

Lighting the Bay Shore Stage

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For years, the Bay Shore School District has rented lighting for their theatre from outside companies. These outside companies supply the best equipment possible within the budget of the district. In September of 2018, at the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year, the director of cultural arts called me into his office, and asked me if I thought that Hi5 Productions could supply the necessary lighting to light the stage. Without hesitation, I said “absolutely”. A few minor bumps in the road later, the school asked us to provide them with a demonstration of what we can really do, a way to prove ourselves to them. Because in all honesty, if a pair of 16 year olds and 24 year old said that they could light a stage, I’d be skeptical as well. We spent hours rigging and focusing lights, and by 1am one Saturday night, we had finished. We fired the whole stage up and immediately knew, we couldn’t fail this.

The next Monday, the director of cultural arts invited many people to come see the work we had done. Some major people included the superintendent of business of the district, the director of all theatrical productions on that stage, many people from other buildings, and of few other people here and there. Once everyone was in and seated, we opened the curtain and fired up the entire system for our viewers. Their jaws dropped. What was in front of them was something that has never been achieved with the gear of 3 people. What we created looked like we had rented many fixtures.

The goal of this presentation was to put students in control of what happens, now more than ever. For once, we called the shots on our gear, we maintain the gear, and obviously, they pay us to use the gear. The other main goal was to make the stage as bright as possible with the least amount of fixtures, and that barely puts it into context of how bright the entire theatre lit up when we fired that system up. “Lights-is-blinding” would be the best way of describing that stage.

The next important factor was precision. When we were focusing fixtures, we wanted cutoffs to be sharp and professional looking. So, before all the lights went up onto the trusses and bars, all fixtures were thoroughly cleaned. And since we are on site every day, we are able to maintain the pristine condition of the fixtures, without having them out of service for too long.

All in all, this is the first time that students have ever achieved such a goal, and like Ford once said. We didn’t raise the bar, we are the bar.

Dennison DeNatalie

Project Director

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