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**Reflection on Participating in  
the 2019 Annual Play: *Vinegar Tom***

SANCTITAS BONITAS

PULCHRITUDO

VERITAS

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## Learning Outcome Demonstration–Annual Play 2019

### Vinegar Tom–Lighting Team Leader

To be honest, I have never imagined that I will be so fascinated by theatrical productions before I entered the university. Aside from actors and actresses' interpretation of the play, I am so attracted to crew member's effort, especially to lighting. I love how lighting brings the whole play alive and how it shines for every performer. Every play I have watched in the English Department, *Secrets in the Wings*, *Machinal*, *All in the Timing*, *Everymen*, *The Wonderful World of Dissocia* have brought me to the world of play productions and also the world of lighting. I am touched by every different design of lighting, every black out, and every subtle change of lighting. Therefore, I chose to be a part of lighting team for this year's Annual Play–*Vinegar Tom*. As the only member in lighting team who has participated in a theatrical production before, I took the responsibility of being the team leader. The only theatrical experience I have is being a lighting team member of last year's annual play–*Everymen*. So, it's really challenging for me to take the responsibilities of designing the whole lighting effects for the play as well as being a leader.

*Vinegar Tom* is a play that based on the 17<sup>th</sup> century witchcraft trials in England. It's not a modern work that we, as production team members, or the audience could have experienced.

Therefore, there are ambiguities in putting myself in the world of *Vinegar Tom*, but it also means that there is room for us to create and to be bold in terms of lighting design.

The main setting of the play is divided into three part, including Jack and Margery's place, Joan's place, and the cottage. In addition, we used light to cut the stage into three part in order to make the transition between scenes more smoothly.



(Main stage design–*Vinegar Tom*)

Except for the main plot that tells the story of Alice, and all the other women, the author interestingly inserted songs that reflects the characters' inner feelings between scene to scene, which allows us to jump out from the origin timeline and construct an unrealistic world for

the songs by the lighting design.

We have design different lighting effect for each song in the play based on the emotion and feeling the song revealing. There are six songs, including “Nobody Sings,” “Oh Doctor,” “Something to Burn,” “If You Float,” “Lament for the Witches,” and “Evil Women.”



*(Nobody Sings–Vinegar Tom)*

The song ,“Nobody Sings,” reveals the heart of women in that period of time. Nobody truly listen to those women and they suffers from the pain of being mistreated by the men.

Therefore, we uses blue and red back light to create the feelings of loneliness and helpless of being an woman.





*(Something to Burn–Vinegar Tom)*

As for “Something to Burn,” the song reveals the anger of women who are considered as lunatics and witched and the feeling of being neglecting all the time. We design the lighting effect based on the song title and the atmosphere of the song; we tried to create the burning effect, so we use two ground light with red and orange colors and smoking machine for the smoking effect. The song “If You Float” tells how people at that time judge a woman whether she is a witch or not. If a woman floats, she is a witch; if a woman sinks, she dies anyways. Therefore, we using cyclorama light and back lights with blue and green colors to build the undersea world.



*(Lament for the Witches–Vinegar Tom)*

“Lament for the Witches” is one of the most touching and sorrowful song in the play that is the elegy of the witches. Although the song is mournful, we still want to convey the audience that there is hope. The lighting design is using pinkish and purplish side light to show the empathy for these women. The last song “Evil Women,” is being interpreted by male and female separately. For the male version, we used back light to create the dynamic atmosphere that the light will follow the beats of the song. For the female version, the song is more like rebelling the men’s interpretation. So, we use back light, side light, and ground light to show the strength of women.

In addition to these special scenes for songs, one of the most difficult and challenging scene that lighting team faced is the hanging scene which the two characters, Ellen and Joan, are

going to be hanged. Basically, it's impossible for us to hang them in the SF theater for real.

After the discussion with director and stage managers, we decided to project the shadows of hanging on the cyclorama. We use the cyclorama light in order to build the atmosphere while they were about to be hanged. Later on, the whole stage blacks out. Then, we reveal the shadows on the cyclorama.



(The hanging scene—*Vinegar Tom*)

As for how we create this special effect, we use two mannequins behind the cyclorama and we actually hanged them (they have names, Alexander and Alissa) on the railing and project the light behind them. Therefore, the shadows will show on the cyclorama to represent the death of Ellen and Joan. I must said that this scene is probably the most stunning and

successful one among all the scenes. The effect is much better than everyone imagined.

All in all, I am glad that I decided to participate in this year's annual play. Although it's

stressful during the theater week, especially for lighting team, my team members and I

survived. Being a part of a play production is always fascinated that I am able to work with

these awesome people and we focus on the same goal—bringing the play alive. I appreciate

everyone who involved in this play, and whoever come to enjoy the play. Let there be light.

