

Q&A with Set Designer Larry Cook, GTA Resident Designer

Q: What do you consider to be this production's biggest challenge?

The biggest scenic challenge is to convey the sense of the vastness and depth of the Grand Canyon. We'll depend a lot on lighting to help the actors tell that story. As well there is the constant change of location on a moving body of water- the Colorado river- and the rapids. We've tried to give the actors a playground where they can convincingly create those moments of awe, danger, heartbreak, and victory that accompanied Powell's expedition.



Q: What excites you the most about this production?

What a great story... and it's true! Powell was both a crazy-man and a visionary. The man had will and was indomitable. He seemed completely unaware that most of what he did should not have been attempted by a man with one arm and that I find exciting- people who refuse to be defined by the expectations of others.

Q: How are the "river runs" going to be accomplished onstage?

With a combination of levels, lighting effects, and a great deal of work on the actors' parts.

Q: What piece of research influenced your designs the most?

I've never seen the Grand Canyon and can only imagine what the experience is truly like. Photos of the river and canyon were my primary source of research. One of the earliest things I noticed was how different the canyon looks as the light changes throughout the day, and that's something we'll try to incorporate into the scenic elements of the show.