Brooks Walsh

Due: October 11, 2023

THTR – 027: Review of Lighting for Show 1

This is Not the Play was certainly “in your face” and the lighting and sounds of the show were instrumental in portraying this desired effect. The premise of this show was to shed light on various touchy topics related to racism through an extended abstract scene that represented the created characters as having free will, and the playwright as “God up in this bitch”. I include the previous phrase because it is my opinion that the excessive cursing was unnecessary to deliver the messages that the actual playwright wanted to express. Putting my thoughts of the substance of the play aside, the lighting and sound was fascinating to focus on.

The lighting was constantly shifting, from up stage to down stage, right to left, sometimes following the character of focus and other times not. There was a moment or two where I was unsure whether it was the performers being in the wrong spot, the lighting being slightly behind timing, or even a stylistic choice of the playwright. This only happened a few times throughout the play, and for the most part, I found the lighting added significantly to the atmosphere and intended emotional message of the play. My favorite example of this was the dramatic use of sound and lighting to show the terrors behind the central door in the set in the first act. While it was evident from the actors screams and the large tentacle props that there was supposed to be a monster back there, what really got me invested was the shift of color, intensity, and position of the lighting along with the loud sound effects from the speakers. A more subtle effect of lighting I noticed was when a long conversation was happening, and performers were moving around the stage. During this time, the lighting never made dramatic shifts, but slowly moved from one style/color/position to another. Something as subtle as a color shift from white to red or shining lighter on one half of the stage versus the other can have the effect of you agreeing or disagreeing with the speaker subconsciously. An example of this came towards the end of the play when “white girl 2” (the one that didn’t die) speaks with the playwright/God character; the lighting was carefully designed to allow focus on both the on-stage speaker as well as the invisible playwright, whose voice was booming and could’ve easily taken over.