Spring 2019

A Visual Spectrum of Sublimity: A Costume Design for Mark Baron, Jeffrey Jackson, and Gary P. Cohen’s Frankenstein: A New Musical

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A Visual Spectrum of Sublimity
A Costume Design for Mark Baron, Jeffrey Jackson, and Gary P. Cohen’s
Frankenstein: A New Musical

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University of Colorado Boulder
Defense Date: April 1, 2019
Abstract:

For this project, I created a full-scale costume design for an unrealized production of Mark Baron, Jeffrey Jackson, and Gary P. Cohen’s *Frankenstein: A New Musical*. This musical is an adaptation of Mary Shelley’s 1818 novel, *Frankenstein, or a Modern Prometheus*. I was inspired by the theme of sublimity that is present in both Mary Shelley’s source text and the adapted musical and used it to construct a visual spectrum of sublimity on which all of the characters in the production exist. This thesis includes visual renderings and swatches for forty-four separate costumes for the production’s entire cast of seventeen performers. The written portion of this project provides an overview of the context of the musical, a discussion of my costume design process, and an explanation of my specific design choices.
# Table of Contents

Introduction ........................................... 3  

PART ONE: Context ........................................ 4  
  Background of *Frankenstein: A New Musical* ........ 4  
  Plot Overview of *Frankenstein: A New Musical* .... 4  
  Character Descriptions for *Frankenstein: A New Musical* 18  

PART TWO: Overview of the Costume Design Process ........ 19  
  Steps in the Costume Design Process .................. 19  
  Elements of Design .................................... 22  

PART THREE: My Costume Design for *Frankenstein: A New Musical* 23  
  Overview ........................................... 23  
  Time Period ......................................... 27  
  Influence of the Music ................................ 30  
  Research ............................................ 33  
  Use of Elements of Design ............................ 36  
  Ensemble ........................................... 36  
  The Creature ....................................... 39  
  Victor Frankenstein ................................ 41  
  Frankenstein Family ................................ 43  
  Elizabeth Lavenza ................................... 45  

Conclusion .............................................. 46  

Appendix A: Character Scene Breakdown .................... 47  
Appendix B: Costume Plot ................................ 49  
Appendix C: Costume Design Renderings .................... 51  

Works Cited ............................................. 64
Introduction:

For this project, I analyze Mary Shelley’s 1818 work *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* using the sublime as the lens to complete a costume design for the musical, *Frankenstein: A New Musical*. By using the story of Victor Frankenstein and his monster, I address the attributes of the sublime such as the elements of danger, the relationship between beauty and the sublime, how love represents a state of the sublime, and man’s reaction to the sublime itself. Specifically, I focus on the subject of humanity and what happens to man when he is pushed to his limits in search for a way to overcome mortality.

I propose that sublimity is an underlying, yet driving force that is at work in the story of Victor Frankenstein and his monster. Sublimity, in this context, would refer to a sense of greatness and magnitude elevating beyond normal human boundary. Victor is ultimately striving for a state of sublimity and he embodies this in his creation. This would mean that the creature is a physical representation of the sublime itself. A statement such as this seems like it is inherently paradoxical, because sublime is the opposite of physical and can not be contained within human boundaries or understanding. By analyzing Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and translating those ideas into a unrealized costume design of the 2007 adaptation, *Frankenstein: A New Musical*, the concepts will be able to take shape for a potential audience. Therefore it will display a visual understanding and interpretation of the sublime.
PART ONE: Context

Background of *Frankenstein: A New Musical*:

This stage adaptation utilizes most of the plot of Mary Shelley’s novel *Frankenstein, or a Modern Prometheus* (1818). At the same time, the authors, Mark Baron, Jeffrey Jackson, and Gary P. Cohen, invoked their artistic license to create “a bold, new experience for modern theater audiences,” by re-imagining “the classic allegory as a ‘memory play’ in which time and space are fluid, and in which people and places come instantly alive in the mind of the story’s protagonist, Victor Frankenstein—and vanish just as quickly. The result is a thrilling ‘mindscape’ that brings the timeless myth of Frankenstein to life as never before,” (“Songs and Story”). In this way, the basic structure of the story and characters are maintained from Mary Shelley’s novel, but the method of storytelling is adapted to engage modern audiences in a new way.

Plot Overview of *Frankenstein: A New Musical*

**Setting:** Late 18th century; Geneva Switzerland; Ingolstadt, Germany; Various locations throughout Europe and the Arctic

**Act 1 Scene 1**

**Location:** Outdoors, in the dark

**Time:** Flash forward in time

**Summary:** The show opens with a single beam of light illuminating Victor. He is on his knees, gasping for breath, dying. Seven other figures stand circling him and are illuminated one by one.
These characters include Robert Walton, his father, his mother, Elizabeth, William, Justine, and Henry Clerval.

*Songs:* “Prelude” ; “Overture”

**Act 1 Scene 2**

*Location:* A lavish estate at the foot of the alps in Geneva, pastoral setting (1769); warm inside of a Frankenstein home (1777), Public space (1787), and Cemetery (1787)

*Time:* 1769, shifts to 1777, shifts to 1787, flash from Victor’s memory with his mother;

*Summary:* There is a social gathering at the Frankenstein estate when Victor is seven years old. Young Victor is described as a “haggard wretch” (13). The scene shifts from the social gathering to a personal moment when time moves forward to 1777. Victor’s mother announces her pregnancy with William. When the scene shifts to 1787, an official from the University of Ingolstadt communicates Victor’s acceptance to the university. At this time, the fully grown Victor enters to join Henry who is standing downstage. Henry informs Victor he is not going to university with him. The scene changes to a cemetery for Victor’s mother’s funeral where the audience learns she died of scarlet fever. At this time, William presents Victor with a dead sparrow. Elizabeth prepares Victor to go off to university expressing they have not been apart since they were five years old. Victor has a memory flash of his mother.

*Songs:* “A Golden Age Part 1-3” ; “Golden Age Underscore” ; “Find Your Way Home” ;

*Notes:* Victor at age 7 (1769); Victor’s Schoolmaster; Victor at 15 (1777); Victor at age 25, at funeral, “Justine enters and hands Victor’s cloak and valise to Elizabeth” (14) as they sing “Find Your Way Home” Elizabeth dresses Victor in the cloak and hands him a valise; the ensemble transitions from Nobility to mourners
Act 1 Scene 3

Location: Cemetery, Caroline’s grave, Univ. of Ingolstadt

Time: 1787, 1788

Summary: Victor is kneeling at his mother’s grave lamenting on why someone who brought so much light was taken from the world. He states that he has discovered the “secret of life” (16) and reaches into his bag and the sparrow flies out alive. The scene shifts to 1789 at the University of Ingolstadt. The ensemble appears and embodies five University professors. As another scene is forming, the ensemble portrays an angry mob with a Condemned Man.

Songs: “Mother’s Grave”

Notes: Members of the ensemble portray five University Professors, Angry Mob, Executioner; Condemned Man same actor as Creature

Act 1 Scene 4

Location: Public hanging with a scaffolding, Ingolstadt

Time: September 16, 1789

Summary: The ensemble has transformed to an angry mob attending the public execution of the Condemned Man. Victor attends and is struck by witnessing “another light, another flame extinguished” (19). It is at this moment that Victor commits to creating life out of death. The Condemned Man is hanged and Victor claims his body.

Songs: “Amen”

Act 1 Scene 5

Location: Victor’s Laboratory

Time: Night of November 16, 1789
**Summary:** Victor establishes the background of his experiment with the intent of reanimating the dead. He will animate the Creature from the body of the Condemned Man and pieces of other dead bodies secured in the cemetery and morgues. A storm is brewing outside and the lightning strikes his experiment, giving it the necessary electrical energy to jumpstart the process. The body is animated only to the point of a very weak pulse. Victor declares the body lifeless and the experiment failed. He exits the laboratory leaving the Creature inside.

**Songs:** “Birth to My Creation”; “The Lab”

**Notes:** Gigantic body is first seen lying covered head to toe on a table; Ensemble takes on the form of a Greek chorus in the laboratory

**Act 1 Scene 6**

**Location:** Victor’s apartment and Elizabeth’s bedchamber

**Time:** November 1789

**Summary:** Victor reads a letter from Elizabeth while standing at his desk. The audience sees Elizabeth writing the letter from her desk in her bedchamber. They discuss the secret that Victor is hiding and the effect it has on each of them. Elizabeth wishes for him to return home. Then Victor hears a primal scream coming from his lab. He races back into his lab.

**Songs:** “Dear Victor”

**Notes:** Victor’s lab is connected to his apartment

**Act 1 Scene 7**

**Location:** Victor’s Laboratory and Apartment

**Time:** November 17, 1789
Summary: Victor enters his lab to find that the slab is empty except for a bloody sheet that was used to cover the body. He searches for the Creature around his lab. There is a strange sound and the Creature emerges from the shadows and walks towards Victor with his arms outstretched. The Creature emits a “chilling, guttural sound” (26). Victor realizes immediately that he made a mistake and rushes out of the lab, locking the door behind him. The Creature pounds on the door, howling. Frankenstein falls to his knees in his apartment. A University Official approaches Victor’s apartment to investigate the noise. They threaten to invade the lab, because it is University owned property. Victor realizes that he has disgraced his family’s name and cannot hide his creation from the world. In a moment of panic, he picks up a lantern and sets fire to the laboratory. As the lab is burning, he hears the Creature scream and call out his first word, “Frankenstein.”

Songs: “Was it a Dream” ; “The Lab-Part 2”; “Burn the Lab/Dear Victor (Reprise)"

Notes: Ensemble member plays the University Official

Act 1 Scene 8

Location: Geneva (flashforward), Ingolstadt (1789)

Time: Early 1790 (flashforward), returns to November 1789

Summary: In Geneva, Elizabeth and Henry open the scene wondering where Victor is. They haven’t heard from him in months, but have heard the news reports of the fire. Then the scene returns to Victor in the immediate aftermath of the fire. He is “seized by an angry mob as the building that housed his laboratory burns in the distance” (29). They all accost Victor with angry accusations. The scene crossfades back to Geneva where William is composing a letter to Victor with Justine at his side. The scene crossfades again to Ingolstadt where Victor lies in a hospital
bed, attended to by a Physician. Victor is in “mental shock” (30) and is having nightmares in his hospital bed. The scene expands to focus on Alphonse Frankenstein singing a song of worry and support to Victor. The scene moves forward to Victor being fully recovered standing before a university official. The official states that there has been insufficient evidence found to charge Victor with misconduct so he is cleared to resume his studies. The focus shifts to William who is now standing before his father. He is emotional, hugs his father, and suddenly exits the stage. Elizabeth writes a letter to Victor informing him that his brother, William, is dead. It is believed that he was murdered by his nanny Justine, because she was found with the locket that was given to William. It was covered in blood, because it was used to strangle William. She protests that is was not her, but some kind of monster. Victor realizes that it was the Creature who killed his brother. The Creature then appears behind Victor and warns him that he will now answer for his sins.

Songs: “The Hands of Time”; “Your Father’s Eyes”; “The Creature’s Tale, Part 1”

Notes: Ensemble members portray angry mob, University Official and Physician.

Act 1 Scene 9

Location: Outside of Ingolstadt

Time: November 1789

Summary: The Creature has a flashback to his escape from the fire in the lab. Victor watches the panic-stricken Creature in horror and fascination. In the flashback, the Creature is seen stumbling into a crowd of townspeople. They cower, scream, and run away. One man raises a rifle to the Creature and strikes him with it before running away. The Creature can’t understand why he doesn’t remember his previous life and why he doesn’t feel right within his body. He wonders
why he is breathing while realizing he is dead. The townspeople begin to torment him. They tell him that he is a walking nightmare and that his only place is in the grave.

*Songs:* “The Walking Nightmare”

*Notes:* Ensemble as a Horde of frightened townspeople

**Act 1 Scene 10**

*Location:* A small cottage in the countryside near Ingolstadt

*Time:* November 1789

*Summary:* The Creature is still in the throes of his flashback as he continues to recount the events that led up to the murder of William. He escapes the horde of townspeople and finds a cottage to use as shelter for the night. Inside, there was a blind man, his daughter, and his infant grandchild. The Creature hides in the Blind Man’s attached woodshed. The Creature can watch the family through a crack in the wall. The Creature finds his human side by providing the family with food and firewood left outside the front door. The Blind Man calls the Creature a friend and it inspires emotion in him. Agatha sings her child a lullaby to quiet the child’s crying while her father plays the violin. The song gives the Creature hope to find love, family, shelter, and a place in the world again. He feels a sense of peace.

*Songs:* “The Creature’s Tale, Part 2”; “The Music of Love”

**Act 1 Scene 11**

*Location:* A small cottage in the countryside near Ingolstadt

*Time:* Early 1790

*Summary:* The Creature continues his story. He narrates that he stayed and watched the family for months, while Agatha puts the baby in a cradle. Listening to the words the family spoke
ignited meaning and memory within the Creature. He begins to feel human again. The scene moves to simultaneously include the Creature within the cottage while he is telling his tale to Victor. The Creature decides to speak to the Blind Man. He could not see the Creature so he was not frightened. He finds himself struck by the ability to love and feel love from the Blind Man. A stylized visual interpretation of the Blind Man’s murder continues. The man made music for the Creature and he is so consumed with feeling that the Creature clutches the violin his chest. The Blind Man is crying out in pain. Then all lights go out on the Blind Man. The Creature exclaims, “What kind of monster kills the soul of kindness by embracing him with love?” (40). Agatha returns to find the Creature and her dead father. She see the Creature, grabs her baby, and runs away in terror. The scream of the young girl “echoes forever in the Creature’s mind” (40).

*Songs:* “Death of the Blind Man”

**Act 1 Scene 12**

*Location:* Ingolstadt

*Time:* Early 1790

*Summary:* The Creature screams at Victor and asks him why he made him a monster, an “agent of death” (40). The Creature found Victor’s laboratory journal in his cloak when he used it to shield himself from the flames. In it, Victor wrote that if he succeeded, he could “master life and death as if he were a God” (41). Once the Creature developed understanding, he became enraged by Victor’s intentions. He vowed to take revenge on Victor and destroy his family as his own nature destroyed the family the Creature thought he had. Justine and William enter the scene as the Creature flashes back to William’s murder.

*Songs:* “The Creature’s Tale, Part 3”
**Act 1 Scene 13**

*Location:* Outside in Geneva  
*Time:* Early 1790  

*Summary:* Justine and William are playing outside. They are sitting on the ground studying a locket that Elizabeth had given to William. In it, is a picture of William’s mother. Justine comments that William has his mother’s eyes. He then ponders why children seem to be pieced together with parts of their parents. William then asks a series of large questions about why things are the way that they are. The sound of a gavel is heard and the scene shifts to a courtroom where Justine is on trial for the murder of William. She narrates what happened while William and the Creature are seen acting the encounter out. Justine and William were playing a game and William ran off into the woods. He wasn’t seen for hours. The Creature found him and asked to play a game. When William refused, he proceeded to kill him with the locket. In the courtroom, Elizabeth, Henry, Alphonse, and Victor enter to witness the trial.  


*Notes:* An ensemble member portrays Magistrate and the rest are “a loud gallery of onlookers, calling for Justine’s conviction” (44).  

**Act 1 Scene 14**

*Location:* Ingolstadt  
*Time:* Early 1790  

*Summary:* Victor draws a pistol from his coat and aims it at the Creature. Unable to harm the Creature, he lowers the pistol. The Creature grabs Victor by the throat. Victor is outmatched in strength and is unable to fight back or free himself. Victor is released and falls to the ground. The
Creature demands that Victor make him a woman to share his life with. He wants someone who will not be frightened of him and so that he can experience love. Victor refuses the Creature. Behind the argument, the scene of Justine’s execution plays out. She is led onto a scaffold and a crowd gathers to witness the hanging. The Creature gives Victor the promise that if he creates a woman for him, then Victor will never have to see him again. Victor shakes the Creature’s hand, sealing the deal, just as the trap door of the scaffold is opened.

*Songs:* “The Proposition”

*Notes:* Ensemble as crowd and executioner

**Act 2 Scene 1**

*Location:* The Frankenstein home

*Time:* November 9, 1793

*Summary:* Guests are gathered in the Frankenstein home for another event, but this time more somber. The music darkens and Captain Robert Walton steps onto the scene to address the audience by reciting a letter to his sister. He moves away as Alphonse Frankenstein moves forward. He explains that in the midst of great sorrow, they are celebrating Victor and Elizabeth’s engagement. Henry enters the party in obvious distress. He is upset about the secrets Victor is hiding from his family. He vows to discover exactly what Victor is up to. Elizabeth exhibits hope for her future with Victor, but she wants Victor to let her in. The guests disperse to reveal the next scene.

*Songs:* “A Happier Day (Part 1)” ; “A Happier Day (Part 2)”

*Notes:* Ensemble is in the scene as guests at the engagement party
Act 2 Scene 2

Location: Victor’s new laboratory

Time: November 1793

Summary: Victor is in another laboratory. Another corpse is on the table. This time, it is clearly the body of Justine. When he begins his experiment this time, Victor is more aware of the human that was once alive. Victor again refers to himself as the Modern Prometheus. Henry appears, finally having discovered Victor. Henry raises the question of morality to Victor who exclaims that he has the power of life and death in his hands. The Creature strangles Henry, seeing him as an obstacle to his Bride. At that moment, lightning strikes and the Bride sits up, initially appearing just as Justine would, but then turns into something more horrifying and inhuman. Victor takes his scalpel and plunges it into the Bride’s back. She convulses and slumps over lifeless. The Creature rushes to his Bride then turns to Victor with unbridled rage. The Creature vows that Victor’s destruction will be his sole occupation and it will occur on his wedding night.

Songs: “The Modern Prometheus”; “Another Like Him”; “What Have You Done?”

Notes: The ensemble is singing in the background, but not necessarily visible

Act 2 Scene 3

Location: Several locations, ending on the shores of Lake Geneva

Time: Separate times in wedding prep, landing in late 1793

Summary: Preparations for Victor and Elizabeth’s wedding are underway. During “Workings of the Heart,” Elizabeth and Victor gradually move into the same place and time to their wedding day. Victor is immediately filled with dread as they move closer to night. He states that they will
spend their first night in a villa on the shores of Lake Geneva. From there, he can watch for the Creature’s approach to meet him outside so Elizabeth can be spared the sight of it.

*Songs:* “Workings of the Heart”

*Notes:* Elizabeth is in her wedding dress, Ensemble as wedding guests and Minister

**Act 2 Scene 4**

*Location:* A house in a villa on the shore of Lake Geneva

*Time:* Late 1793, Victor and Elizabeth’s wedding night

*Summary:* Victor has left the house, leaving Elizabeth alone. The Creature enters and confronts Elizabeth, revealing that he is her husband’s greatest accomplishment. She sees that he is the secret Victor has been keeping. He tells her that Victor murdered his Bride. Elizabeth is horrified to hear this about her husband. The Creature begins to cry and she wipes away a tear. He is enraged and draws her to him, crushing her to the point of death.

*Songs:* “An Angel’s Embrace”

**Act 2 Scene 5**

*Location:* Elizabeth’s grave

*Time:* Some time after wedding night, 1793

*Summary:* Victor is extremely emotional standing over Elizabeth’s grave. A feeling of great failure consumes him. As “Your Father’s Eyes (Reprise)” is performed, a grave reading “Alphonse Frankenstein” appears next to Elizabeth’s. Victor blames himself for his father’s death and wonders if it is possible to die of a broken heart. He knows the bloodshed isn’t over while the Creature still live and he vows to find him.

*Songs:* “Workings of the Heart (Reprise)”; “Your Father’s Eyes (Reprise)”
Act 2 Scene 6

Location: Outdoors, bare scene

Time: 1793

Summary: The Creature is experiencing inner torment. He sings asking why he feels such rage and fury within him. Then looks at his hands and questions how his hands could bring about such destruction.

Songs: “Why? (Reprise)” ; “These Hands”

Act 2 Scene 7

Location: Cemetery, multiple villages, landing Ausberg, Bavaria; Breslau, Prussia

Time: 1793

Summary: The Creature appears behind Victor, who is still sobbing over the two graves, in the cemetery. He challenges Victor to pursue him across byways and villages, following his wake of destruction. The chase ensues as Victor pursues him across physical space and time. The chorus is used to create scenes of movement, sometimes on impeding Victor on his pursuit. From within the Ensemble, the ghosts of William, Justine, and Alphonse appear. The chase lands in Ausberg, Bavaria. The Creature always remains in control. The ghost of Henry appears as Victor pursues the Creature to Breslau, Prussia. Then the ghost of Elizabeth appears. Victor begins to think that the Creature’s life and his are inextricably linked. The scene shifts again as the Creature has led Victor to Fauske, Norway, ultimately leading him to the Arctic. The scene ends when Victor sees the ghost that impacts him the most, his mother.

Songs: “The Chase”

Notes: The Ensemble takes the form of a chorus of townspeople
Act 2 Scene 8

Location: A ship bound for the Arctic, Norwegian Sea

Time: 1793

Summary: Victor is in a ship bound for the Arctic. He sings a lament for his decisions and how his actions have led to his own destruction. Victor realizes that man is created by his actions. He sees that the end is finally near.

Songs: “The Coming of the Dawn”

Act 2 Scene 9

Location: The Arctic

Time: Fall 1793

Summary: Victor moves through the desolate Arctic landscape. He is close to death and is losing his sanity. The Creature is watching him. The audience hears Victor narrating his journal entries as voiceovers. The Creature thinks he has finally beaten Victor as he is experiencing a slow and painful death in the cold landscape. In that moment, a loud sound of ice breaking is heard. Victor falls through the ice as a ship approaches and spots Victor falling through the ice.

Songs: “The Arctic”

Act 2 Scene 10

Location: The Arctic Ocean

Time: November 9, 1793

Summary: Captain Walton appears and explains how he found Victor, fed him, tended to his sickness, and listened to his story. Victor is seen on Walton’s ship, near death. The Creature appears looming over Victor’s bed. Victor explains that he has chased the Creature out of shame
and begs for forgiveness for creating such a terrible fate for the Creature. Victor collapses in the Creature’s arms. Victor then dies in his arms. The Creature realizes that it is cruel fate for the two of them to only see the truth of their situation at the very end. The Creature lifts Victor’s body into his arm and carries him off, as if he were a child, into the ice and darkness.

*Songs:* “Amen (Reprise)”

**Character Descriptions for *Frankenstein: A New Musical*:**

**Victor Frankenstein:** a brilliant, young scientist; Henry states that he “has been bent on conquering the world” (14); He is driven by his ambition and curiosity, which turns to an obsession, in his quest for the sublime.

**Captain Robert Walton:** sea captain; sailing the Arctic Ocean when he is seen; He shares a bond with Victor in his ambition and desire for greatness.

**The Creature:** the subject of Victor’s grand experiment; “approximately eight feet in height and comprised of only the most finely-formed limbs and organs...exceedingly perfect.” (21); an extension of Victor’s personality

**Elizabeth Lavenza:** Victor’s fiance and childhood friend; beautiful, young; Victor’s one true love; representation of ideal woman, nurturing, innocent, caring

**Henry Clerval:** Victor’s lifelong friend; moral, fascinated with the history of mankind, becomes a symbol of the devastation that Victor’s actions cause

**Alphonse Frankenstein:** Victor’s father; a distinguished patriarch; adored Victor, can only see greatness in him; kind, selfless, his happiness is dependent on his children
**Caroline Frankenstein:** Victor’s mother; a regal wife; a loving mother; representation of a mother’s concern for the wellbeing of her children, generous, nurturing; her death acts as the catalyst for Victor’s search to transcend death

**William Frankenstein:** Victor’s ten year old brother; worships Victor; curious, always questioning why things are the way they are

**Justine Moritz:** William’s nanny; a young governess; treated like a sister of Victor and Elizabeth; executed for William’s murder; becomes one of first victims of the destruction the Monster/Victor causes

**The Blind Man:** a poor cottager; a pious man; allows the Creature to hide in his attached woodshed

**Agatha:** the blind man’s daughter; in her early 20s; lives in a small cottage with her infant child and blind father; a simple peasant woman

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**PART TWO: Overview of the Costume Design Process**

**Steps in the Costume Design Process:**

**Step 1: Read the Script**

Reading the script is a crucial step to get a sense of the scope of the show. The script not only provides the understanding of what the show is about and who the characters are, but also provides context for how the show could be actualized.

**Step 2: Script and Character Analysis**
After reading the script, the costume designer completes a script analysis to determine things like the subject, theme, setting, and context for a production. In the same step, character analysis is also completed to gain insight into each of the characters. This involves examining aspects such as their background, motives, and relationship to other characters and the world of the production.

Step 3: Character Scene Breakdown and Costume Plot

After the first or second reading of the script, the costume design completes what is known as a character scene breakdown. This is a way of tracking the characters throughout the show. This document provides information about costume changes and potential actor tracking to determine the scope of the show when approaching designs. My character scene breakdown for this show is included in Appendix A. The costume plot is a document that is created off of the character scene breakdown. It tracks a performer’s movement and costume changes throughout the show. The designer creates a shorthand code that is inputted into the plot in which a each code denotes a specific costume. For example, Victor’s costume plot codes include the preface “V” with a number following it dictating which number look it is in the show. This would mean that his final look would have the code, “V4.” I have included the costume code on the corresponding rendering in the lower left hand corner. My costume plot for this production is included in Appendix B.

Step 4: Research

After a concept for a show is at least generally in place and the time period has been established, the costume design gathers research imagery to establish the visual vocabulary
for the show. This includes elements such as historical fashion silhouettes, color palettes, and location specific research. When meeting with a director, specific research is assigned to each character to become a basis for costume renderings.

Step 5: Rough Sketches

After the research is in place, the designer can begin sketching the costume renderings which include a physical silhouette for the character and then the costumes are drawn onto that body. These rough sketches are often completed on less expensive paper and with pencil to accommodate for frequent alterations and revisions.

Step 6: Final Sketches

After further conversations with the director, outline sketches are finalized.

Step 7: Swatch

Before painting the renderings, the costume designer accumulates a series of fabric swatches to assign to each character and rendering. This provides a textile understanding of what is represented in the sketch. However, in many cases, a costume designer will design based on what they would like their costumes to look like in an ideal world and then fabricate afterwards.

Step 8: Paint Renderings

After the swatches have been pulled, the sketches can be painted based upon the color, texture, and patterns of the fabric pulled for each rendering.

Step 9: Finalize Renderings
After the renderings are painting the final touches are added. This includes adding fine detail or redefining lines that became muted through the painting process. Renderings are labeled with the show title, character, and scenes that each particular costume is seen.

**Elements of Design:**

The costume design process is one that doesn’t exist within a vacuum. Design is dependent on a series of variables that influence decisions around the world of the show and the people that exist within it. Designing is often a fairly intuitive process, but the instinctual choices made are based in knowledge of the production and its context. A designer utilizes a series of tools to produce their art. These include the seven elements of design:

*Line:* refers to a straight or curved connection between two points

*Shape:* is flat and two-dimensional with no form or thickness

*Form:* is a three-dimensional shape that exists within space

*Space/Proportion:* space refers to the area that a shape or form occupies, proportion refers to the relationship of one thing in terms of size or ratio

*Texture:* it is how something feels, its surface quality can either be tactile or visual

*Light:* value, highlight and shadow, how light interacts with the surfaces

*Color:* is the reflection of light and refers to hues and the properties of hue; also includes intensity, temperature, value and saturation
PART THREE: My Costume Design for Frankenstein: A New Musical

Overview:

I was first drawn to the story of Frankenstein, because of its relevance to modern society. It expresses an anxiety around industrialization, advancements in science and technology, as well as the overall expansion of humanity. Whenever I interacted with the story, I always found myself having a visceral reaction. This adaptation spoke out to me, because it is a fresh take on a well-known story. When entering into this project, I knew that I wanted this project to meld several interests of mine. Specifically, I wanted to complete a costume design for a musical, but also find a show that had a strong literary context. This would combine my interests in costume design and literature. I was taking a humanities class revolving around analysis of the sublime in art and literature. I had the idea of finding a piece of literature that we would be discussing in this context that also had a musical adaptation. Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein: or a Modern Prometheus was one of the pieces on the schedule for the semester. I knew that there have been several theatrical adaptations of the Frankenstein tale. It was at this point that I began to research shows like Nick Dear’s Frankenstein and Mel Brooks’ Young Frankenstein. Eventually I found a newer title, Frankenstein: A New Musical. Reading the plot synopsis, it was clear to me that this was a musical was closely tied with Mary Shelley’s original novel. To me, this was important, because it allowed for me to provide contextual analysis for characters within the musical.

Regarding the process of adaptation, in her book, A Theory of Adaptation (2006), Linda Hutcheon says,
Of course, there is a wide range of reason why adapters might choose a particular story and then translate it into a particular medium or genre. As noted earlier, their aim might well be to economically and artistically supplant the prior works. They are just as likely to want to contest the aesthetic or political values of the adapted text as to pay homage. This, of course, is one of the reason why the rhetoric of ‘fidelity’ is less than adequate to discuss the process of adaptation is an act of appropriating or salvaging, and this is always a double process of interpreting and then creating something new. (Hutcheon, 20)

The musical clearly salvages the majority of Mary Shelley’s original plot so that those most familiar with her novel would recognize the story and characters. As a designer, my own interpretation represented in my design is an act of adaptation. What I have elected to salvage from both the original novel and the musical is the theme of the sublime.

Sublimity has a long history as a philosophical and literary concept beginning with Longinus in the first century A.D. Here, sublimity was described as elevated thought and language, particularly in rhetoric. For Mary Shelley’s context, the most relevant interpretation is that put forth by Edmund Burke and the Romantics, who were her contemporaries. For them, the sublime is the unknowable and thus humans stand in awe and horror of it. Edmund Burke claims that “pain and danger...are the most powerful of all the passions,” (Burke, 86). For this reason, terror is one of the strongest sensations, even more so than pleasure. The sublime is defined by a quality of grandeur, which can be physical, moral, mental, spiritual, or emotional. Sublimity refers to a greatness beyond imitation or measurement. The sublime is something that must be experienced, but at the same time, cannot be limited by definition. The absolute is infinite and can have no boundary. For this reason, grand landscapes are often cited as
inspiration for the sublime, as the vastness has no clear boundary and cannot be fully comprehended by human consciousness. Sublimity is something that transcends even beauty and greatness. It incites a reaction to magnificence within the human.

For my purposes, I focused on sublimity as something that is greater and beyond human consciousness and understanding. In Mary Shelley’s novel, the Creature represents the sublime or what’s unknowable. The Creature is unknowable and therefore can’t be integrated into society; it is somehow beyond human comprehension and understanding. In this way, like the sublime, the Creature evokes both wonder and horror. I used this concept to inform my costume design. I created a visual spectrum of sublimity in which the unknowable, the Creature, is at one end and the fully knowable, the ensemble, is at the other end.

My process started with reading Mary Shelley’s novel and analyzing it through the lens of the sublime. My concept for the musical grew out of my analysis of the characters on a spectrum of sublimity. For my design, I worked off of what I refer to as a “spectrum of sublimity.” This continuum places extreme sublimity on one end of the spectrum and grotesqueness and base existence on the opposite end. In this world, the Creature represents the absolute and the ensemble represents the grotesque. This spectrum started with my analysis of the Creature.

For this project, I had a costume design mentor, Markas Henry, as well as a director, Iain Court. I elected to have a director for an unrealized production so that the conceptualization of the show was not just coming from myself. At one of my initial design meetings with my director, we started discussing the contrast between the two ends of the continuum. There is a line in the musical, that was derived from Mary Shelley’s original text,
that describes the formation of the Creature. In the musical, Victor says the line as pre-recorded voice-over played over music while Victor is setting up his experiment. The line reads, “he will be approximately eight feet in height and comprised of only the most finely-formed limbs and organs...exceedingly perfect” (Baron et al, 21). Mary Shelley describes this same moment as, “His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful!” (Shelley, 35). Further thought into this moment begged the question, what if the Creature was beautiful? In the musical, it is clear that this is Victor’s intention, so what if he had actually succeeded in his goal? He has pieced together the most beautiful and perfect pieces of various human bodies. In most iterations of a Frankenstein adaptation, the Creature is portrayed as a grotesque, ugly, and deformed derivative of what was once a human being. This led me down a series of contemplations. The first, what would this mean for the ensemble? If the Creature was a display of what we as an audience would consider to be physical perfection, then the ensemble would have to be grotesque. Would this be sending the wrong message about the world I was establishing or would I inadvertently enter into territory that could be offensive if not done properly?

In my adaptation of this concept of the sublime, I work against Kantian notions that the sublime cannot be beautiful, because I wanted the Creature to both sublime and beautiful. For Kant the sublime cannot possess beauty, but I was interested in the notion that beauty can evoke the same kind of horror that the grotesque can. What I am exploring here is the concept that perfection would be horrifying. As humans, we want perfect symmetry and beauty, as that is held to be the societal standard of attractiveness. However, because we are used to seeing beauty that is not completely symmetrical, it is unsettling when we see perfect symmetry.
While I acknowledged the importance of arguments against the sublime being beautiful, I saw the story that my production would be telling as equally important. I think this story is meaningful, because it addresses a still relevant issue of the limits of human curiosity and search for knowledge. It presents a cautionary tale about what happens to man when pushed to his limits in search for something more and beyond himself. The more I contemplated the implications of the sublime being beautiful in this context, the more I was interested in the show that could be created from flipping the audience’s expectations. By doing so, I was particularly intrigued in exploring society’s reaction to the search for the sublime and the potentially horrific reaction when we find it.

Time Period:

The script dictates that the majority of the musical takes place in the late 1780s to early 1790s. I went into the initial design meeting planning on setting this production in the time the script dictated. Below are examples of the 1790s silhouette:

As you can see, these silhouettes are restricting and separate from modern fashion. The audience won’t have a familiarity with this time period and therefore, it would create a greater sense of distance. For this reason, I saw that the production should still possess an awareness of modernity and at least a subtle modern connection to make it accessible to an audience from a visual standpoint. The audience would be walking into the performance with a certain set of expectations surrounding what they will witness. The concept itself is challenging enough that I decided to give the audience a basic visual vocabulary that they would be more familiar with. My first thought was to make the production contemporary. I liked this idea, but I wanted there to be some visual distance between the audience and the world of the musical. This would provide the opportunity to escape into the show, but also allow them to interpret the world how they felt comfortable. For this reason, I was drawn to the Victorian era, because this is a show that leans into darkness and menace. To me, setting it in a dark Victorian landscape seemed more appropriate than the distant late eighteenth century.

When focusing solely on silhouette, I narrowed the time period to sit in 1890s. There are still wide and exaggerated shapes, but they are not to the point of the century prior. My concept resonated strongly with the use of angles in the style lines of the clothing.
1897 specifically saw the female silhouette embracing architecture of the shoulders and reduced the volume of the skirt and sleeves. Men’s fashion in this time firmly adopted trousers. I was very interested in these elements for the ensemble so this confirmed my decision to set the majority of the production in 1897. This would mean that the second act would be taking place in 1897 and from there I determined what that meant the other years would be for Act 1 based on the differences dictated in the script. The visual storytelling of this project was equally important as the given text. While it was important to stay faithful the original text, the story that I was aiming to tell through my design took precedence. I maintained the intention of the originally chosen time periods and the differences in time. The musical utilized jumps in time and flashback sequences to highlight the visual evolution of the world and the characters who exist within it.

Even though I wanted to move this production forward for the sake of the visual story I was intending to tell, it was still important to maintain the original intent that Mary Shelley and the writers of the musical had when placing the story in the eighteenth century. Mary Shelley does not specify exactly when in the eighteenth century it is set. It is simply notated as “17—.” The writers of Frankenstein: A New Musical decided to place their story in the late eighteenth century. It is important to note the forces influencing the work in the time the writers decided to set it. This time was considered the Gothic era of literature. The movement was a reaction to the Age of Reason that was developed in the eighteenth century. It emphasised the importance of the mind and thought above more emotional pursuits.

While the story takes place in the eighteenth century, Mary Shelley was a nineteenth
century writer. I knew that I needed to maintain the societal norms that she was influenced by while she was writing. In the new time period, there were advances in the areas of industry, science, psychology, politics and society in general, as there were at the beginning of the century. However, the latter part of the nineteenth century began to expose the dark underbelly of society while rapid advancements were occurring. An example of this is the 1893 World’s Columbian Exhibition which saw a gathering of advancement and invention. At the same time, the monstrous was also put on display. What stood out to me about this event is that it brought H.H. Holmes, one of the first serial killers, into the public eye. While this occurred in Chicago, I resonated with it as an example of the darkness that was lurking below the surface of a newly modern world. The Exhibition is a great example of the juxtaposition of advancements in science and invention with monstrosity. This event was on tail of Jack the Ripper’s terror on London, which is another example of the dark underbelly lurking below the surface of a great metropolis. Notable literary figures of the time were Louis Stevenson’s Jekyll and Hyde, yet again representing the intersection between science and the monstrous. Whatever this world contained, I knew that the argument that I was trying to make must be maintained within the realm of the show. It would certainly be influenced by external factors and decisions, but it was not solely dictated by them.

Influence of the Music:

At the same time, the music of the production has strong contemporary influences so that gave me as a designer the artistic liberty to move the production to a more contemporary time
period. As it is written, the music already takes the audience out of the strict historical time period that it is initially set in. One of the first questions that my director asked me at our first design meeting was what is the music like and how did I see it influencing the costumes? To me, the music is one of the strongest influences on my design. Aside from the influence on time period, it informed my idea of the ensemble as a unit that moves about the space. For the majority of the show, the ensemble is woven throughout the music, emphasizing the emotion of each part. The song “The Waking Nightmare” is a perfect example of this. The song is the Creature’s lament over his unknowable condition. The orchestration builds behind the Creature’s solo throughout the song culminating with the ensemble tormenting him. There is menace and heightened emotion conveyed through this piece.

Overall, the music has a sense of drama and passion that is communicated through the orchestration and lyrics. The music provides a gateway into the characters’ experience. This is one of the significant choices made in the adaptation into a musical. The audience is able to empathize with the experience of each of the characters represented. We are given an opportunity to feel similarly to those in the scene, whether this be the Creature, Victor, Justine, or the ensemble as a whole. In my mind, the music and costumes would provide the audience the means to interpret the story and the world in which the production exist.

It is also important to note that this musical is intended to be a memory play. This means that the action is drawn from a character’s memory. In this case, it is drawn from Victor’s consciousness. This is indicated from the very first song in the show, “Prelude,” where he is surrounded by important figures in his life introducing his tale and the consequences it had on Victor himself and those around him. It explains the heavy use of voice overs throughout the
show, as it is reflective of how Victor might be remembering events and reconstructing dialogue over action. This structure combined with the music allows for greater sympathy for Victor and his choices throughout the story, because the audience is able to gain greater insight to his rationalization and his emotional reactions to what he does. The music reflects how Victor views each character in his experience. For example, the music is more melodic when his family members are singing in songs like “Dear Victor” and “Why?” The ensemble not only torments the Creature, but Victor as well. This reflected in the drama and tension that is expressed by the ensemble when onstage. The Creature is often a menacing presence, but we are able to note the moments when Victor sympathizes with him in songs like “The Creature’s Tale Pt. 2” when the Creature is questioning the role of his lost humanity.

For me, the music is the driving force in the musical. It builds character and creates context for a rapidly moving plot. The action of the production is woven through quick and fluid transitions. This fueled a concept for me that the production would be focused on the music with a visual landscape created by the costumes. For this reason, I conceptualized that all deaths would occur either offstage or in darkness, as the music indicates an emotional impact of the deaths on Victor, but he does not witness any of them firsthand. For this reason, none of the deaths that occur involve a visual appear of blood. The emphasis is on the emotional impact of the event created by the swell and shift in music that occurs. The music constructs a landscape driven by emotion as perceived by Victor throughout the story.
Research:

After establishing the time period, I focused on accumulating research that resonated within this world. First, I gathered a general batch of strictly period research. This established historically accurate style lines and the spectrum that fashion embraced at the time. Examples of this research are below:

I presented my solely historical research at my initial design meeting with my director. It was at this time that we started discussing stylizing the time period, meaning that I would take artistic freedom in altering style lines instead of sticking fully to the historical silhouettes. My director then mentioned that he was interested in looking at embracing Victoriana influences after shifting the time period to sit in the late Victorian era. This led to the suggestion from my advisor, Markas Henry, to look into the Prada 2012 Fall/Winter menswear fashion show. The collection was called “Prada Presents: Il Palazzo. A Palace of Role Play.” This became the base that my research grew off of. The steampunk influences harken back to the
Victorian era where science and the monstrous converged. Visually, what resonated the most to me was how the designer took existing historical style lines and accentuated them.²

The Prada line became the basis for the world that I was creating. It opened my eyes to how I could abstract the time period to my advantage. I continued to focus my research on images that were inspired by the Victorian time period, but took artistic liberties to appeal to a modern observers.

Above are two examples of the Victoriana influences I am referring to. These images inspired artistic decisions I eventually made in terms of moving away from the strict period style lines. What I reacted to the most in these images is the use of line. The left image of the woman embraced a corset accentuating the waist while defining sharp curves in the middle of the body. The blouse has a series of ruffled seams running diagonally across the chest. The right image includes a suit constructed with rigid textiles including an undershirt with a high collar, a double-breasted vest, a cumberbund, and a tailored jacket. The lines are clear, clean, and defined in both examples.

The Prada line became the base inspiring the whole world. Influences can be seen in most of the men’s silhouettes. However, I knew I wanted Victor’s costume to speak the loudest and stand apart from the rest. For this reason, his costume is the most closely tied with the Prada research. One element I reacted to for Victor was the layering of the clothing. Most of his looks
include a high collar undershirt, a vest, a jacket, an overcoat, and sometimes a vest on top of that. I was drawn to this, because I wanted to see Victor restricted.

Use of Elements of Design:

When approaching the design process, I knew that I had the seven elements of design in my metaphorical toolbox. Each individual character and rendering utilizes all seven elements, in varying degrees to achieve the desired effect. These tools become especially useful when entering the world of exaggeration and asymmetry that I have created to form a grotesque ensemble. For my design, I knew that I had all of the characters residing on a spectrum of sublimity. Using the elements of design, I could define the ends of the continuum. On one of end of the spectrum is the Creature and the ensemble is at the other end. By defining the way design elements are used on one end, the other end is characterized by the exact opposite.

The Ensemble:

As I was designing, I spent the most time conceptualizing the ensemble. I knew that I had to get their design right in order to make the principal characters read the way I intended and to clearly define their end of the spectrum of sublimity.

Each ensemble member has a base costume for both the first and second act. This costume is worn whenever they embody group entities such as an angry mob or horde of townspeople, as notated in the script. These costumes exemplify the extreme grotesque end of the spectrum. There is a heavy use of asymmetry, exaggeration, and bold pops of color. Exaggeration is defined by specifically altering the elements of proportion, line, shape, and
color. The ensemble costumes utilize abstractions in terms of asymmetry to create a purposeful imbalance. Asymmetry tends to make people uncomfortable, so I leaned into this discomfort to achieve my intention with the audience’s reception. This is why the one of the beautiful aspects of the Creature is that he is perfectly symmetrical, which makes him more visually appealing.

When creating exaggerations within ensemble costumes, I most often elected to make one style line smaller on one side of the performer’s body and one larger on the opposite side of the body. This would create the illusion of dwarfing one side in comparison to the other, which had grown beyond expected proportion. Another method I used was to lengthen one side of the garment, such as a suit jacket, and shorten the other side. This can be seen in the example ensemble member to the right.

When I first started gathering fabric swatches, I was very drawn to high intensity, acidic colors. This conflicted with the initial color palette I had seen the show in which consisted of more muted, neutral tones of grays, black, and earth values. What I resonated the most with about the brighter colors was that they felt super aggressive. There was an attack and power that they held that I wanted the costumes to hold overall. However, when I approached my director and design mentor regarding this new color palette, several concerns were brought up. I was cautioned that the musical could quickly turn into a comedy and therefore have the opposite effect. The second is that it could be a gamble using mostly bright colors, because it could easily become overwhelming to the audience. As the conversation continued, we landed on having the
base color palette of the costumes to be a more neutral color palette, but I expanded into navy and dark greens, rather than sticking strictly in grays. However, I didn’t completely eliminate the acidic colors. Instead, I used these colors to accentuate points of exaggeration. This worked, because it pulled focus to the abstractions without distracting from the style line. I added accessory elements such as belts and bows to act as a kind of visual punctuation to specifically define the context of what is going on around them. I utilized trim details in a similar way.

In general, the silhouettes of the ensemble are very rectilinear and angular. I embraced a heavy use of triangles within the costumes, particularly in the lapels of the suit jackets. The overall shape of the women’s silhouettes is conical while the men’s is more cylindrical, mostly as a result of the shapes of the clothing of the inspired period. I elected to use variations of upholstery fabric for most of the ensemble base fabrics. This means that the fabric maintains its shape and remains a rigid form. This can allow for the costumes to be larger and more imposing. The points of exaggeration are in softer, more reflective fabrics in brighter, higher intensity colors to aid in bringing attention to these points. They are placed onto a base color palette of dark forest, gray, navy, or maroon. I choose this so that light would be absorbed by the majority of the
costume, except where its is reflected on points of exaggeration, which are generally concentrated on the torso and neck.

For the roles that would be considered authority figures, such as the magistrate and university professors, I put them in large robes to create a menacing, looming presence. Shoulders were given height and extended width with the use of an understructure built into the robes. This would give the actors the ability to utilize physical intimidation through unnatural height and proportion. The robes encase the natural physical silhouette to create a swath of black floating and moving about the space.

The Creature:

If the ensemble is characterized by being mechanical, scientific, and contrived, then the Creature represents the natural and organic. The Creature embraces the emotional while society remains detached and analytical. This manifests in my design of the Creature through use of
curvilinear lines and circular shapes, in comparison to the ensemble. The fabrics have a looser weave allowing for greater ease of movement and flexibility. His color composition is of higher value, especially in the first act when he is shirtless, than the ensemble. The clothing that he does wear is all in simple earthtones emphasizing that his end of the spectrum has a warmer color temperature as opposed to the cooler tones that characterize the ensemble. The Creature is described to be eight feet tall and extremely muscular. The performer does not need to be made eight feet tall for this production. The importance is that his presence is large and looming compared to the Victor and the ensemble. Given this large stature, he proportionally takes up more space. The Creature is one of three characters that is perfectly symmetrical, as opposed to the asymmetry of the ensemble.

As I have stated earlier, the sublime is represented as perfect beauty within this world. The Creature is depicted as a vision of physical perfection. The horrific aspect of the Creature is his sheer beauty. His physical features are in line with what our society would deem to be attractive. It is often said that the more symmetrical someone’s features are, the more likely people are to find them attractive. This was the basis for the idea of asymmetry in the production. The Creature would be as symmetrical as possible and then the
ensemble would be thrown into asymmetry in contrast. It is startling for the ensemble to see him as physically perfect, because he is so different and “other” from them. I was interested in prompting the audience to question what it meant to have the object of fear be beauty. If grotesque becomes the norm, then beauty is the thing that incites fear. The intention is to find a kind of abject horror in utter beauty.

**Victor Frankenstein:**

I wanted Victor to be set apart from the other characters in the production to show how he was viewed as an outsider to the norms of their world. I also knew that I wanted him to possess a link to his creation. I chose to have Victor’s final look tending towards the Creature’s end of the spectrum of sublimity. Victor’s costume evolution through the show presents his internal evolution within the spectrum of sublimity as he is fighting against his societal conditioning.

Young Victor exhibits influences from his family, with the inclusion of asymmetry and exaggerations. The base of his costume is black, as it continues to be throughout the rest of the show. However, allegiance to his family is seen in the bright pops of gold and orange on his lapels and neck tie, as well as an extravagant, asymmetrical hairstyle. The Frankenstein family is tied together with black or gray bases for their costumes and pops of color in either red, gold, or orange. I used these colors elsewhere in the ensemble, but they are not used in the same way in order to maintain a visual tie between the family.
As Victor grows up, he loses these elements and becomes one of the only few characters to embrace symmetry. His style lines become very rectilinear, rectangular, and trapezoidal. The shape of his overall silhouette is cylindrical. The visual texture is fairly flat except for the moments of contrasting color. There are subtle patterns to create visual interest, but are not pronounced enough to be distracting from the audience’s distance. He is physically restricted by the number of layers that his costume contains. The last look of Victor’s sees him removing several of his layers and becoming more disheveled, thus completing his arc to end closest to the Creature on the spectrum. This physically represents his liberation from the constraints of societal conditioning and his reach towards sublimity.
The Frankenstein Family:

Victor’s family, including Caroline, Alphonse, and William Frankenstein, serve several purposes in the show. One purpose is to emphasize the circumstances Victor was raised within. This is visually represented in the amount of asymmetry and exaggeration that is used. The emphasis of color that is used within the family stays within a color palette of gold, orange, and reddish orange. This is to create a visual familial link between the characters. My intention with these three characters was to have them embrace attributes of the grotesque world, because they are considered upper class in the world. This would mean that they are looked up to within the world of the ensemble so they must visually stay within the bounds of the grotesque nature. At the same time, I wanted them to still appear safe and nurturing to Victor. His family is one of the main things that keeps him motivated through his struggle with his creation. His family inspires him to do more and be better (“Find Your Way Home”). In the musical, it was Caroline’s death that inspired Victor to find a way to beat death. He contemplates this saying, “How can someone who was the light of our world...be suddenly gone forever? Mother...I vow to do all in my power
to one day see us reunited again. I have discovered the secret of life,” (Baron et al, 16).

William’s death was the breaking point for Victor when he truly saw first hand the devastation that the Creature was creating. Despite all of Victor’s inner demons, Alphonse continually believe in him and sees the best parts of what his son could become (“Your Father’s Eyes”).

For these reasons, I leaned into the use of asymmetry more than I did exaggeration. I wanted the pops of color and imbalance, because they are prominent figures within society, but I didn’t want the family to feel unapproachable. Within the spectrum, the family sits towards the middle, but are visually closer to the grotesque side with the use of rectilinear lines, asymmetry, and disproportion.

Justine Moritz resides within the same category as the family. She is employed by the Frankenstein household, but is treated like family. In Mary Shelley’s novel, Justine is taken in by the Frankensteins at a young age and considered one of their own. I wanted her to be distinguished as working class, but also appear as though she was dressed by the Frankensteins. This was achieved by the use of coarser textures and muted colors. There is a piece of period research I found which depicts a woman in a black dress with a large swag of fabric running diagonally from the collar to the side of the hip. This image spoke to me as a perfect example fit for Justine.
This image is of a woman in the late nineteenth century serving class who also exhibited a clear example of asymmetry of period research. Almost accidentally, the swag of fabric running diagonally across her dress became a measure for the level of asymmetry that other characters could be compared to.

**Elizabeth Lavenza:**

To Victor, Elizabeth is constantly a beacon of hope within his dark world. She inspires him to be a better man. His love for her carries him through several episodes of grief. In the song “Find Your Way Home,” Victor says to Elizabeth, “Ever my angel...the light of my soul, we have been always two parts of one whole, anywhere I go, you will always be near and one day I will make you so proud,” (Baron et al, 15). For this reason, I wanted Elizabeth to be visually distinct from the rest of the characters that inhabit the space. I was drawn to lighter, higher value pastel colors. The use of line within her silhouette embraces more curvilinear lines and oval shapes. She is one of the three characters to be symmetrical. The textures used are softer and would flow through the space as she moves. The fabric is often layered, because there are several fabrics that are translucent and that would be more reflective of light.
My goal with Elizabeth was for her to appear like the heart of the show, because in truth, she is Victor’s heart. She keeps him grounded and straddling the boundary between sublimity and reality. She is also the most sympathetic to the plight of the Creature. For this reason, she tends towards the Creature’s end of the spectrum of sublimity.

Conclusion:

I was fortunate enough to have found a concept for my design that I am passionate about. The story of Victor Frankenstein and his Creature is a meaningful and well-known story that continues to be relevant today. To me, it is a story of what happens when man is searching for understanding of humanity’s mortality and society’s adverse reaction to that. Looking at this through the lens of the sublime, the whole of society is contrasted with the unknowable sublime. The Creature, as a representation of extreme sublimity, is set apart from the grotesque society has been reborn into, therefore evoking horror and awe in all he encounters. What fueled my continued interest in this project, was the idea of flipping the audience’s expectation of what the Creature manifests as. It is not just that the Creature is beautiful, but the rest of the world is contrasted by being made to appear “other” and grotesque. I am interested in what it would mean for an audience member to enter a theatre with a preconception of what horrific looks like and then they are met with our current society’s expectation of what physical perfection is.
Appendix A: Character Scene Breakdown

Act 1

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<td>Dear Victor</td>
<td>WAS IT A DREAM/InThe Lab</td>
<td>Was I Burned in the Laboratory</td>
<td>Hands of Time/You Fathers/Eyes/My Creatures</td>
<td>The Walking Nightmare</td>
<td>The Creature Tale (pt1)/The Music of Love</td>
<td>Death of the Blind Man</td>
<td>Thy Creatures Tale (pt3)</td>
<td>WHY? (pt1 &amp; 2)</td>
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Updated: 1/4/2019
### Act 2

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Updated 1/4/2019
# Appendix B: Costume Plot

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Updated 1/14/2019
Appendix C: Costume Design Renderings

*Act 1 Male Ensemble*
Act 2 Male Ensemble
Act 1 Female Ensemble
Act 2 Female Ensemble
Misc. Ensemble Authority Figures
University Officials
The Creature (& Condemned Man)
Victor Frankenstein
Frankenstein Family
Elizabeth Lavenza
Henry Clerval
Blind Man and Agatha
Captain Robert Walton


