

## Topic 028

### Stage lighting design evolution

#### Early Stage Lighting

Stage lighting design is probably as old as formalized theatre. The early Greeks built their theatres as open air spaces and orientated them in relation to the sun, so as to use natural light for stage lighting. They would present their plays at different times of day, to take advantage of the different types of natural lighting. This type of planning was in essence, early lighting design. The Theatre of Dionysus (Athens, about 330 BC) and the theatre at Epidaurus (finished about 340 BC) are examples of these early public theatre facilities.

Lighting for the theatre developed over the centuries, using both natural sources then artificial sources. **The sun, candles, torches oil, gas, electric arc and lime lighting, all have had a place in early stage lighting.**

**During the Renaissance period in Italy, many of the principals of modern lighting design, were firmly established.**

#### Lighting Positions:

Lighting Positions consist of 5 main positions of lighting an object on stage. There is definitely more lighting positions. As an introduction to lighting, these 5 positions covers enough for informational purposes.

**1) Front Light-** The key and fill light is the primary lighting source in a scene. It represents the motivating light source for a specific area or scene on the stage. Front lighting involves a method of light referred to as McCandless Theory of lighting, this theory was developed by Mr. McCandless in order to properly light an object/actor by the means of light mimicing natural daylight. McCandless theory involves the light source projected from a front position at a 45 degree angle, one light should be warm (to mimic the sun's light, while the other light should be cool to mimic the sky). This depiction of lighting the performer using natural light and McCandless theory eliminates any possible shadows from the faces, which will cause proper lighting and not distract the audience so that they may focus on the dialogue and action of the character(s).

**FYI FILM LIGHTING:** In film lighting this form of front light is referred to as key and fill lighting. Fill light is used to help REDUCE and SOFTEN the shadows. The fill lights usually are set at about 50% of the intensity of the key light. Different colors can also be used in the fill lights to help contribute to the mood of the scene.

**2) Side Light** - Side lighting is used to accent the side of the face, arms, mid-torso, legs down to the shin of the body. The movements of the performer are highlighted from a direct side light source. Full side lighting is composed of shin light (bottom), mid torso (middle) and neck to head lighting (top). The lights are mainly used to reveal form of the body, and are used to enhance the performer, especially dancers.

**3) High Side light** - this light is from an overhead and at an angle of 30-60 degree angle approximately. This form of lighting is to accentuate the top side of the head, neck, shoulders, arms and mid torso. High side light is used as an additional form to objects/actors. It is also used in dance lighting to help shape the form of the body from another perspective angle.

**4) Back Light** - is used to help the performer or object to be separated from the background and not blend in. Back light also shapes the performer and or object so it is individualized and reveals its natural form. Back lighting creates a depth which makes the performer become more three dimensional. This will also help pull the performer out from the scenery or backdrop.

**5) Down Light** - is used to sculpt the top of the head, shoulders and adds light to the form if it is extended or wide. Down light is great for washing an area on stage by the means of covering that area with light coming straight down from the top. Down light is mainly used to wash or flood an area on stage with light in a soft or harsh manner.