# Dog Sees God:

### Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead

By Bert V. Royal

Design Plan with Analysis – Final for Thea 170

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### Dog Sees God: Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead - Bert V, Royal

### Given Circumstances:

- Time & Period
  - Season Late Spring is implied It's raining and near the end of the school year (planning for Prom etc).
  - Day/Time/Hours:
    - 1. Scene 1 "Dear Pen Pal" The Present
      - a) Scene 2 "Canis Execquiae" The Recent past, a Saturday before the letter-writing starts Early daytime
      - b) Scene 3 "Nirvana" Later that same day
      - c) Scene 4 "Where Swine Live" The following Thursday Morning during school hours
      - d) Scene 5 "The Pianist and the Platypus" Same Thursday during Lunch Period
    - 2. Scene 7 "A Segue I Suppose" The Present continued
      - a) Scene 8 "The Viper's Nest" Thursday continues (Lunch Period)
      - b) Scene 9 "Drama" Thursday continues (after School)
      - c) Scene 10 "You're Invited" Saturday Night (two days later)
      - d) Scene 11 "Nocturne" Later that Saturday Night
      - e) Scene 12 "The Hangover" Next Morning, Sunday Sunrise
      - f) Scene 13 "Fire Is Bad" Sunday during the Day
      - g) Scene 14 "Our Sister of Mercy" Sunday later in the afternoon
      - h) Scene 15 "Salisbury Steak" The next Monday at school (Lunch Period)
    - 3. Scene 16 "Warsaw War Song" The Present continued
      - a) \*Scene 17 "Mal Di Luna" Return to Monday (Lunch Period)
    - 4. Scene 18 "Taphephobia" The Present continued
      - a) Scene 19 "Peer Counseling" Perhaps a week later (daytime at school)

- 5. Scene 20 "Changing Evolution" The Present and Recent Past: the two timelines have now converged
- 6. Scene 21 "Brothers and Sisters" Later that same day, Afternoon into evening
- Span the complete action of the play spans about two weeks. It is told in two time lines that converge by the last scene. The Present and the Recent Past. CB writes his letter in the Present and we also see the Recent Past (about two weeks prior) as he writes about it. Action is presented in a linear timeline so that they converge at the end. Denouement and point of termination in the final scene, as CB receives a response to the letter from his Pen Pal, is about 2 weeks and 2 days after the point of attack.
- Era, Period, Year Now
  - 1. Note: A leap from character's comic book ages as based their actual age from those comics, Charlie Brown would now be 66 which determines that we are using the characters in their archetypal capacity rather than depictions of what their actual high school years would have been like; those would have been set this in the early 70's if there is a question on style of furnishing choices, leaning toward a piece that would fit equally well in 1971 as today is the choice.

#### Place & Locale

- Locale: inside the stereotype of teen life America maybe Anytown, USA
  - 1. A dark and real future of the Peanuts Gang
  - 2. Note: The actual Peanuts Gang were in Hennepin County, Minnesota
- Place: The action of the play is all in aged and stylized versions of the common locations of the Peanuts gang from their comic strip life. The following specific spaces are required:
  - 1. CB's writing desk
  - 2. CB's backyard with a dog house
  - 3. The contemplation brick wall
  - 4. School Hallway
  - 5. School Cafeteria
  - 6. School Music Room
  - 7. School Theatre/Stage

- 8. Marcy's House
- 9. Lucy's Doctor Booth
- 10. A Classroom
- Scenic Breakdown:
  - 1. Scene 1 "Dear Pen Pal" Writing Desk
  - 2. Scene 2 "Canis Execquiae" Backyard of CB's house
  - 3. Scene 3 "Nirvana" Brick wall of contemplation
  - 4. Scene 4 "Where Swine Live" School Hallway
  - 5. Scene 5 "The Pianist and the Platypus" School Hallway
  - 6. Scene 6 "Spork" School Cafeteria
  - 7. Scene 7 "A Segue I Suppose" CB's soliloguy Letter Writing Table
  - 8. Scene 8 "The Viper's Nest" Music Room at School
  - 9. Scene 9 "Drama" Drama Club "Meeting" on school stage
  - 10. Scene 10 "You're Invited" Marcy's House (Party)
  - 11. Scene 11 "Nocturne" No specific Place but somewhere away from all other action isolated they have left the party
  - 12. Scene 12 "The Hangover" Marcy's House (Party Aftermath)
  - 13. Scene 13 "Fire Is Bad" Lucy's Doctor Booth in a Mental Health Detention facility
  - 14. Scene 14 "Our Sister of Mercy" Brick wall of contemplation
  - 15. Scene 15 "Salisbury Steak" School Cafeteria
  - 16. Scene 16 "Warsaw War Song" CB's soliloquy Letter Writing
  - 17. \*Scene 17 "Mal Di Luna" The Music Room at School
  - 18. Scene 18 "Taphephobia" CB's soliloquy Letter Writing
  - 19. Scene 19 "Peer Counseling" A Classroom at School but subdued light
  - 20. Scene 20 "Changing Evolution" Both CB's soliloquy Letter Writing AND Drama Club "Meeting" on school stage

- 21. Scene 21 "Brothers and Sisters" CB's Backyard, The Doghouse
- 22. Scene 22 "Dear CB" CB's Letter Writing but (Under a Raincloud) and The Brick wall and the Music Room
- Theme, Mood, Style
  - Mood: Rain Cloud Dog Died tragicomedy dark
  - Style: Reality meets Comic Strip Stereotypes The black outlines of their comic book selves are blurred now. They have lost
    pieces of their youth but they find some of them along the way.
  - Themes: Lost Youth, Repressed Individuality and Sexuality, Suicide, Aggressions, Bullying, Destructive Coping Mechanisms:
     Self-Destructive Behavior Sex, Drinking, Drugs, Viloence
  - Thoughts: The Peanuts Gang began life as stereotypes of childhood and are now harsh representatives of real (still stereotypes) teenage life. Peer pressure, repression and self-loathing dominate the struggle. Each individual character is both exposed and hidden behind a stereotype. CB is the protagonist. The stylized design choices should contrast and thereby expose how deeply human his and the other characters' journeys are.

### **Given Circumstances and Action Summary Implications for Design:**

The play starts with CB writing a letter. This could be staged with the actor directly addressing the audience without the props/table but I see it as a recreation of the common imagery from the comic strip where Charlie Brown is always at a table writing with a pencil and paper. The table (with the unfinished letter and pencil) and chair would be set far downstage and remain in place for the duration of the play as a visual reminder that the action is how CB recalls it as he writes his letter. Time and place of all other action is before this letter has begun so essentially happening as flashbacks of what he writes. Each of the flashback scenes are presented in chronological order from about 2 weeks and 2 day prior to the POA. He returns to his letter-writing before the complication, before and after the climax and then between each scene of the resolution. The timelines converge in the last two scenes as CB finishes his letter after the gang is in Sc 19. Peer Counseling following the suicide of Beethoven that happens off stage between Sc.17 & 18. The denouement "Dear CB" brings all characters back onstage to speak a portion of the letter to CB from CS (inferring Charles Schulz) where they will end in a tableau. During the final scene, the suggested raincloud should become a "real" rain cloud affecting CB only.

# Costuming

### **Character and Costume notes**

All costumes should have a **dominant element** indicative and reminiscent of their original Peanuts gang **comic book kid character**. The children they were are still a part of the teenagers they have become.

This play, as the Peanuts comics did, categorizes and stereotypes, each character represents a recognizable extreme type in the high school social strata. The costumes should always be an **instagram worthy outfit** - **current stereotypical styles** that beg viewers to make assumptions about High School social status from what they are wearing.

#### Cast of Characters

- CB (Charlie Brown, "Chuck" to Patty and "Blockhead" to Lucy), Then: a "lovable loser"
  - "[He] must be the one who suffers because he is a caricature of the **average** person. Most of us are much more acquainted with losing than winning." —Charles M. Schulz
  - Now: Handsome teenage boy our protagonist in his Peanuts gang years, always wore a yellow shirt with a single black chevron stripe.

    Now his style should be the least "specific" of all the costumes something very current and well-put together but not overtly typical of any social group average maybe H&M metrosexual he really thinks about what he wears. His shirt should always be black and yellow.
    - o Outfit 1: Typical teenager clothing casual black and yellow shirt
    - o Outfit 2: Slightly more stylish and well-dressed (trendy) black and yellow button up
    - Outfit 3: Very Trendy hip possibly even showy
- CB's Sister (Sally Brown), the seeker and question asker, in search of her own identity
  - "Sally is the complete pragmatist. There is a certain charm when she fractures the language: 'By golly, if any centimeters come in this room, I'll step on them!" —Charles M. Schulz on Sally Brown. Her comic book kid version was always in a dress with puffy sleeves and polka dots usually pink. NOW: Changes her outfits to match her current exploration of "type". No matter how extreme the style though, there should always be something "cute" about her look. She has the most costume changes of any character.
    - Outfit 1 (Scene 2) Elvira(ish) but still somewhat "little girl" more Manga Goth here hairdo may be Bride of Frankenstein(ish)

- Outfit 2 (Scene 3) Gangsta Bitch Pink and black camo pants with super tight low-cut crop-top that BITCH across the boobs in hot pink
  - White Silky or Chiffon Wrap (over Gangsta bitch) theatrical and long enough to go around her multiple times
- Outfit 3 Wiccan party Dress -
- Outfit 4 Very basic, nondescript, current Teen clothing in all black
- Van (Linus van Pelt) Comic Strip notes: "Though young, Linus is very intelligent and very wise and acts as the strip's philosopher and theologian, often quoting the Gospels. Linus's relationship to his blanket was one of intense emotional attachment to the point of manifesting physical symptoms if he was deprived of it even for a short while." A stoner now, he just had his signature security blanket burned by his sister and CB 2 months ago. He is still emotionally distraught about it but is ever the philosopher. Best friend to CB both in the comics and now. He becomes physically involved with CB's sister after the party when he gets her high and talks her into giving hima ablow job. His clothing should be comfort clothes but still follow teen trends he will wear the same thing for the whole show.
  - Oversized red sweatshirt and joggers. Birkenstocks with socks
- Beethoven (Schroeder) Comic Strip Notes: "Schroeder has short, blond hair and he almost always wears a striped shirt. He is the only boy in the Peanuts gang who has noticeable bangs." Now, he is skinny, trying not to get noticed, the victim of chronic bullying at school & the child of an abusive father. He is now an extremely talented musician, and (reluctantly at first) becomes CB's love interest. He commits suicide after being visciously bullied by Matt after CB makes the relationship public at the Party.
  - Well-Styled Green Striped shirt perhaps jersey for school and then an upgrade to button-up for the party
  - Blond hair grown a little long but not unkempt
  - Outfit needs at least one pocket large enough to put a CD
- Van's Sister (Lucy van Pelt) Of the original character from the comics, "Lucy is no 'fussbudget.' She's an American nightmare, a combination of zero brains, infinite appetites and infinite self-esteem, who is (for that reason) able to run roughshod over all her playmates. At her best, she is the most terrifying character in the history of comics." Christopher Caldwell So it's not that shocking that she is now in a mental health detention facility under doctor's care for setting the Freida's hair on fire. It is revealed that she and CB had some sort of intimate relationship in the past and that they are still very good friends.

- Outfit Concept: A hospital gown worn like a sexy dress. Barefoot.
- Matt (Pig Pen) formerly very dirty but now a germ-o-phobe. Of his comic days, "Pig-Pen" was proud of his uncleanliness and Charlie Brown was the only other *Peanuts* character to unconditionally accept "Pig-Pen" for who he was. His new style should suggest a tough, bully, wanna be gangster who's way too clean to be "street". Rich white boy trying to look gangsta. No outfit changes are necessary but if he changes, it should like the same exact outfit but in different colors. Like he picked a personality out of a catalog and bought it in a different color scheme for each day of the week. Variations of beige, tan, khaki, olive drab and brown.
  - Outfit should have pockets maybe lots cargo pants? Big fake diamond stud earrings. Cleancut hair and manicured nails. Shirt
    a little too tight.
  - Note: He is shirtless in "the Hangover"
- Tricia (Peppermint Patty) Her comic strip persona is described as "She has <u>freckles</u> and <u>"mousy-blah"</u> hair, and generally displays the characteristics of a <u>tomboy</u>." Now she's got that tough chick turned mean girl trying to be sexy she was a classic jock and now she wants to be the gueen of the school she should look like she bought her personality but it doesn't guite fit her (similar to Matt)
  - Shirt too tight, pants too tight & shoes too high shirt should be some version of red & white stripes she should have a different top from school to party but always be in the too tight ripped jeans with same high heel sandals
  - She needs sunglasses
- Marcy (Marcie) Comic strip description, characteristically drawn with glasses, "She has befriended the tomboyish, athletic <u>Peppermint</u>
   <u>Patty</u>, and she has a mostly-unrequited crush on the underdog <u>Charlie Brown</u>." Now, she is completely Tricia's sidekick but clearly the smarter of the two. She's just as much a mean girl. She and Tricia are the drinkers of the crowd bringing their booze to school. Marcy throws the raging party.
  - She should look like she is mimicking Tricia's outfit but in a different palette. The tight ripped jeans, heel sandals and tight tops. Yellow
    or Mustard color (she might be trying to coordinate with CB who always wears yellow and show they would make a cute couple)

Cast (for type):	
СВ	Felix Mallard
CB's Sister	Willow Shields
Van	Toby Nichols
Matt	Dylan Sprouse
Beethoven	Timothee Chalamet

Tricia Maya Hawke

Marcy Anya-Taylor Joy

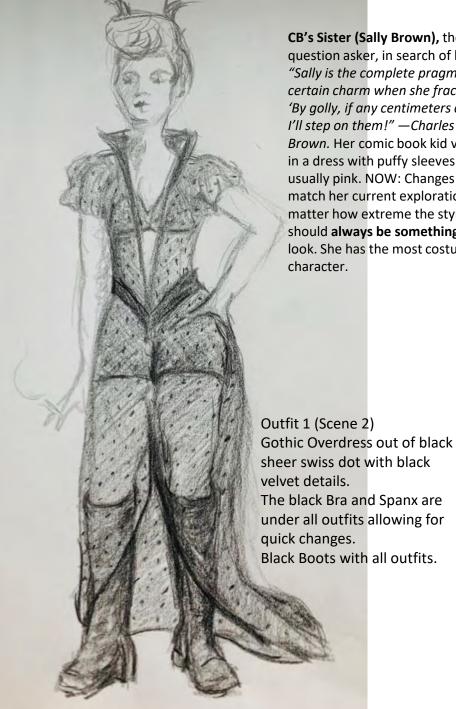
Van's Sister Hailee Steinfeld

Note:

All are presented in the next slides with look book images. Highlighted include Sketches.



Van – Toby Nichols



CB's Sister (Sally Brown), the seeker and question asker, in search of her own identity "Sally is the complete pragmatist. There is a certain charm when she fractures the language: 'By golly, if any centimeters come in this room, I'll step on them!" — Charles M. Schulz on Sally Brown. Her comic book kid version was always in a dress with puffy sleeves and polka dots usually pink. NOW: Changes her outfits to match her current exploration of "type". No matter how extreme the style though, there should always be something "cute" about her look. She has the most costume changes of any



CB's Sister – Willow Shields





Outfit 3 (Scenes 10-

14) Wiccan Style

Party dress



Style Reference for Outfit 4 (Scenes 15-22) Very basic, nondescript, current Teen clothing in all black - t-shirt and spanx





Tricia – Maya Hawke





Marcy
- Anya-Taylor Joy



School look 2



Concept sketch for Outfit 1: Scene 1-8 Scene 18-22





CB – Felix Mallard



Beethoven – Timothee Chalamet



Matt – Dylan Sprouse

## Van's Sister – Hailee Steinfeld















## Scenic

### Scenic Design Plan

- 4 main Panels in a zig zag form a backdrop for the stage. They will each have a white border suggesting the separation of panels in a comic strip. They will each have a soft watercolor background, perhaps suggesting some clouds but only faintly (see screenshots from peanuts background in animated films. The backgrounds should allow the hard lines of the comic styled setpieces to pop off it. There is a reference to the rain starting when CB's dog dies which happens prior to the exposition so some stylized rain in the background panels see the sketchy look from the comics.
- No drop behind the panels solid black wall preferable
- Panels 1 & 2 hinged and 3 & 4 hinged so that 2 & 3 can "open" to expose the school interior space for all weekdays scenes (Hallway, Cafeteria, Music Room, Classroom) except "Drama" - closed for the weekend scenes (Marcy's House, CB's backyard, The Brickwall, Doctor is In)
- Onstage throughout:
  - Brickwall at Stage Right at right angle to edge of where Panel 2 covers Panel 1 when open it is crumbling and has graffiti but still has a tell-tale visual representation of the wall that Linus and Charlie Brown leaned on when in contemplative thought in the comic strip.
  - Doghouse at Stage Left also downstage just enough to allow panel 3 to cover 4 in shadow until Sc. 21 when it is lit enough to reveal The doghouse is red with blackline, the snoopy above the arched entrance should looked almost completely worn off.
     Paint should be peeling and boards falling cobwebs obscure the arched entrance dead grass may be growing up around it suggestion of dried blood and yellow feathers at the entrance The doghouse should be large enough and sturdy enough for two actors to sit on top of it.
  - o Table and chair Far down stage center
- The Doctor Is In Booth moved on and off for the scene A recreation of Lucy's comic book Doctor Booth (like a lemonade stand) with "THE DOCTOR IS IN", hand-lettered in black marker, sign that hangs on the corner and a chair behind and in front of it again, all blacklined

- The Interior space leaves 3 panels visible backsides of 2 & 3 and panel 5 that was hidden behind 2&3 when they were closed. These panels are again subtle washes of color but without the clouds as this is an interior.
  - o Stage right: Cafeteria pull down cafeteria table with seating for 4 is mounted on the panel
  - Upstage Center is the Music Room a Piano preferably a black baby grand should be functional and the only set piece not comic book styled - it is simply there when the panels are opened and stays in place
  - o Stage left: Hallway & Classroom desks to be brought on and off for the classroom scene

Scenic Inspirations and reference

Color wash Sky style (look) for Panel background 1, 2, 3 & 4

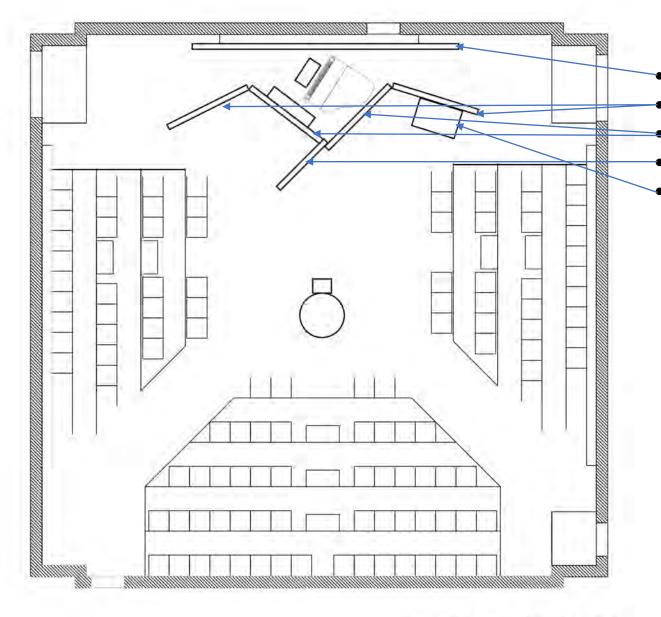
add the rain











SCALE: \frac{1}{8}"=1'-0"

## Ground Plan – Top of show

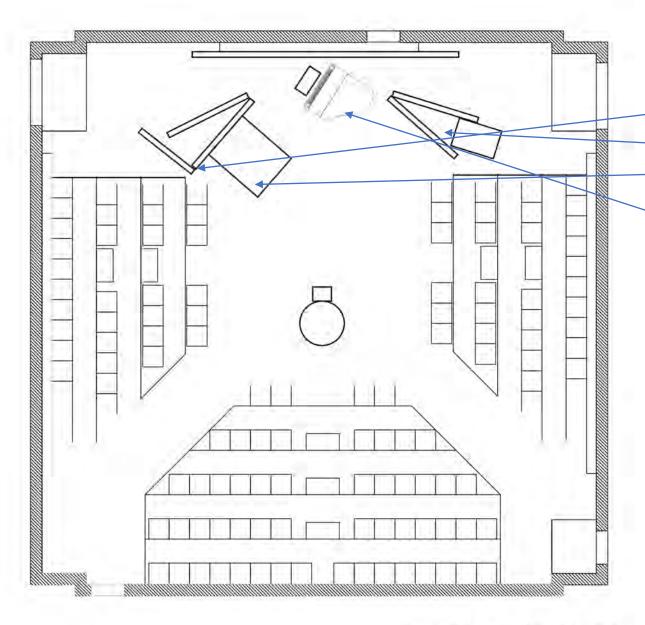
**Background Panel Fixed** 

Panel 1 & 4 Fixed

Panels 2 & 3 Move – hinged to 1 & 4 respectively

Brick Wall Hinged to Panel 2

Dog House Moves



SCALE: 1"=1'-0"

### Ground Plan 2

For all Interior "School" Scenes

- Panel 2 opens Brick Wall is rotated back
- Panel 3 opens and Dog House Moves back
  - Cafeteria Table Pulls down for cafeteria scene and back up when done
  - Piano could be moved farther downstage for Music room scene

1st Draft Color Rendering for Interior "School" scenes



# Properties

## Properties / Set Dressing Concept

### **Stylized and Hyper Realism**

Wherever possible, all stage props and set dressing (list below) should have a black outline suggesting that they were made into tangible objects directly off the flat comic strip/animation style. Furniture pieces should be very generic but equally era-relevant today as 1950 - 1970 so mid-century modern is ideal. Personal Props (next page) should be very current (if an era is indicated at all) but still as generic as possible unless a brand is specifically identified.

### **Practical Scenic:**

- Round table with a simple chair black outline on table & chair
- Wooden Cross Homemade childish and comic book look black outline
- Foam "Dirt" Mound Cross must be able to be put in and stand up black outline
- "Peer Counseling" classroom has 5 desks should be individual one piece chair and table style, "old-school" with the lift up tops and blacklined

## Personal Props:

### **CB's Sister**

Coffin Shaped Purse with pack of cigarettes and lighter in it Red Solo Cup

School Lunch Tray #2 - Salisbury steak, Jello etc. (edible)

An Envelope addressed to C.B. (handwriting of the addressing should look vaguely like the comic strip font) a snoopy stamp would be ideal

### Van

Joint (lit)

Pipe & Lighter

School Lunch Tray #2 - Salisbury steak, Jello etc. (edible)

Backpack

Pencil and Paper (on Table)

School Lunch Tray #1 - Tater tots, Spork and Milk Carton (maybe more lunch) Brown Sack Lunch with Yogurt, 2 individually bagged lunch meat (1 ham, 1 bologna) sandwiches

### Matt

Baggie of Cocaine

School Lunch Tray #1 - Tater tots (piled high), Spork and Milk Carton (maybe more lunch)

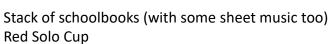
Hand Sanitizer bottle (pocket sized)

School Lunch Tray #2 - Salisbury steak, Jello etc. (school lunches that are edible)

### Beethoven







CD (labeled in black sharpie Marker neat writing "CHOPIN for CB")

### Tricia

School Lunch Tray #1 - Tater tots, Spork and Milk Carton (maybe more lunch) Backpack with Vodka Bottle in it

Red Solo Cup

School Lunch Tray #2 - Salisbury steak, Jello etc. school lunches that are edible

### Marcy

School Lunch Tray #1 - Tater tots, Spork and Milk Carton (maybe more lunch) Backpack with Kahlua Bottle in it

Malibu rum bottle

School Lunch Tray #2 - Salisbury steak, Jello etc. school lunches that are edible

Kleenex

### Van's Sister

Toy Handcuffs with quick release (no key) Handknit Scarf - Black and Yellow Chevron pattern







# Lighting

### <u>Lighting and Effects: concept & requirements</u>

The lighting should allow for both color washes on the panels and set pieces as well as stark isolating lights for individual characters at specific locations noted by staging.

Following are preliminary lighting areas/effects identified during analysis of the action and working up the design plan:

- CB's Writing Desk Always Isolated in soft white light
- Backyard 1 morning gloomy and overcast
- Backyard 2 Afternoon/Dusk storm rolling in
- Brick wall Always blue color wash Add Blue Spot for tableau
- Hallways & Cafeteria general light, harsh and bright (fluorescent)
- Music Room & Classroom still general light but more subdued Drama 1 & 2 Isolated mark -
- Drama DSL Drama club style single spotlight that transitions colors through the speech / repeats later but settles into Blue only at the end of her speech.
- Marcy Pink Light DSR (used later for tableau)
- Marcy's House Major Party lighting at night, DJ light effects effects: Smoke from offstage right
- CB & Beethoven DSL single focused white light (moonlight)
- Marcy's House 2 Sunrise to harsh sunny glare

# Sound

### Sound Plan for Dog Sees God

The sound design revolves around the piano pieces. The audience will hear the Moonlight Sonata on entering the theatre. It is sad and beautiful, and Beethoven's last piece played at the final crisis. The curtain call and exit music will be a mix of an amped up guitar version of Revolutionary Etude mixed with the piano version, the piece we hear when CB was happiest in the play. In scene transitions, various piano chords and lines will be used to echo the current tone implied by the upcoming action — as if the piano is premonitory. The following list attempts to identify the required and implied sound effects along with some interpretive choices.

### **Conceptual and Interpretive:**

- Scene Changes: Piano chords, lines maybe same chord or line but with varying dynamics and sometimes out of tune for use between scenes
  - Resource: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXdja8RvKi0
- Pre-Show: Use full version of Moonlight Sonata (a single line of this is what Beethoven plays in the final crisis)
- Curtain Call: Revolutionary Etude guitar version overlayed with the piano

### Sound Effects in order of use:

- School Bell
- Simple piano solo version of Chopin's Prelude #4 in E Minor Op 28/4
- Heart and soul duet on the piano, first plunked out only bass line and then add in the treble played beautifully- bass line cuts out first then treble line out
- Teenage weekend Party music techno dance music with a very demanding beat
  - Something like this <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GeXPetN1ez8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GeXPetN1ez8</a>
- DJ mix from the first party music to include the original "classic" Peanuts gang "dance" music (Vince Guaraldi) should have a strange feeling of working together and being discordant as well a battle between the beats for dominance where the "current" party music ends end drowning out the "classic"
  - This is the concept but needs to be much faster : <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CdkwF1Ij-m8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CdkwF1Ij-m8</a>
- Rooster Crow
- Buzz Visiting hour ends prison sounding alert/buzz usually heard before a door opens
- Cell door closing
- "Revolutionary Etude" solo on piano softly in the background during the soliloquy and comes to full volume with light transition into next scene
- "Moonlight Sonata" solo on piano single line played slowly
- School Bell again (but distant)
- the classic Peanuts teacher (trombone) "wah, wah, wah" -
  - asking a question
  - Droning on in commentary
  - Agitated but higher pitch and louder
- Soft Rain sound for final scene