Brooks Walsh

Due: November 29, 2023

THTR – 027: Review of Lighting for Show 2

The title of this show was “Rags Parkland Sings the Songs of the Future”, and I watched the Wednesday Nov 15 performance at 7:30pm. Reviewing the content of this show is extremely difficult because there wasn’t exactly “a story/plot” in the traditional sense. Instead, this production was effectively a concert, starring Rags Parkland and an underground band of cyborgs. The best I can do is describe how the songs made me feel in combination with the one or two plot elements that were sprinkled between songs. To this end, this play was a joy to watch and the various takes on the ‘cyber-funk’ music genre was compelling enough to hold my attention throughout. I came away from that night with no idea as to what the actual plot-points were, but happily humming the tunes that I heard. The only plot-related takeaway for me was the metaphor to “an establishment oppressing expression when the groups involved aren’t ‘acceptable’ to said establishment”.

As for the lights, there was so much (almost too much) to take in. For starters, I found it very interesting that the background that was raised above the band had a constant blue light. The reason for this was likely to draw audience attention away from the set while keeping it noticeable; the effect for me was anticipation that something would eventually happen up there, but nothing did. In my opinion, the most notable lighting decision for this production was the stage-wide fog. This accomplished two main things: one, it obscured what the actual lighting composition was on the stage, which made the lighting into a subtle purple for most the performance. Secondly, the fog allowed the audience to see the lights in the air rather than on the stage. This effect was very well done and the overall effect for me was that it really felt like you were at a concert rather than a play. I believe this was the intended effect, and the only thing that broke me out of it was the awkward audience interaction section with performers holding lights on the stairs. There were also obvious lighting moments, like the times when the “authorities” show up, but I think that those moments are overshadowed by the overall mood of the theatre, which was song-dependent lights, mostly seen in the air, and the occasional audience facing lightshow for a stronger impact. Overall, this show was an 8/10 for me.