the best work is borne out on the the screen.

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