

TRAP TECH HINTS

Trap debuted at the 2018 International Thespian Festival in Lincoln, Nebraska. The production was by Olathe South High School in Olathe, Kansas, under the direction of David Hastings. Since then, the play has had a gratifying number of productions and production requests. Along with those requests have come questions about a few of the technical elements of the play. What follows are the solutions that worked well for David Hastings and his Olathe South crew.

THE EYES

By far the most common production query has been how to create the glowing eyes that appear at the end. Light up reading glasses are a great solution, but quite a few of them are required, and they can be expensive. David found cheap ones at this link and bought them in bulk: <https://www.dhgate.com/product/fashion-led-reading-glasses-night-reader/378940810.html> He put red gels over the lights to make them a spooky crimson. The trick was to tape them so that the white light didn't shine through and the actors could fold them up and put them in their pockets. Everyone who was on stage for the fake curtain call, as well as the teacher (David), the ushers and the plants in the audience got a pair of glasses.

THE PLANTS

The (dark) heart of *Trap* is the climax, in which the pharanochs, eyes lit, whisper “Can I tell you a secret?” to people in the audience—and by so doing cause them to fall unconscious.

To serve as the audience members who fell over, Olathe recruited plants from the school (and later, from the festival participants). Each plant was told to bring a different guest every night and was instructed not to tell them what was going to happen. Part of what was thrilling about the Olathe production was watching the reactions of the audience members who didn't know their companion was part of the conspiracy. As more and more people fell over, the audience actually started to scream or to shout “no” to the question: Can I tell you a

secret? The sound operator had to use the foghorn effect to try to quiet them.

Use lots of plants. The more the merrier.

THE MUSIC

Horror demands atmosphere. From early on I thought the play needed a soundtrack, so I asked David if he had any thoughts. David's son Isaiah was studying to become a video game composer, and when I heard the samples he submitted I knew instantly they were right: dark and haunting and propulsive. Isaiah's score is available separately from the play and you should use it. It's hard for me to imagine the play without the music.

OTHER SOUNDS

The sounds of the foghorn and of the siren were purchased. David recorded himself making the chirps that the unconscious bodies make—the sound you make when you're trapped in sleep. You could record your own or probably have the actors make the sounds live.