

usitt

Sightlines

The monthly newsletter for USITT members

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Architecture Awards
- To the Editor: Time to Vote
- PQ Reprised at La MaMa
- Announcements
- Raymond Kent Goes Green
- Commissioners Meet
- Following a Fellow
- In Memoriam: Katherine Brants
- Offer Writing Prize
- The Last Word - 24 Hour Theatre

NEWS FROM:

- Around the Institute
- Contributing Members
- USITT's President
- Sustaining Members
- Executive Director
- Regional Sections

CONFERENCE & STAGE EXPO:

- To Feature David Gallo
- Dining in Milwaukee
- Virtual Designing
- Touring in Chicago
- New at Stage Expo

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

[VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »](#)
[CONTACT THE EDITOR »](#)
[Search the Archives](#)
[GO](#)
[SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE »](#)


Five Merit Winners Named

Three performing arts centers, an opera house, and a national parks visitor center will be honored in March. [more »](#)



To the Editor:

The national elections may be over, but a long-time member of the Institute is urging members to consider their choices in the USITT election process. [more »](#)



La MaMa Hosts a Reprise of Prague

A portion of the USITT-USA National Exhibit to the PQ '11 will be exhibited in the La MaMa La Galleria in New York City, opening December 6. [more »](#)



Honored with Sustainability Award

Raymond Kent, an active member of USITT, received the 2012 Sustainable Technology Award from InfoComm International. [more »](#)



USITT Commissioners Share Ideas

An August meeting in Disney World allowed leaders of USITT's Commissions time to share information and plan for the future. [more »](#)



Following a Fellow

Read about the impact on one student as she is mentored by one of USITT's Fellows. [more »](#)



In Memoriam – Katherine Brants

A vivid character and long-time USITT supporter. [more »](#)



Prize for Theatre Writing

Entries for a national essay contest with a \$2,500 prize can be on any aspect of theatre or drama, so break out those ideas. [more »](#)



USITT's President – A Las Vegas Experience

Making connections across the generations and seeing how USITT makes that happen. [more »](#)



Executive Director – Expressing Appreciation

Finding ways to express appreciation to all those who may hold differing views, but who all work to make USITT a great organization. [more »](#)

Dispelling the Success Myths

Tony Award Winner David Gallo shows the multitude of paths that can



lead to success in a special session at the 2013 Annual Conference. [more »](#)



How is the Food in Milwaukee?

The answer, from an expert on the subject, is that there are a plethora of places serving a multitude of choices, all close to the site of the 2013 Annual Conference. [more »](#)



Designing for and In Virtual Worlds?

A special session at the 2013 Annual Conference invites a closer look at *Using Virtual Worlds for Performance & Design*. [more »](#)



Spotlight on Chicago

The Windy City is just down the road from the 2013 Annual Conference location, so a day trip before the Conference will allow you to sample some of what it offers. [more »](#)



Adding Excitement to Stage Expo

New interactive programming, the Rose Brand Design Challenge, and a new Innovation Gallery & Stage are all planned for Stage Expo 2012. [more »](#)



The Last Word — 24 Hour Theatre

A 24-hour theatre process is much more than just a performance opportunity. Guiding it to success is a training opportunity for stage manager. [more »](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Fellowship Application Deadline January 10
- Member Author Program
- Catering at Conference Events
- Groups Receive Stewart Award from PLASA
- Researchers Sought
- Company Donates Proceeds from App
- Winners Announced at LDI

NEWS FROM: AROUND THE INSTITUTE

- Action Design Competition Returns to Stage Expo
- Kraft Joins JTH Lighting Alliance
- StageBitz Raises Investment Capital
- Institute in 'Green' Headlines
- New Website for Pittsburgh Stage

NEWS FROM: CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS

- **City Theatrical:** Business Disrupted by Sandy's Wrath
- **Phillips Lighting:** Ghostlights Shine for Behind the Scenes
- **Creative Stage Lighting:** Vontobel Joins Company, Allen Promoted
- **Stage Technologies:** Control Helps *Timon of Athens* Soar
- **ETC:** New Dimmer Debuts at LDI
- **J.R. Clancy, Inc.:** Block Controls Runaway Linesets
- **GAMPRODUCTS:** Introduces New Cookie
- **Rose Brand:** Provides Custom Curtain

NEWS FROM: REGIONAL SECTIONS

- **California:** Slates Sixth Career Fair
- **Desert State:** Hold Workshops, Plan Annual Meeting
- **Upstate New York:** Hold Elections, Seek Nominees for New Posts
- **Southwest:** To Hold Winter Symposium

NEWS FROM: SUSTAINING MEMBERS

- **Rhode Island College:** Welcome New member
- **First Stage Milwaukee:** Increases Support Level
- **TMB:** ProPlex Helps Light Ryder Cup Ceremonies
- **L-ACOUSTICS:** The Dukes of September Take K1 to the Streets
- **Stagecraft Institute of Las Vegas:** Applications for 2013 Classes Available Online
- **Norris-Whitney Communications Inc.:** Assistant Editor Named
- **Nemetschek Vectorworks:** To Name Scholarship Winner
- **Meyer Sound:** MythBusters Test 'Frequency of Fear'
- **Alcons Audio:** Brewery House Sound 'Lager' Than Life

[Lead story ›](#)

Volume LII, Number 12



© United States Institute for Theatre Technology, Inc.

FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Architecture Awards
- To the Editor: Time to Vote
- PQ Reprised at La MaMa
- Announcements
- Raymond Kent Goes Green
- Commissioners Meet
- Following a Fellow
- In Memoriam: Katherine Brants
- Offer Writing Prize
- The Last Word - 24 Hour Theatre

NEWS FROM:

- Around the Institute
- Contributing Members
- USITT's President
- Sustaining Members
- Executive Director
- Regional Sections

CONFERENCE & STAGE EXPO:

- To Feature David Gallo
- Dining in Milwaukee
- Virtual Designing
- Touring in Chicago
- New at Stage Expo

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

[VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »](#)

[CONTACT THE EDITOR »](#)

Search the Archives

GO

News & Notices

Five Receive Architecture Merit Awards

Three performing arts centers, an opera house, and a national parks visitor center will receive Merit Awards from the USITT Architecture Awards program in 2013. The awards recognize architectural excellence in performing arts spaces. No Honor awards will be given in 2013.

The 2013 Merit Award winners are:

- **Garsington Opera Pavilion**, Wormsley Estate, Stokenchurch, High Wycombe, United Kingdom. Snell Associates Architect; Ian Mackintosh, TheatrePlan, and Anne Minors, theatre consultants; Sound Space Design, sound consultant.
- **Wagner Noel Performing Arts Center**, Midland, Texas. Boora Architects; Rhotenberry Wellen Architects, associate architects; Auerbach Pollock Friedlander, theatre consultant; Jaffe Holden, sound consultant.
- **Valley Performing Arts Center**, Northridge, California. HGA Architects and Engineers; Auerbach Pollock Friedlander, theatre consultant; McKay Conant Hoover, Inc., sound consultant.
- **Rosie the Riveter Visitor Center/World War II Home Front National Historic Park**, Richmond, California. Marcy Wong Donn Logan Architects; Architecture and Light, theatre consultant; Charles M. Salter Associates, sound consultant.
- **Kilden Performing Arts Center**, Kristiansand, Norway. ALA Architects Ltd., architects; SMS Arkitekter AS, associate architect; Theatre Projects



The Kilden Performing Arts Center in Kristiansand, Norway, will receive one of five Merit awards in the 2013 USITT Architecture Awards program.

Photo/ Ivan Baan

SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE »

Consultants, theatre consultant; Arup Acoustics (Concert Hall), Brekke & Strand Akustik AS, sound consultants.

Awards were chosen based on creativity, contextual resonance, functional operation, use of new technologies and community contribution. All are new projects completed since January 2011. They will be presented as part of the 2013 Annual Conference & Stage Expo March 20 to 23, 2013 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin where a reception will be held to honor them. Each project will also be represented in a special exhibition at Stage Expo.

USITT's Architecture Commission sponsors the awards, which are adjudicated by a panel whose recommendations are forwarded to the Board of Directors for final approval.

The judges for the 2013 Architecture Awards included Chicago-based Theatre Designer Robert Shook of Schuler Shook; Architect Timothy Hartung of Ennead Architects in New York; and Dawn Schuette, an architect and designer with Threshold Acoustics in Chicago.

Mr. Hartung also will be honored at the 2013 Annual Conference, where he will receive the USITT Distinguished Achievement Award in Architecture.

For information on the Architecture sessions planned for USITT's 2013 Annual Conference & Stage Expo, [click here](#).

[« Front Page](#)

[Next story »](#)

Volume LII, Number 12



© United States Institute for Theatre Technology, Inc.

FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Architecture Awards
- To the Editor: Time to Vote
- PQ Reprised at La MaMa
- Announcements
- Raymond Kent Goes Green
- Commissioners Meet
- Following a Fellow
- In Memoriam: Katherine Brants
- Offer Writing Prize
- The Last Word - 24 Hour Theatre

NEWS FROM:

- Around the Institute
- Contributing Members
- USITT's President
- Sustaining Members
- Executive Director
- Regional Sections

CONFERENCE & STAGE EXPO:

- To Feature David Gallo
- Dining in Milwaukee
- Virtual Designing
- Touring in Chicago
- New at Stage Expo

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »

CONTACT THE EDITOR »

Search the Archives

GO

News & Notices

One Fellow's Perspective on Elections

Tim Kelly *Fellow of the Institute*

To the Editor:

November is voting month whether it's national, state, local, or –yes– USITT elections; when we each have a voice in who we want to represent us. As overindulged as even the most ardent politico might be with the flood of campaign ads, at the very least there is no losing track of the upcoming elections. Many of us are focused on sorting out vexing design and technical problems or improving the bottom line, but there's no escaping *"I'm Blowhard T. Foghorn, and I approve this message."*

Seriously, we all have a good deal at stake in our national and local elections just as we have a vested interest in voting on the best leadership for USITT. From my perspective, the Institute's elections provide much easier choices as all our candidates are dedicated USITT members who bring significant credentials to the job. It should be every member's desire to recognize the dedication of time and talent selflessly given by our Board and Officers. The best way to show appreciation for their service is to have an overwhelming percentage of Institute members vote.

Tim Kelly

Fellow of the Institute

Voting for six members of USITT's Board of Directors continues until December 10. All those eligible to participate in the election should have received information and a link to electronic voting. Those with questions about the process should contact Shannan at shannan@usitt.org or 800-938-7488 ext 101.

[‹ Previous story](#)

[Next story ›](#)



usitt

Sightlines

The monthly newsletter for USITT members

December 2012

[Print this page ›](#)

[Next story ›](#)

FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Architecture Awards
- To the Editor: Time to Vote
- PQ Reprised at La MaMa
- Announcements
- Raymond Kent Goes Green
- Commissioners Meet
- Following a Fellow
- In Memoriam: Katherine Brants
- Offer Writing Prize
- The Last Word - 24 Hour Theatre

NEWS FROM:

- Around the Institute
- Contributing Members
- USITT's President
- Sustaining Members
- Executive Director
- Regional Sections

CONFERENCE & STAGE EXPO:

- To Feature David Gallo
- Dining in Milwaukee
- Virtual Designing
- Touring in Chicago
- New at Stage Expo

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

[VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »](#)

[CONTACT THE EDITOR »](#)

[Search the Archives](#)

GO

News & Notices

La MaMa to Exhibit From the Edge:

Alexandra Bonds *USITT-USA National Exhibit*



The USA/USITT exhibit on display at the 2012 Annual Conference & Stage Expo.

Photo/Tom Thatcher

A portion of the USITT-USA National Exhibit to the PQ '11 will be exhibited in the La MaMa La Galleria in New York City, opening December 6. The showing will highlight USITT's continuing efforts to document and promote performance design in America, and introduce this exhibit to a new audience.

From the Edge, sponsored by the Institute, represented the United States at the Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space in 2011. It features the works of 36 politically compelling productions from across America, selected by Artistic Director Susan Tsu and curators Chris Barecca, Linda Cho, Don Tindall, and Allen Hahn. Randy Gener, co-producer of the La MaMa La Galleria exhibit, acted as curatorial advisor during the selection process. Ms. Tsu conceived of the socio-political theme in order to identify theatre companies tackling the issues consuming Americans today including war, ecology, political polarities, race, gender, and religion.

SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE »

Among the featured works are Paul Chan's *Waiting for Godot* set in New Orleans, Nancy Keystone's *Apollo and The America Play*, Rob Roth's *Screen Test*, and Basil Twist's *Arias with a Twist*. Special recognition is given to companies considered to be founders of innovative and political theatre.

Originally displayed in a garage motif designed by William Bloodgood, the pavilion reflected the workspace of seminal performance groups such as the Wooster Group. The outer walls were defaced with graffiti, while the interior was furnished with sawhorses and makeshift furniture, and splashed with paint in the frenzy of creativity. A model will represent the exhibit structure.

USITT has organized and sponsored the American participation in the PQ since the USA began participating in 1975. *From the Edge* is the 10th exhibit representing America in this singular world event dedicated to design for performance.

The exhibit, presented with additional support from Carnegie-Mellon University, will be open Wednesday through Sunday between 1 and 7:30 p.m. until December 16.

[◀ Previous story](#)

[Next story ▶](#)

Volume LII, Number 12



© United States Institute for Theatre Technology, Inc.

[Next story ›](#)

FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Architecture Awards
- To the Editor: Time to Vote
- PQ Reprised at La MaMa
- Announcements
- Raymond Kent Goes Green
- Commissioners Meet
- Following a Fellow
- In Memoriam: Katherine Brants
- Offer Writing Prize
- The Last Word - 24 Hour Theatre

NEWS FROM:

- Around the Institute
- Contributing Members
- USITT's President
- Sustaining Members
- Executive Director
- Regional Sections

CONFERENCE & STAGE EXPO:

- To Feature David Gallo
- Dining in Milwaukee
- Virtual Designing
- Touring in Chicago
- New at Stage Expo

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »

CONTACT THE EDITOR »

Search the Archives

GO

News & Notices

Announcements

- [Fellowship Application Deadline January 10](#)
- [Member Author Program](#)
- [Catering at Conference Events](#)
- [Groups Receive Stewart Award from PLASA](#)
- [Researchers Sought](#)
- [Company Donates Proceeds from App](#)
- [Winners Announced at LDI](#)

Fellowship Application Deadline January 10

Applications for Fellowship Awards from USITT are now available, and the deadline for submissions is January 10.

Those interested in a particular area of study with a coherent theme that will result in significant excellence in scholarship or creative activity can find out more information [here](#). The Grants & Fellowship Committee typically funds several fellowships each year up to \$15,000. This year, the Committee will focus on proposals that strive to provide advanced research on the specific interests of applicants.

Member Author Program

Members who have had (or will have) a book published in 2012 (January 1 to December 31) are encouraged to participate in the USITT Member Author Program. Books in this program are sold at the USITT Annual Conference & Stage Expo in Milwaukee. Additionally, authors are invited to be part of a book signing during the Conference. Send title and publisher information to carol@usitt.org to be included in this great member benefit.

Catering at Conference Events

USITT offers a wide variety of food and beverages for all types of events at the 2013 Annual Conference & Stage Expo. Catered functions are easy to arrange; just contact Tracy Davis at the USITT office at 800-938-7488, extension 105, or e-mail tracy@usitt.org. She will provide menus once they become available and coordinate catering orders with Conference hotels and the Delta Center.

Groups Receive Stewart Award from PLASA

PLASA presented the 2012 Frank Stewart Volunteer of the Year Award to members of the Technical Standards Program's E1.6-1 Powered Hoist Systems Task Group and the Entertainment Technician Certification Program's Rigging Subject Matter Experts on October 18th at PLASA's Cocktails and Awards Reception.

The award to the E1.6-1 Task group was presented to Joe Champelli, Kimberly Corbett, Chris Kaiser, Michael Lichter, Jack Miller, Jim Niesel, Pete Svitavsky, Steve Walker, and Task Group leader Harvey Sweet.

The award to the ETCP Rigging Subject Matter Experts was presented to group members Patrick Bash, John Bleich, David Boevers, Marcel Boulet, Eric Braun, Olan Cottrill, Dan Culhane, Brad Dittmer, Jim Doherty, Russ Dusek, Tony Galuppi, Kelly Green, Tom Heemskerk, Dan Houser, Glenn Hufford, Ed Kish, Eric McAfee, Joseph McGeough, Brian Miller, Joe Mooneyham, Walter Murphy, Mark O'Brien, Michael Reed, Stephen Rees, Bill Sapsis (chair, Arena SMEs), Peter Scheu, Loren Schreiber, Karen Seifried (chair, Theatre SMEs), and Gil Vinzant.

Researchers Sought

Anyone interested in being a contributing researcher for the upcoming publication of *World Scenography, Volume II - 1990-2005* is asked to consider applying.

World Scenography Volume I, published this past summer, continues in the tradition of Rene Hainaux's *Stage Design Throughout the World from 1935*, and documents works that made a major impact on the world of performing arts between 1975- 1990. Volume I was published by OISTAT as a project of the OISTAT Publications and Communications Commission.

Publishers hope to have several more contributors from the USA working on Volume II and are looking for people who have an interest in writing about theatre design. This may appeal to those in academia who would like to add some publication to their curriculum vitae. There is a third volume in the works which will cover 2010-2025.

Editors Peter McKinnon and Eric Fielding will select approximately 30 designs/designers from the United States to include in Volume II. Once these selections are made and assigned, researchers will gather pertinent information about a production and will write brief copy that succinctly explains the production's impact and/or significance.

For more information on doing research, visit the [project website](#).

Company Donates Proceeds from App

ETC CEO Fred Foster presented a check for \$23,423 to Behind the Scenes

October 20 at LDI. The donation reflected ongoing proceeds from sales of ETC's iRFR (Radio Focus Remote for iPhone and iPod Touch) application.

When ETC introduced the iRFR, which was developed by ETC software engineer Chris Mizerak, another employee, Luke Delwiche, suggested the profits be put toward Behind the Scenes and its UK counterpart Light Relief. Since then, both charities have benefited enormously. This check brought the total ETC donation to Behind the Scenes to just over \$100,000. The ETC iRFR application is purchased through iTunes for iPhones and iPod Touches; no special hardware or factory-coding is required. Users simply purchase the app that corresponds to the charity they wish to support.



Individuals or companies can support Behind the Scenes by making donations online at www.estafoundation.org or by calling 212-244-1421.

Winners Announced at LDI

PLASA announced the winners of the 2012 Members' Choice Awards and the fifth annual Rock Our World Awards presented during LDI.

The Members' Choice Awards, presented October 20, recognized newly released, outstanding entertainment technology products. Voting on these awards was open to all employees of PLASA member companies who attended the LDI show. The 2012 winners are:

- **Expendable Category:** NFG Tape from Rose Brand
- **Gadget Category:** EverGrip 7 Pin Molded Socapex Compatible Motor Control Cable Connector
- **Equipment Category:** 20 Amp Break out Box to PowerCON Connectors, Feed Thru by Lex Products Corporation.

The Rock Our World Awards, presented at the PLASA Cocktails and Awards Reception on October 18, recognize ground-breaking achievement by PLASA Members.

The winners were **ELC Lighting** for the Green-GO digital intercom system, and **The Pan American Games** in Guadalajara involving PRG.

[Previous story](#)

[Next story](#)

FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Architecture Awards
- To the Editor: Time to Vote
- PQ Reprinted at La MaMa
- Announcements
- Raymond Kent Goes Green
- Commissioners Meet
- Following a Fellow
- In Memoriam: Katherine Brants
- Offer Writing Prize
- The Last Word - 24 Hour Theatre

NEWS FROM:

- Around the Institute
- Contributing Members
- USITT's President
- Sustaining Members
- Executive Director
- Regional Sections

CONFERENCE & STAGE EXPO:

- To Feature David Gallo
- Dining in Milwaukee
- Virtual Designing
- Touring in Chicago
- New at Stage Expo

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »

CONTACT THE EDITOR »

Search the Archives

GO

News & Notices

Kent Honored with Sustainable Technology Award

Raymond A. Kent, CTS, LEED AP BD+C, EAVA, ECA, DMC-D, received the 2012 Sustainable Technology Award from InfoComm International. Mr. Kent is managing principal of Sustainable Technologies Group, LLC and serves as director of Westlake Reed Leskosky's innovative technology design group.

Mr. Kent also received the USITT Ohio Valley Regional Section Peggy Ezekial Awards for both Outstanding Achievement for Audio Visual Desing (for the Allen Theatre complex at Playhouse Square in Cleveland, Ohio) and Outstanding Achievement for Lighting Desing and Audio Visual Design for the Mob Museum in Las Vegas, Nevada. The awards were juried and presented at the section's fall workshops at Kent State University.

Mr. Kent is Vice-Commissioner for Special Projects for USITT's Architecture Commission.

InfoComm International is the leading nonprofit association serving the professional audiovisual (AV) communications industry worldwide. The Sustainable AV Technology Award recognizes companies and individuals who have implemented environmentally sustainable practices in a variety of ways, from the manufacturing of products, to the integration of AV systems, to green initiatives in the workplace.

Mr. Kent is an award-winning specialist in the design and specification of audio-visual, show control, lighting, and theatre performance systems. He has worked in design and project management from New York to Los Angeles, with expertise in designing audio-visual systems for corporate, healthcare, educational, and civic clients as well as theatrical and AV systems for performing and cultural arts projects. Innovative technology projects have included tele-presence, audio-visual conferencing, digital signage applications, paging and background audio systems, classroom media technology, and room automation systems. His background includes working as a professional in the entertainment industry; he has taught design and technology classes at the university level, and has written two books on technology systems as well as numerous technical articles in major industry publications. He blogs for InfoComm International's *AllVoices* and will soon be a featured columnist for the online publication *rAve Magazine* covering the topic of sustainability and technology.



Raymond Kent

SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE »

He is part of a group of pioneers in the sustainable technology industry serving on the InfoComm International's Green AV Task Force. He is a co-author of the Sustainable Technology Environments Program (STEP) rating system and currently serves as chair of the technology task force for the STEP Foundation. He is an active participant in the Center for Sustainable Practice in the Arts and a frequent lecturer at conferences such as InfoComm, USITT's Annual Conference & Stage Expo, and the American Institute of Architects (AIA/CES Provider).

Sustainable Technologies Group, LLC provides state-of-the-art technology solutions with the environment in mind.

[« Previous story](#)

[Next story »](#)

Volume LII, Number 12



© United States Institute for Theatre Technology, Inc.

FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Architecture Awards
- To the Editor: Time to Vote
- PQ Reprised at La MaMa
- Announcements
- Raymond Kent Goes Green
- Commissioners Meet
- Following a Fellow
- In Memoriam: Katherine Brants
- Offer Writing Prize
- The Last Word - 24 Hour Theatre

NEWS FROM:

- Around the Institute
- Contributing Members
- USITT's President
- Sustaining Members
- Executive Director
- Regional Sections

CONFERENCE & STAGE EXPO:

- To Feature David Gallo
- Dining in Milwaukee
- Virtual Designing
- Touring in Chicago
- New at Stage Expo

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »

CONTACT THE EDITOR »

Search the Archives

GO

News & Notices

Commissioners Meet at Disney World

David Krajec *Vice-President for Commissions*

In early August, the Commissioner's Retreat was held at Disney World Boardwalk Resort in conjunction with the Board of Directors meeting. After a short reception with the USITT Board. The Conference Committee, and Florida-based members met to discuss their most pressing issues. Lea Asbell-Swanger, USITT President, met with the group to discuss the challenges facing the Institute and its members.

USITT Website - David Grindle, Executive Director, provided a preview of the new website and all its new features. The Commissioners were excited about the possibilities that are now available. The site is now available through one server with Commission forums.

Commission Budgets – The Commissions continue to do great work throughout the year. However, programming and projects need more input from the membership. Those interested in seeing a particular program presented at the conference or who have an idea for a project within a Commission, should contact the appropriate Commissioner to solicit help on how to propose and fund a project. Projects are funded through each Commission's budget.

Conference Programming Quality & Dissemination – This is a topic on which we are constantly striving to improve. Programming at the national conference should not end at the conference but continue on to the regional level. Many members cannot attend the conference; however, they are active in their local sections.

Commission Leadership – Although there is strong leadership within the Commissions, the group discussed how Commissioners can serve the membership throughout the year. USITT is not only the conference. The support for the membership growth in knowledge and experience should be continuous.



USITT's Commissioners gathered in Disney World at the same time as the Board of Directors and Conference Committee.

Photo/Barbara E.R. Lucas

FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Architecture Awards
- To the Editor: Time to Vote
- PQ Reprinted at La MaMa
- Announcements
- Raymond Kent Goes Green
- Commissioners Meet
- Following a Fellow
- In Memoriam: Katherine Brants
- Offer Writing Prize
- The Last Word - 24 Hour Theatre

NEWS FROM:

- Around the Institute
- Contributing Members
- USITT's President
- Sustaining Members
- Executive Director
- Regional Sections

CONFERENCE & STAGE EXPO:

- To Feature David Gallo
- Dining in Milwaukee
- Virtual Designing
- Touring in Chicago
- New at Stage Expo

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »

CONTACT THE EDITOR »

Search the Archives

GO

News & Notices

Two Days in the Life – with a Fellow

Eliza Emily Warner *University of Montana*

I was sitting in a workshop during the USITT Annual Conference & Stage Expo when my phone started vibrating. I tried to ignore it, but it wouldn't stop. Finally, I checked my cell and saw I had about three missed calls from a professor who had convinced me to attend USITT that year, not to mention the 10 or so texts from friends who were also at the conference. Most of them had a variation of: "YOU WON THE FIND A FELLOW THING!! GET TO THE EXPO FLOOR!!"

I couldn't believe it. I never win anything. Ever. About half a year later, I was on a plane headed for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and my Fellow Mentor, Richard Hay.

I was very excited. Richard had gotten me tickets to see several shows with the intent for me to critique each one. I was worried, though. What if Richard and I didn't have anything to talk about? What if he was crazy? What if it was very, very, very awkward? Fortunately, none of these things happened. He picked me up outside of the airport, gave me a ride to my Shakespeare-themed hotel, and made plans to meet me at 10 a.m. the next day.

Over the next two days, I woke up and walked the six minutes to the theatre ready to learn and experience everything I could. Richard took me on a tour of the entire Oregon Shakespeare Festival campus. I never had imagined that something theatre-related could take that much space. This entire time I was completely "nerding out" while backstage and in the shops. Everything was bigger and better than anything I had ever seen. My favorite place was the Light Shop; it was there I started to notice that something about myself had changed.



Eliza Emily Warner -
University of Montana



Each day after the tour (the campus was so large it took two days to see the whole thing), I saw two shows:

Romeo and Juliet, and *Animal*

Crackers the first day; *Troilus and Cressida*, and *All The Way* the second. I had come to the Festival to look into props, but the thing that kept on catching my attention was the lighting in both shows. I started to think about how much I enjoy both lighting and props. Last semester, I had started spending more and more time in the lighting areas of the University of Montana theatre department. I had discovered a new love and source of excitement while in Ashland.

Besides seeing shows and the Ashland campus, I enjoyed spending time with one of regional theatre's most celebrated designers, Richard Hay. He talked to me about his life experiences, both professional and non-professional. On Sunday, we walked to the design studio and he showed me his model and research for the show *Animal Crackers*. It amazed me that he could turn a couple of pictures into a model and that model into a set that thousands and thousands of people would see onstage.

Attending professional shows and this experience in general was more beneficial than I had imagined. It gave me direction and a chance to talk to a professional about how he had gotten to this place in his life. All in all, I wouldn't change a thing about my weekend with a USITT Fellow.



Eliza Warner was one of two winners in the Find-A-Fellow contest at the Long Beach 2012 USITT Annual Conference & Stage Expo. Each winner was awarded an all expense paid, two-day mentoring session with a Fellow of the Institute chosen to match his or her area of interest.

Ms. Warner was paired with Richard Hay, whose home base is in Ashland,

Oregon. Mr. Hay is acclaimed as one of the preeminent deans of theatre design in the United States. At the conclusion of her FAF experience, Eliza shared her story.

The Fellows of USITT sponsor this event, which will be repeated in 2013. A new group of Fellows have been selected, and students will be invited to identify the six mystery photos and obtain six signatures to validate their entries.

Watch for more information about Find-A-Fellow 2013 as March approaches, and enjoy reading about the experiences of one of the 2012 winners.

[« Previous story](#)

[Next story »](#)

Volume LII, Number 12



© United States Institute for Theatre Technology, Inc.

FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Architecture Awards
- To the Editor: Time to Vote
- PQ Reprinted at La MaMa
- Announcements
- Raymond Kent Goes Green
- Commissioners Meet
- Following a Fellow
- In Memoriam: Katherine Brants
- Offer Writing Prize
- The Last Word - 24 Hour Theatre

NEWS FROM:

- Around the Institute
- Contributing Members
- USITT's President
- Sustaining Members
- Executive Director
- Regional Sections

CONFERENCE & STAGE EXPO:

- To Feature David Gallo
- Dining in Milwaukee
- Virtual Designing
- Touring in Chicago
- New at Stage Expo

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »

CONTACT THE EDITOR »

Search the Archives

GO

News & Notices

In Memoriam: Katherine Ann Brants

Katherine Ann McDaniel Brants, retired dancer, costumer, and administrator for Protech Theatrical Services and the former Hoffend & Sons rigging company, died October 29, 2012, in Fort Worth, Texas. She was 81.



Katherine Ann Brants

A former professional dancer in New York, Katherine made her “grand entrance into the world of back-stage performance rigging during the renovation of the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas” after the fire of 1980, recalls Jack Hoffend of InterAmerica Stage Inc. in Sanford, Florida.

Jack’s father, Don Hoffend Sr., “recognized her extraordinary talents” on that project and asked her to move to Victor, New York, to help run Hoffend & Sons, Jack said. (Hoffend & Sons pioneered the patented Vortek rigging system and was bought by Daktronics, Inc. in 2006).

Katherine was a popular figure in the theatre industry, with a vivacious personality and sense of humor. A famous quote was, “Tomorrow I’m wearing my work boots and jeans,” said whenever she faced a challenge. She was known for always being dressed to the nines and once competed in the Miss Senior Nevada beauty contest.

Her example inspired her son, Will Brants, who also worked for Hoffend, to form Protech Theatrical Services in North Las Vegas in 1988. Nearly everyone in her extended family continues to work in the theatre industry.

Katherine worked for Protech from 1989 to 2001 as contract administrator, head seamstress, and founder of the drapery division. In 1993 she founded Prima Stage Draperies, a drapery shop with 7 employees in Las Vegas, while performing costume work on the side.

USITT was a passion of hers, especially spending time with her favorite Fellows: Ed Peterson, Theatre Consultant George Howard, and rigging expert Jack Suesse, who all predeceased her.

Her love for USITT was inspired by her desire to grow a passion for the theatre industry in young people, Will said. She donated thousands of dollars in charity work, crafting curtains and draperies for underfunded school theatre programs.

Katherine served on the Conference Committee for USITT’s 1995 Annual Conference & Stage Expo in Las Vegas, and “looked forward to every USITT conference she could attend,” until Parkinson’s Disease slowed her down in

SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE »

recent years, said a friend, Robert Watson of Themeing Solutions in Las Vegas.

Her kindness extended far beyond the stage; she always had an open door for stray and unwanted animals, and for a time owned a horse boarding business.

"She had a great career, but at the same time loved her children and grandchildren so much," wrote George Jacobstein and Tom Coulouris of Rose Brand Stage Fabrics. "May the memories of Katherine live on for eternity."

Her son Will said her life was an inspiration to many. "If we could all accomplish half the things she has done in her life, the world would be a brighter place," he said.

[« Previous story](#)

[Next story »](#)

Volume LII, Number 12



© United States Institute for Theatre Technology, Inc.

FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Architecture Awards
- To the Editor: Time to Vote
- PQ Reprised at La MaMa
- Announcements
- Raymond Kent Goes Green
- Commissioners Meet
- Following a Fellow
- In Memoriam: Katherine Brants
- Offer Writing Prize
- The Last Word - 24 Hour Theatre

NEWS FROM:

- Around the Institute
- Contributing Members
- USITT's President
- Sustaining Members
- Executive Director
- Regional Sections

CONFERENCE & STAGE EXPO:

- To Feature David Gallo
- Dining in Milwaukee
- Virtual Designing
- Touring in Chicago
- New at Stage Expo

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »

CONTACT THE EDITOR »

Search the Archives

GO

News & Notices

E\$\$ay Contest Opportunity for Theatre Writers

A national essay contest with a \$2,500 prize offers a great opportunity for theatre writers. The 2013 Amy & Eric Burger Essays on Theatre Competition at the University of Wyoming is seeking submissions of essays on the theatre by March 12, 2013.

The contest offers \$2,500 for the best unpublished essay of 1,800 to 7,500 words written in English on any aspect of drama or the theatre. Topics on film and television are excluded. To enter, mail two copies of the essay without the author's name on them, plus a separate cover letter with the essay title and the author's name, address, phone number, and e-mail address, to: National Amy & Eric Burger Essay Competition, University of Wyoming, c/o Dr. Jim Volz, President, Consultants for the Arts, Theatre & Dance, PO Box 6850, Fullerton, CA 92834-6850.

Essays must be mailed first class, postmarked by March 12, and received by March 18, 2013. A winner will be notified by June 1, 2013.

The contest is funded by donors to the University of Wyoming's College of Arts and Sciences. Past winners of the annual contest have included New York playwright Deborah Brevoort, author of *The Women of Lockerbie*, and Curt Tofteland, director of the award-winning independent film *Shakespeare Behind Bars*.



Women of Lockerbie was produced at Marquette Theatre in November and the playwright, Deborah Brevoort, was there for opening weekend. Ms. Brevoort is a previous winner of the Amy & Eric Burger Essays on theatre Competition.

Photo/Dan Johnson

[‹ Previous story](#)

[Next story ›](#)

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Sightlines

The monthly newsletter for USITT members

December 2012

[Print this page ›](#)

[Front Page ›](#)

FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Architecture Awards
- To the Editor: Time to Vote
- PQ Reprised at La MaMa
- Announcements
- Raymond Kent Goes Green
- Commissioners Meet
- Following a Fellow
- In Memoriam: Katherine Brants
- Offer Writing Prize
- The Last Word - 24 Hour Theatre

NEWS FROM:

- Around the Institute
- Contributing Members
- USITT's President
- Sustaining Members
- Executive Director
- Regional Sections

CONFERENCE & STAGE EXPO:

- To Feature David Gallo
- Dining in Milwaukee
- Virtual Designing
- Touring in Chicago
- New at Stage Expo

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

[VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »](#)

[CONTACT THE EDITOR »](#)

[Search the Archives](#)

GO

The Last Word:

The 24-Hour Theatre Process: A Training Opportunity for Young Stage Managers

Elynmarie Kazle *USITT Fellow*



The actors, writers, directors, playwrights, and stage managers of Firestone's 24-Hour Theatre Project '11.

Photos/Elynmarie Kazle

I thought it would be just another performance opportunity for our students, but it has become so much more. I now understand that a 24-hour theatre project is an outstanding and indispensable stage management training ground.

I received early Leadership Learning in USITT. There were not many students involved at the board or committee levels of USITT when I first joined as a college student. Projects were encouraged, but 30 years ago we were a young organization, and we were just getting our wings. Through the urging of Dick Durst, Pat Dennis, and my other teachers at the University of Minnesota - Deluth, I was encouraged to join the USITT conference adventure in Overland Park, Kansas. That week in 1980 opened a door for me, and I have never looked back.

In USITT, I found mentors, encouragers, discouragers (of bad behavior) as well as the folks who wrote and were the stuff of my text books. Soon I found myself on the board and, through the encouragement of many fine theatre professionals including Joel Rubin, Dick Devin, Chris Kaiser, and Bill Byrnes, developing the first Stage Management Mentoring Project (SMMP).

SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE »

I eventually turned the successful project over to the first in a line of outstanding SMMP leaders. I was then able to apply my efforts locally, developing a stage management training program and mentoring project as part of the Vocational Theatre Program for the Akron Public Schools at Firestone High School. We are several years into the ongoing stage management training, and as of last year, our numbers of currently trained stage managers swelled to 24. How to train this growing number of eager students in the practical skills of stage management became my challenge.

To find something new and challenging for his budding actors and directors, Mark A. Zimmerman, theatre director, created the first 24-Hour Theatre Project for the school's program. It was at about hour number 18 of that first project that I realized what a fantastic training ground this was for my stage management students.

Firestone did not invent the concept of the 24-Hour Theatre Project, but I am not aware of many high schools taking it on. It works like this: actors, directors, stage managers, and writers meet for the first time at 8 p.m. on a Friday night. Introductions are made and the directors, with their writers, go through an audition process for a play yet to be written. The actors are dismissed to go home and sleep in their own beds while the writers go to work.

The schedule then allows time for stage managers and directors to get to know one another and plan out the process before the first bits of information begin to emerge. Casts are divided so initial planning of rehearsal spaces and assignments can be made. Around midnight, first drafts begin to emerge and more planning can be done. The stage managers assist in first reads if necessary, and the playwright mentors work with all on making improvements to each script. Directors and SMs then try to get a cat nap while the writers take the next round.

About 3 or 4 a.m., the final drafts emerge, and the stage managers arrange for the first reads making copies and setting up rehearsal rooms at the school. At 7 a.m. the actors and heads of lighting, sound, set, and props arrive for breakfast followed by the first reading of all of the scripts -- each being 10 to 20 minutes in length. Rehearsals begin, and the writers head off for a nap keeping close by to be consulted if major changes need to be made. Stage managers then work with the heads of the technical departments to pull props, small set pieces, costumes, and so forth and get them into rehearsal.



I think I'll sleep on it.

Lunch is served mid-day, and each play gets some spacing time on stage followed by technical rehearsals. Each stage manager runs either lights or sound, and the others help out. Cat naps are encouraged for those not directly involved in a piece. Dinner is served, followed by a single performance of each play.

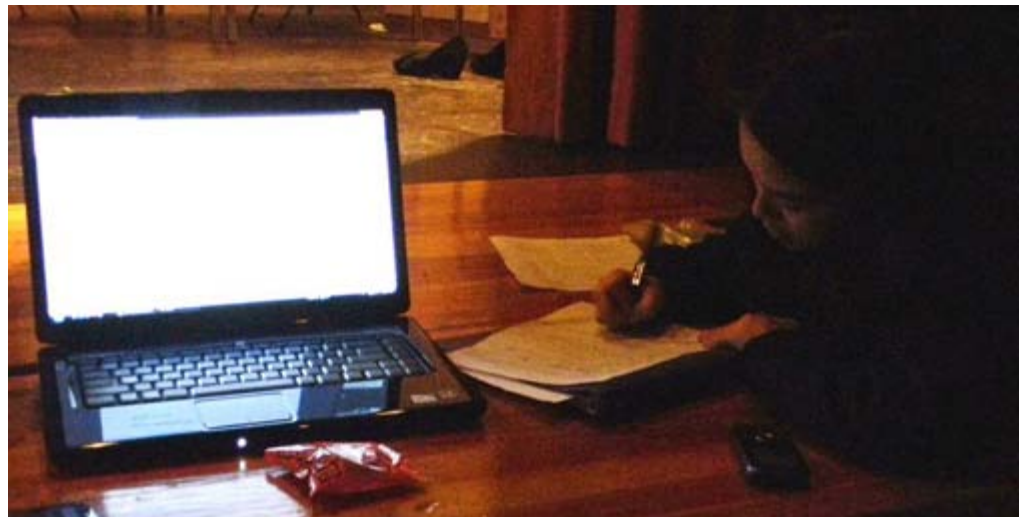
This is a process in which stage managers get to undertake --hands on-- everything they do in a regular rehearsal process. They do it all in the same 24-hour period. They experience the entire process from auditions to performance, practicing skills such as taping down a set, communicating on a headset, blocking, taking notes, pulling props, and calling the performance. It is a crazy night, but I can say that it has developed some of the best stage managers I have.

I would not, could not, would never have had the confidence to build this program (which will have about 30 trained stage managers serving as the house crew for our 150 events throughout the year here at Firestone in 2012-13) if it had not been for the early and continuing leadership training, mentoring, and support I found as a member of USITT.

I encourage anyone who is interested in this type of personal development to get involved in a leadership role in USITT, and to be a part of keeping the leadership in our business highly trained, motivated, and well able to support the creative process.



30 Teenagers from Firestone Theatre working until the wee hours at the school to create four new plays.



Technology left behind. It's back to the paper and the pen.

[Previous story](#)

[Front Page](#)

FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Architecture Awards
- To the Editor: Time to Vote
- PQ Reprised at La MaMa
- Announcements
- Raymond Kent Goes Green
- Commissioners Meet
- Following a Fellow
- In Memoriam: Katherine Brants
- Offer Writing Prize
- The Last Word - 24 Hour Theatre

NEWS FROM:

- Around the Institute
- Contributing Members
- USITT's President
- Sustaining Members
- Executive Director
- Regional Sections

CONFERENCE & STAGE EXPO:

- To Feature David Gallo
- Dining in Milwaukee
- Virtual Designing
- Touring in Chicago
- New at Stage Expo

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »

CONTACT THE EDITOR »

Search the Archives

GO

News From

Around the Institute

- [Action Design Competition Returns to Stage Expo](#)
- [Kraft Joins JTH Lighting Alliance](#)
- [StageBitz Raises Investment Capital](#)
- [Institute in 'Green' Headlines](#)
- [New Website for Pittsburgh Stage](#)

Action Design Competition Returns to Stage Expo

Get ready; get set; action! The 2013 Rose Brand/ Action Design Competition will return to the Milwaukee 2013 Conference & Stage Expo.

The competition pits four teams of student designers and technicians against each other in a design "slam." Each team is given limited supplies and are challenged to create a scenic environment, based on a theme. But, there are a few catches: team members don't receive those supplies until they get to the Expo; the team's theme is a secret until the day of the competition; teams are not announced until the start of Stage Expo; and teams have under four hours to design and create an environment as Stage Expo happens around them.

Rose Brand is looking for students who are up to the task. Applications to join in the fun will be available soon on the [Rose Brand website](#).

Kraft Joins JTH Lighting Alliance

Jerry Kraft is the newest member of JTH Lighting Alliance's Controls Group. He will be a rigging and projects specialist responsible for the promotion and specification of automated rigging for performance facilities as well as lighting controls for commercial, hospitality, and performance applications. Jerry comes to JTH after 17 years at SECOA of Champlin, Minnesota where he served in a variety of capacities including estimator and project manager. He is a member of USITT and holds ETCP certification as an Entertainment Electrician and Rigger – Theatre. A graduate of Minnesota State University - Mankato, Jerry received his bachelor of science degree in theatre arts.

StageBitz Raises Investment Capital

We recently received an update from Catherine Prosser who says, "This is not what I imagined I'd be doing when I did my stage management training back in the '90s, but this industry is full of surprises."

She has co-founded StageBitz, which creates online project and inventory management tools for props, scenery, costumes, and other elements of a show. The tools then collate all that information into a central company inventory and allows users to share what they have online for hire, sale or swapping. Visit www.stagebitz.com/take-the-tour to see what is available. The system was exhibited at the Long Beach 2012 Conference & Stage Expo.

Institute in 'Green' Headlines

Michael Mehler and Paul Brunner have put USITT in the headlines of the Broadway Green Alliance's "Green Sheet" publication.

In an article titled "Education Committee Looks for Current and Future Allies," the pair outlines BGA's recent establishment of a committee to address environmentally conscious theatre production in primary, secondary, and higher education institutions. The authors credit USITT member efforts at the past two Annual Conference & Stage Expos. In Long Beach, the Institute provided BGA a table at Stage Expo. The group also presented information during a Conference session.

To find out more about the Education Committee and its work, e-mail BGAEducation@broadway.org.

New Website for Pittsburgh Stage

Pittsburgh Stage, Inc. recently launched its new [website](#).

The site design features straightforward navigation and a streamlined presentation. This new tool will allow the company to keep visitors up to date with announcements, accomplishments, and design information.

Designers are encouraged to contact Pittsburgh Stage for access to design pages.

[« Previous story](#)

[Next story »](#)





FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Architecture Awards
- To the Editor: Time to Vote
- PQ Reprised at La MaMa
- Announcements
- Raymond Kent Goes Green
- Commissioners Meet
- Following a Fellow
- In Memoriam: Katherine Brants
- Offer Writing Prize
- The Last Word - 24 Hour Theatre

NEWS FROM:

- Around the Institute
- Contributing Members
- USITT's President
- Sustaining Members
- Executive Director
- Regional Sections

CONFERENCE & STAGE EXPO:

- To Feature David Gallo
- Dining in Milwaukee
- Virtual Designing
- Touring in Chicago
- New at Stage Expo

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »

CONTACT THE EDITOR »

Search the Archives

GO

News From

Contributing Members

- **City Theatrical:** Business Disrupted by Sandy's Wrath
- **Phillips Lighting:** Ghostlights Shine for Behind the Scenes
- **Creative Stage Lighting:** Vontobel Joins Company, Allen Promoted
- **Stage Technologies:** Control Helps *Timon of Athens* Soar
- **ETC:** New Dimmer Debuts at LDI
- **J.R. Clancy, Inc.:** Block Controls Runaway Linesets
- **GAMPRODUCTS:** Introduces New Cookie
- **Rose Brand:** Provides Custom Curtain

City Theatrical: Business Disrupted by Sandy's Wrath

City Theatrical's Carlstadt, New Jersey, office sustained damage from Hurricane Sandy in October due to severe flooding. The company is assessing the damage to systems and the building, and will begin to clean up when public transit resumes and the full staff can return to work. City Theatrical's staff and their families are all safe.

Most staff members had no power at home, and everyone's access to cell phones and e-mail has been very marginal because of the scope of the disaster in the New York City area. In the short term, CTI had no power, phone, or e-mail, so the company was unable to ship to or communicate with customers. In the longer term, it will take weeks or longer to get back up and running.

The company will update customers with more information as soon as possible and is sorry for any inconvenience to customers during this emergency. City Theatrical sends its thoughts and prayers out to all others affected by this unprecedented storm and hopes everyone's life can return to a safe and normal state soon.

Phillips Lighting: Ghostlights Shine for Behind the Scenes

Working to support Behind the Scenes, **Philips Strand Lighting** and **Philips Selecon** have donated USB LED ghostlights to be sold by The ESTA Foundation to raise funds for the financial support of entertainment technology industry professionals who are ill or injured. To date, 250 donated ghostlights

have raised a total \$10,000.

Those interested in purchasing a ghostlight to support Behind the Scenes may visit www.estafoundation.org.

Creative Stage Lighting: Vontobel Joins Company, Allen Promoted

Creative Stage Lighting recently announced personnel changes.

Scott Vontobel has taken a position with the company as business development manager.

Mr. Vontobel has a strong lighting and entertainment industry background. He was previously with Lex Products, TMB, and Global Distribution Systems, and brings experience in cable and cable assembly products, and power distribution.



Julie Allen

Julie Allen has been promoted to purchasing manager. She will be responsible for the company's external vendor relationships, inventory management, and other functions concerning the company's supply chain. Ms. Allen has been with Creative Stage Lighting in the purchasing department for six years as a direct ship specialist.

Stage Technologies: Control Helps *Timon of Athens* Soar

A **Stage Technologies** AU:tour control system provided the overhead flying for Nicholas Hytner's triumphant version of William Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* at the Olivier Theatre in the National Theatre, London. The play was presented to a live audience and was live-streamed to cinemas around the world.



ETC: New Dimmer Debuts at LDI

The latest addition to **ETC's** dimming and power control line – the Source Four Dimmer -- made its American debut at the LDI 2012 tradeshow in Las Vegas, Nevada. Tradeshow attendees got the first opportunity to see demonstrations of the dimmer, which can be attached to any conventional Source Four model to provide per-fixture distributed dimming in 120V markets.



More information about the Source Four Dimmer and ES750 Dimmer can be

found at www.etconnect.com/product.overview.aspx?Id=22115.

J.R. Clancy, Inc.: Block Controls Runaway Linesets

Continuing its record of innovation to make manual rigging safer and easier to use, **J. R. Clancy, Inc.**, introduced its new SureStop Head Block at the LDI show in Las Vegas.

The SureStop Head Block mechanically senses the head block speed and engages a brake to stop its motion when the speed exceeds safe levels. In the event of a runaway lineset situation, SureStop halts the movement for both the arbor and the batten in either direction. This helps prevent the potentially dangerous impact of a runaway arbor on the locking rail, or an overloaded batten on the heads of actors and technicians. When the overload situation is cleared and the lineset's direction is reversed, SureStop automatically releases the set, allowing normal operation to resume.

More information about J. R. Clancy's manual rigging solutions is available at <http://www.jrclancy.com/manualrigging.asp>, or by calling 800-836-1885.

GAMPRODUCTS: Introduces New Cookie

GAMPRODUCTS, Inc. recently introduced the new GAM Cookie Cucoloris Gel Panel.

No more struggling with the big wooden "cookies" to achieve the desired projection on the set for film and TV. The durable GAM Cookie is a printed panel on 3 mil transparent polyester. It is used to cast shadows and patterned illumination. Lightweight and tough, it can be rolled up and stored anywhere.



For more information about GAM Cookie, contact GAMPRODUCTS, Inc., 4975 West Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90019. 323-935-4975 or www.gamonline.com.

Rose Brand: Provides Custom Curtain

Rose Brand fabricated the custom-made, white, voile curtain for the set of *Sweet Bird of Youth*, a Tennessee Williams classic which played at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago through October 28. The play featured Academy Award winner Diane Lane and Broadway's Finn Wittrock.



[Previous story](#)

[Next story](#)

Volume LII, Number 12



© United States Institute for Theatre Technology, Inc.

FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Architecture Awards
- To the Editor: Time to Vote
- PQ Reprised at La MaMa
- Announcements
- Raymond Kent Goes Green
- Commissioners Meet
- Following a Fellow
- In Memoriam: Katherine Brants
- Offer Writing Prize
- The Last Word - 24 Hour Theatre

NEWS FROM:

- Around the Institute
- Contributing Members
- USITT's President
- Sustaining Members
- Executive Director
- Regional Sections

CONFERENCE & STAGE EXPO:

- To Feature David Gallo
- Dining in Milwaukee
- Virtual Designing
- Touring in Chicago
- New at Stage Expo

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »

CONTACT THE EDITOR »

Search the Archives

GO

News From **Lea Asbell-Swanger**, *USITT President*

A Las Vegas Experience



At LDI, President Lea Asbell-Swanger had the opportunity to talk with two members who met at USITT's Elite Training Program and have since collaborated on several projects. From left are Megan Gardner, USITT Executive Director David Grindle, Cheryl Smith, and USITT President Lea Asbell-Swanger.

Photo/Barbara E.R. Lucas

The last time you heard from me, I shared some of my experiences traveling on behalf of USITT. Since then, I had the opportunity to represent the membership at LDI in Las Vegas. I'm happy to report that, once again, spending time with USITT staff (David Grindle, Barbara E. R. Lucas, Monica Merritt, and Ron Procopio) is always informative and entertaining. I learned more than I thought I needed to know about a South Korean entertainer called PSY, but perhaps I just haven't found the best use of that experience.

We were visited by lots of members representing all sorts of disciplines, but there were a couple of highlights that I'd like recount. On separate occasions, gentlemen approached the booth. Almost apologetically, each said he had been involved with USITT years earlier but not recently.

One said he had actually left the industry to pursue other interests but was returning. The other said he had just gotten out of the habit of attending the conference even though he had colleagues that still did so. After a little conversation, each finally admitted that he was really there on behalf of his offspring. One had a daughter who was interested in theatre, particularly stage management. The other had actually brought his son, an aspiring technician, with him to visit us to find out what we might have to offer. Of course, we were

able to offer information to both and encouraged each to attend the upcoming conference, consider involvement in the appropriate regional section or student chapter, and visit the recently updated website to explore the programs and materials that are available to our members.

The thing that struck me about these encounters was not that these gentlemen had been members and weren't currently, but that their time as members affected them enough that they thought of USITT when their children expressed an interest in pursuing a career in the entertainment industry.

Other visitors of note were Megan Gardner and Cheryl Smith. They stopped by to sing the praises of the Elite Training program hosted by Cirque du Soleil at its training center in Las Vegas. They actually met during that program, became friends, and now partner as colleagues on projects using many of the skills they learned through the Elite Training experience. They both believe that USITT and the folks involved with Elite Training changed their lives in positive ways that they hadn't previously considered.

Megan, a student member of USITT, and Cheryl, a professional member, spoke of the bigger personal goals they have as a result. They want to share the importance of taking advantage of this kind of opportunity no matter where a person is along a career path. We're going to work with them and have them share their thoughts personally because the impact of our programs is personal.

The point of these stories is to remind us all that the opportunities and programs that USITT offers are relevant to all kinds of people -- in many different ways and at different points within careers. Sometimes we get so caught up in the how and when to get it all done, that we forget why it needs to be; here are at least four people who can remind us.

If you have not seen PSY perform, [click here](#), and tell me what you think.



We'd like to hear your comments on this story.
Please e-mail Lea at Lea.Asbell-Swanger@usitt.org.

[« Previous story](#)

[Next story »](#)

Volume LII, Number 12



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usitt

Sightlines

The monthly newsletter for USITT members

December 2012

[Print this page ›](#)[Next story ›](#)

FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Architecture Awards
- To the Editor: Time to Vote
- PQ Reprised at La MaMa
- Announcements
- Raymond Kent Goes Green
- Commissioners Meet
- Following a Fellow
- In Memoriam: Katherine Brants
- Offer Writing Prize
- The Last Word - 24 Hour Theatre

NEWS FROM:

- Around the Institute
- Contributing Members
- USITT's President
- Sustaining Members
- Executive Director
- Regional Sections

CONFERENCE & STAGE EXPO:

- To Feature David Gallo
- Dining in Milwaukee
- Virtual Designing
- Touring in Chicago
- New at Stage Expo

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »

CONTACT THE EDITOR »

Search the Archives

GO

News From

Sustaining Members

- **Rhode Island College:** Welcome New member
- **First Stage Milwaukee:** Increases Support Level
- **TMB:** ProPlex Helps Light Ryder Cup Ceremonies
- **L-ACOUSTICS:** The Dukes of September Take K1 to the Streets
- **Stagecraft Institute of Las Vegas:** Applications for 2013 Classes Available Online
- **Norris-Whitney Communications Inc.:** Assistant Editor Named
- **Nemetschek Vectorworks:** To Name Scholarship Winner
- **Meyer Sound:** MythBusters Test 'Frequency of Fear'
- **Alcons Audio:** Brewery House Sound 'Lager' Than Life

Rhode Island College: Welcome New member

We welcome new Sustaining member **Rhode Island College**. Christopher A. Abernathy, professor of theatre design and technical direction and chair of the Department of Music, Theatre, and Dance, is the USITT contact for the college.

To learn more, visit www.ric.edu.

First Stage Milwaukee: Increases Support Level

First Stage Milwaukee has increased its level of support to that of Sustaining member. The organization, celebrating its 25th anniversary, has become one of the nation's most acclaimed children's theatres and Milwaukee's second largest theatre company. Its Theatre Academy teaches life skills through stage skills.

Find out more during sessions at the 2013 Annual Conference & Stage Expo in Milwaukee or at their web site, www.firststage.org

TMB: ProPlex Helps Light Ryder Cup Ceremonies

At the 2012 biennial Ryder Cup golf tournament, a team of United States all-stars challenged the European Cup-holders at the Medinah Country Club in Illinois. Lighting for the event ceremonies was provided by Theatrical Lighting Connection (TLC) of Chicago and included ProPlex equipment distributed by

TMB.

ProPlex Devices are distributed exclusively worldwide by TMB. Learn more about the company's innovative and exciting products at www.tmb.com.

L-ACOUSTICS: The Dukes of September Take K1 to the Streets

The Dukes of September Rhythm Revue-- better known as Donald Fagen, Michael McDonald, and Boz Scaggs, along with a seasoned nine-member backup band--recently closed the final chapter on a very successful 43-show North American tour. The outing was a combined effort between Detroit-based Thunder Audio, which supplied the monitor package for Fagen, and Escondido's Sound Image, which handled monitor packages for McDonald and Scaggs as well as provided FOH control and a full **L-ACOUSTICS** K1 system for the duration.

The K1 system, which had just come off of the road with Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, was prepped by Sound Image in Nashville for the Dukes' first show at St. Louis' Fox Theatre.

L-ACOUSTICS is a leading innovator and manufacturer of high-performance loudspeakers, amplifiers and signal processing devices for touring and installed sound markets.



Stagecraft Institute of Las Vegas: Applications for 2013 Classes Available Online

Stagecraft Institute of Las Vegas

2013 applications are available [online here](#). SILV classes will include CAD, Rigging, SFX, Automation, Foam Arts, Audio, Make-up and Prosthetics, Lighting Tech, Pre-visualization, Design Charette, and a two week



session on Movers and Digital Media.

Classes are taught by top working professionals in each field who offer students the kind of experiences that will give them a step up in their careers. Students see a show every week complete with hands-on contact with a backstage or industry component.

Classes fill up quickly and a limited number of scholarships are available.

Norris-Whitney Communications Inc.: Assistant Editor Named

Michael Raine has been named assistant editor at **Norris-Whitney Communications Inc.**, publisher of *Canadian Musician*, *Canadian Music Trade*, *Professional Lighting & Production*, and *Professional Sound* magazines.

A graduate of Humber College's post-graduate journalism program, Mr. Raine will work alongside NWC Editor Andrew King on editorial content for each of NWC's four publications. He will connect with readers and clients to gather and produce interesting and informative content. Information on new products, industry or company news, events, or other subjects relevant to the Canadian music, musical products, professional audio, lighting, video, staging, and production technologies industries should be sent to his attention. He can be reached at mraine@nor.com or 905-641-3471.

Nemetschek Vectorworks: To Name Scholarship Winner

The recipient of **Nemetschek Vectorworks, Inc.**'s the Vectorworks Young Architects Student Scholarship will be announced December 14. The scholarship provides \$2,500 to an outstanding student pursuing either an undergraduate or graduate degree in architecture in the United States.

For additional information about The Vectorworks Young Architects Student Scholarship, visit www.vectorworks.net/scholarship or contact Alice at alow@vectorworks.net.

For more information about the company, visit www.vectorworks.net.

Meyer Sound: MythBusters Test 'Frequency of Fear'

When Discovery Channel's *MythBusters* set out to test the claim that subaudible, low-frequency sounds near 19 Hz can instill feelings of discomfort, dread, and even outright terror, they turned to **Meyer Sound** and Dr. Roger

Schwenke, the company's staff scientist and honorary MythBuster, for assistance. The episode was aired on October 28.

Filming for the "fear frequency" segment took place in and around four abandoned cabins at a secluded forest resort in Northern California. To test the theory, the show enlisted 10 volunteers to spend time in the cabins.

"One cabin was subjected to infrasonic sound while the other control cabins had no sound," said Dr. Schwenke. "Although the cabins were essentially identical, the idea was to ask the participants if one cabin seemed more eerie or frightening than the others."

Unbeknownst to the subjects, a U-shaped array of nine modified Meyer Sound 1100-LFC low-frequency control elements was hidden behind one of the cabins to create the ultra-low sounds. It turns out that nine were more than were needed. "We had to be careful with the level because, at around 95 dB, we started rattling the cabin walls," recalls Dr. Schwenke. "That would have been a dead giveaway."

The 2012 Halloween edition marks Dr. Schwenke's seventh appearance on the popular TV series. In previous episodes, he applied his expertise and Meyer Sound technical resources to urban myths associated with movie gunshots and explosions, extinguishing flames with sound, the echo of a duck's call, a human voice breaking glass, and the infamous "brown note."

Alcons Audio: Brewery House Sound 'Lager' Than Life

A former brewery may not seem the obvious choice for a live venue, but that is exactly the new use for Stockholm's Bryggarsalen. A newly-installed **Alcons Audio** system ensures that the sound for live events has a crisp head and a full body. Just like a good ale, in fact.

Originally built in 1914, the Bryggarsalen (Brewery House) ended its first incarnation as a brewery in 1970. The ensuing 40 years saw the building put to a variety of uses until its rebirth as a live music and corporate event venue in 2010. With a restaurant and two bars complementing the event spaces, it's already extremely popular.



Bromma-based Electrosound knew that Alcons would deliver in what proved an acoustically challenging room. Originally it contained the washbacks for brewing the beer (giant vats where liquid wort is mixed with brewer's yeast), so has a high ceiling with tiled walls and floor. In addition, a balcony at the rear of the space has another flat, tiled wall facing the stage, with two sets of marble stairs leading up to it. This profusion of hard, flat surfaces made careful product selection essential.

For more information, visit www.alconsaudio.com.

usitt

Sightlines

The monthly newsletter for USITT members

[Next story ›](#)

FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Architecture Awards
- To the Editor: Time to Vote
- PQ Reprised at La MaMa
- Announcements
- Raymond Kent Goes Green
- Commissioners Meet
- Following a Fellow
- In Memoriam: Katherine Brants
- Offer Writing Prize
- The Last Word - 24 Hour Theatre

NEWS FROM:

- Around the Institute
- Contributing Members
- USITT's President
- Sustaining Members
- Executive Director
- Regional Sections

CONFERENCE & STAGE EXPO:

- To Feature David Gallo
- Dining in Milwaukee
- Virtual Designing
- Touring in Chicago
- New at Stage Expo

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

[VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »](#)[CONTACT THE EDITOR »](#)[Search the Archives](#)

GO

News From **David Grindle**, *USITT Executive Director*

Expressing Appreciation

One of the latest Facebook trends I opted out of was to update your status each day in November with something you were thankful for. This made me chuckle. If you have read my recent missives, you know how I feel about telling people their value. By reducing it to once a year, it leaves things open to doubt when times get difficult.



The nation's recent election saw another interesting trend on the "book of face" - unfriending over political views. The vast rhetoric being spewed by both sides of the political aisle on and around Election Day brought to light some interesting personality traits that resulted in mass "unfriendings," according to news reports. Frankly, while some of my friends had political views that I found polar opposite to mine, others shared views that were much like mine. I was surprised by that as well. In the end, they are still my friends because diversity brings flavor to life.

People surprise us. As an organization of individuals and companies, USITT is an amalgamation of thoughts and ideas. That is our strength. But in this world, where it seems someone who holds ideas and opinions contrary to yours must be evil and shunned, we are a rarity. It is a great thing to speak with the leadership of the organization at all levels and hear respectful dialogue, disagreement, and resolution. Without that kind of willingness to listen, we would find ourselves mired in the same intransigence as Congress, perhaps.

USITT has its own politics, factions, and interest groups. Any organization bigger than one person should in order to be healthy. But the health comes from those groups listening to each other, finding common ground, and moving forward with what is best for the whole. This is something we have done successfully for many years now, and we are poised to do so for many years to come.

It doesn't mean we sit around the fire holding hands and singing while making s'mores and call it a meeting. It means we engage each other in communication and build upon the best of each other's ideas. It means we listen and ask questions to get to the root of people's concerns rather than decide we know what they are thinking. This is a far more laborious style of communicating and

SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE »

rather difficult in an instant information age society.

As we approach the end of the year, I'll express these thanks: Thank you to all of the members of this organization. You speak so that your voices are heard. You support the Institute not only for what you get out of it, but what it does for others. You care for each other in times of need regardless of location through both physical support and emotional caring. You defy everything the last election cycle showed about our nation. Regardless of political belief or viewpoint, you value each other for the creative, innovative people that make a diverse organization. For that I am thankful, and I hope you are, too.



We'd like to hear your comments on this story.

Please e-mail David at david@office.usitt.org.

Follow me on Twitter — #USITTExec

[« Previous story](#)

[Next story »](#)

Volume LII, Number 12



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usitt

Sightlines

The monthly newsletter for USITT members

December 2012

[Print this page ›](#)[Next story ›](#)

FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Architecture Awards
- To the Editor: Time to Vote
- PQ Reprised at La MaMa
- Announcements
- Raymond Kent Goes Green
- Commissioners Meet
- Following a Fellow
- In Memoriam: Katherine Brants
- Offer Writing Prize
- The Last Word - 24 Hour Theatre

NEWS FROM:

- Around the Institute
- Contributing Members
- USITT's President
- Sustaining Members
- Executive Director
- Regional Sections

CONFERENCE & STAGE EXPO:

- To Feature David Gallo
- Dining in Milwaukee
- Virtual Designing
- Touring in Chicago
- New at Stage Expo

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

[VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »](#)[CONTACT THE EDITOR »](#)

Search the Archives

GO

News From

Regional Sections

- **California:** Slates Sixth Career Fair
- **Desert State:** Hold Workshops, Plan Annual Meeting
- **Upstate New York:** Hold Elections, Seek Nominees for New Posts
- **Southwest:** To Hold Winter Symposium

California: Slates Sixth Career Fair

The California Regional Section will have its Sixth Annual Career Fair 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, January 26, at the State Playhouse at California State University Los Angeles. The Career Fair will include a student competition for produced projects in design, technical production, and management. Admission is free to all attendees. Consult the [California Section website](#) for details.

Display tables at the Career Fair Expo are \$30 each for vendors, employers, and academic programs. Contact Anne McMills, assistant professor in the Department of Music, Theatre, and Dance at CSULA: amcmill3@calstatela.edu.

Desert State: Hold Workshops, Plan Annual Meeting

The Desert State Regional Section held a workshop on Cover Letters on October 13, and is in the planning stages for its Annual Meeting, Monday, January 21. The Section also was at the Arizona State Thespian Conference on November 16 and 17, presenting several workshops and supporting the Tech Challenge.

The Desert State Annual Meeting will be held at Xavier College Preparatory High School. Peter Monahan from Rose Brand will be the keynote speaker and will conduct a workshop. There will be nine workshops including Costume Distressing and Airbrush Techniques presented by Gail Wolfenden-Steib. Jake Pinholster will discuss the use of Video on Stage. Other topics include the World of the Microphone and the use of LEDs and Green Theatre, as well as a workshop on Interviews, to be followed by 20-minute individual practice interviews and feedback sessions.

Upstate New York: Hold Elections, Seek Nominees for New Posts

Recent elections at the Upstate New York Regional Section have resulted in the following people being elected; Katie Gilliland was elected for a full term as Vice-Chair of Programming. Becky Misenheimer was elected Secretary.

The election resulted in a standing committee: Sean Culligan, Chair, sean.culligan@oswego.edu; Katie Gilliland, VC – Programming, kathleenegilliland@gmail.com; Jeff Reeder, VC-Membership, reederj@pottdam.edu; Don Guido, Treasurer, dguido@binghamton.edu; Becky Misenheimer, Secretary, rmisenhe@sbu.edu; and Trish Ralph, Past Chair, pralph@brockport.edu.

The Section also approved the creation of two additional executive committee positions: Vice-Chair of Communication and Webmaster. As of November 1, nominations were open for the VC-Communications, and Webmaster offices.

The Nominations Committee will serve through June 30, overseeing the election for offices that are up at the end of this fiscal year (June 30): Chair and Vice-Chair of Membership. In the future, Vice-Chair of Communication will be elected with these two.

Southwest: To Hold Winter Symposium

The Southwest Regional Section will usher in 2013 with its two-day Winter Symposium January 18 to 20 at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas.

The event features two, jam-packed days of workshops, meetings, and the annual Student Design Competition. Workshops include puppet making, cold foam mask making, set welding, stage management for opera, lighting for dance, and wardrobe strategies for The Houston Ballet. Keynote speakers are Judy Dolan, head of design at UC San Diego Theatre and Dance, and TV Set Designer Arthur Edward Chadwick.

The student design competition will judge submissions in scene, costume, lighting, sound, make-up, stage management, costume and props crafts, and technology. For more information, visit www.southwest.usitt.org.

« Previous story

Next story »

FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Architecture Awards
- To the Editor: Time to Vote
- PQ Reprised at La MaMa
- Announcements
- Raymond Kent Goes Green
- Commissioners Meet
- Following a Fellow
- In Memoriam: Katherine Brants
- Offer Writing Prize
- The Last Word - 24 Hour Theatre

NEWS FROM:

- Around the Institute
- Contributing Members
- USITT's President
- Sustaining Members
- Executive Director
- Regional Sections

CONFERENCE & STAGE EXPO:

- To Feature David Gallo
- Dining in Milwaukee
- Virtual Designing
- Touring in Chicago
- New at Stage Expo

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »

CONTACT THE EDITOR »

Search the Archives

GO

Conference & Stage Expo

Gallo to Dispel Success Myths

Michael Riha *Scene Design & Technology Commission*



Scenic Sketch, David Gallo Design, Ltd.

Sudden Misfortune, 1994

Ever sit in a technical theatre class or in the scene shop wondering if this is all really worth it? Ever think, “I really should have listened to my dad when he told me to get that business degree because I don’t think I will ever find work as a technician or theatre designer in this economy”? Rest assured there are more jobs today than ever before – especially in New York City.

Those who question whether it was possible to have a successful and lucrative career doing theatre design need to attend *The Reality of Working in New York City: Dispelling the “Myths” of the New York Connection Needed in Order to Succeed* hosted by Tony Award-winning set designer, David Gallo. His round-table discussion, scheduled for 2:30 p.m. Friday, March 22, will focus squarely on the opportunities available for all young designers interested in how to begin a career as a theatre designer in the Big Apple and beyond.

Mr. Gallo’s design career casts a wide net, with productions in New York City and regional theatres such as the Goodspeed Opera House, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, the Pittsburgh Public Theatre, and the La Jolla

SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE »

Playhouse. He also has an incredibly busy career in Europe, where his designs can be seen in cities such as Amsterdam, Antwerp, Hamburg, Berlin, Rome, and Milan. This wide range of projects demands that he, like so many other theatre designers, establish and keep relationships with a number of talented, eager assistant designers who are ready to work on a number of productions at one time.

Mr. Gallo will discuss how he found his way into this industry. He will share stories of how he created opportunities and cultivated relationships in an effort to begin establishing himself as a working designer.



Production Photo, David Gallo Design, Ltd.
Memphis, Shubert Theatre, New York, NY, 2009

[« Previous story](#)

[Next story »](#)

Volume LII, Number 12



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usitt

Sightlines

The monthly newsletter for USITT members

December 2012

[Print this page ›](#)

[Next story ›](#)

FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Architecture Awards
- To the Editor: Time to Vote
- PQ Reprised at La MaMa
- Announcements
- Raymond Kent Goes Green
- Commissioners Meet
- Following a Fellow
- In Memoriam: Katherine Brants
- Offer Writing Prize
- The Last Word - 24 Hour Theatre

NEWS FROM:

- Around the Institute
- Contributing Members
- USITT's President
- Sustaining Members
- Executive Director
- Regional Sections

CONFERENCE & STAGE EXPO:

- To Feature David Gallo
- Dining in Milwaukee
- Virtual Designing
- Touring in Chicago
- New at Stage Expo

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

[VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »](#)

[CONTACT THE EDITOR »](#)

[Search the Archives](#)

GO

Conference & Stage Expo

Come for the Conference, Experience the Food

David Krajec *Milwaukee Promotions*



The Thai Palace may be dwarfed by its neighbors physically, but it is renowned for its cuisine. It is just one of many places to eat just steps from the Delta Center in Milwaukee.

Photo/Barbara E.R. Lucas

Planning to come to the Milwaukee 2013 Conference & Stage Expo Milwaukee this March? Great! In between sessions and activities at the conference, attendees are going to have to find a place to break bread with friends and colleagues. Within the immediate area of the Delta Center are many fine establishments and opportunities to sample the local fare.

First, to give a sense of place, the Delta Center (formerly the Frontier Airlines Center) is the site of the conference and is located on Wisconsin Avenue between 4th and 6th streets. Numbered streets run north and south and are west of the river. The Milwaukee River is the dividing line between east and west. Just south of downtown, the river bends to the east and becomes the dividing line between North and South. Mapquest or Google Maps will be a help. Within a short walk of the conference center, visitors will find a variety of cuisines: American, Chinese, Cuban, Brazilian, German, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Mexican, or Thai.

And remember, Urban Spoon is your friend.

Fine Dining

- **Bacchus** - A four-star restaurant, sleek and stylish space, emphasizing fresh seafood, exquisite handmade pastas, and grilled-to-perfection meats, featuring an extensive wine selection and the highest service standards. (925 E. Wells St.)
- **Benihana** – Welcome to the longest running dining show in the world, complete with a personal chef. Benihana, an experience at every table. (850 N. Plankinton Ave.)
- **Butch's Old Casino Steak House** – A personal favorite. They have a butcher shop on the premises, and they cut and age their beef with great care. Their cuts are generous and infused with garlic (injected directly into the cut of meat). The biggest and best steaks in town. Casual atmosphere with great chops, ribs, and seafood. (555 N. James Lovell St.)
- **Capital Grille** - The Capital Grille is a sophisticated, traditional steak house specializing in dry-aged steaks, chops, and fresh seafood. (310 W. Wisconsin Ave.)
- **Carnevora** - Milwaukee's premier steakhouse, Carnevor has been lauded for its luscious barrel-cut beef, New York Strip, and bone-in fillets. The steak menu offers exquisite wet- and dry-aged USDA prime beef. (724 N. Milwaukee St.)
- **Cubanitas** (21/30 Zagat) - Cubanitas is Milwaukee's first Cuban restaurant and bar serving authentic food and drinks such as Cuban sandwich, ropa-vieja, black bean soup, mojitos, and daiquiris. (728 N. Milwaukee St.)
- **Elsa's on the Park** – This classy bar/restaurant has been a popular gathering spot with local urbanites and visiting celebrities for years. Elsa's attracts an eclectic mix for its unique combination of top-shelf spirits and casual dining. (833 N. Jefferson St.)
- **Ginger** – Based on the Spanish tradition of tapas but with a unique Milwaukee slant, it offers petit tenderloin filet or tater tots, asparagus risotto or mac n' cheese, and cioppino or wings (235 South 2nd St.)
- **Karl Ratzsch's** - Milwaukee's premiere German restaurant, family-owned and operated since 1904. It features the finest German entrees, game, fish, steaks, and homemade strudels. (320 E. Mason St.)
- **Kil@Wat at the InterContinental Milwaukee** – In downtown Milwaukee where Kilbourn meets Water, you'll find one of the most "electrifying" dining experiences the city has to offer. The chic decor, hip attitude, and spectacular views of the city enhance Chef Zakroczymski's inspired culinary twists on familiar lunch and dinner favorites. (139 E. Kilbourn Ave.)
- **King & I** – A staple in Milwaukee for over 20 years. Authentic Thai dishes. (830 North Old World 3rd St.)
- **Mader's Restaurant** (18/30 Zagat) - In 1902, an ambitious young German

immigrant, Charles Mader, poured his life savings into a speculative venture; Mader's Restaurant opened. Before the Wright Brothers and before Henry Ford's Model T, Mader sold cold steins of Cream City beer at 3 cents, two for 5 cents, and with a beer, lunch was free. (1037 N. Old World Third St.)

- **Mason Street Grill** – The legendary Pfister Hotel is home to this classic American Grill where high-quality wood-grilled steaks, amazing sandwiches, and house-made desserts await. The lounge features live jazz Monday through Saturday providing a comfortable place to relax and unwind before settling in to enjoy a meal to remember. (435 E. Mason St.)
- **Milwaukee ChopHouse** – Located in the historic Hilton Milwaukee, the Milwaukee ChopHouse delivers the perfect combination of flavors, presentation, and personalized service. (633 N. 5th St.)
- **Mo's...A Place for Steaks** – Great steaks and great service in a fun, upscale atmosphere. Prepared-to-order steaks, chops, seafood, and chicken. Reservations suggested. (720 N. Plankinton Ave.)
- **Mo's Irish Pub** – Authentic Irish pub serving great food, beer, and cocktails six days a week. Open for lunch and dinner; late night menu available until 1 a.m. Live music and traditional Irish bands. (142 W. Wisconsin Ave.)
- **Sanford's Restaurant** (29/30 Zagat) Chef Sanford D'Amato and wife Angela owners. James Beard, Best Chef Midwest. Mobil 4 Star. AAA 4 Diamond. Highest Zagat rating for food in Midwest. Need I say more? Reservations required. (1547 N. Jackson St.)
- **Thai Palace** - While the interior, and certainly the exterior, at Thai Palace are not nearly as glamorous as what one may find at neighboring Thai restaurants, the food here is sublime and the atmosphere is comfortable. (838 N. Old World 3rd St.)
- **Umami Moto** - Elegant downtown restaurant and sake lounge. Dinner, late night menu, and drinks. (718 N. Milwaukee St.)
- **Zarletti** – (24/30 Zagat) Traditional Italian fare inspired by the country cooking of northern regions such as Piemonte, Emilia-Romagna, Tuscany, and Les Marches. (741 North Milwaukee St. #1)

Fast Food

- **Culver's** (275 W. Wisconsin Ave.) – Butterburgers – need we say more?
- **Jimmy Johns** (225 E Mason St Ste 700) – “Subs so fast you'll freak!” Really, – you'll have your sub before you're done paying for it.
- **Subway** (641 N James Lovell St) – Sub shop (or grinders if you're on the east coast).
- **Domino's Pizza** (719 West Wisconsin Ave.)
- **Dunkin' Donuts** (622 West Wisconsin Ave.)

■ Starbucks (509 W Wisconsin Ave)

« Previous story

Next story »

Volume LII, Number 12



© United States Institute for Theatre Technology, Inc.

FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Architecture Awards
- To the Editor: Time to Vote
- PQ Reprised at La MaMa
- Announcements
- Raymond Kent Goes Green
- Commissioners Meet
- Following a Fellow
- In Memoriam: Katherine Brants
- Offer Writing Prize
- The Last Word - 24 Hour Theatre

NEWS FROM:

- Around the Institute
- Contributing Members
- USITT's President
- Sustaining Members
- Executive Director
- Regional Sections

CONFERENCE & STAGE EXPO:

- To Feature David Gallo
- Dining in Milwaukee
- Virtual Designing
- Touring in Chicago
- New at Stage Expo

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »

CONTACT THE EDITOR »

Search the Archives

GO

Conference & Stage Expo

Designing in the Virtual World

Richard Finkelstein *Scene Design & Technology Commission*



The designs for this production of *Anna in the Tropics*, directed by Ricky Martinez in November 2012 at James Madison University, above, were created in just a few hours using the tools of SecondLife. The image, below, shows the stage as designed.

Images/R. Finkelstein

Today, there is a renewed trend toward ever more hyper-realistic, mesh-based, ray-traced design methodologies. Unfortunately, each move forward has either been somewhat of an illusion or hindered by the loss of other traditionally valued aesthetic sensibilities. High-end systems demand years of training and still force collaborators to merely look at screens as someone else does the work. What has been needed is something to democratize new design methodologies and to bring the collaborators into the screen as equal partners in creation.

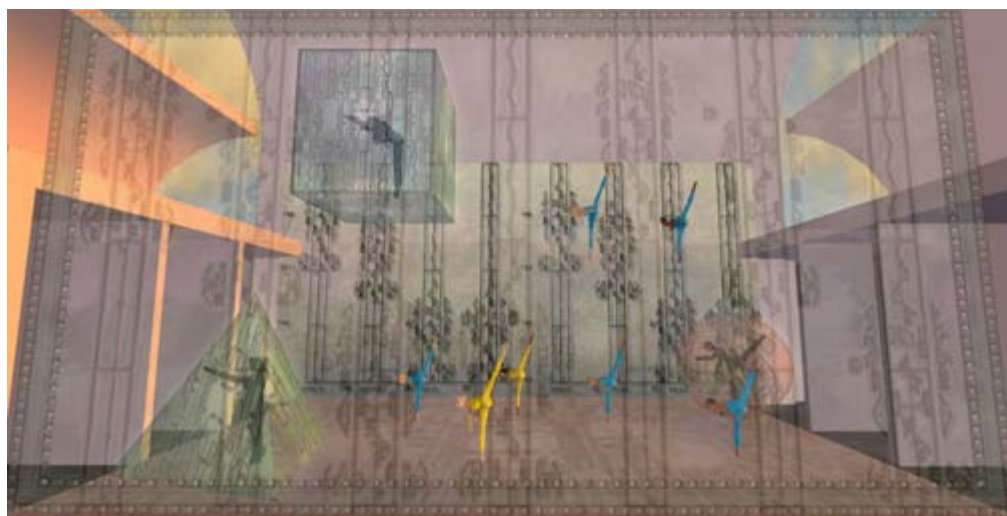
A new avenue will be discussed in *Using Virtual Worlds for Performance & Design* scheduled for 2 p.m. Saturday, March 23 at the Milwaukee 2013 Conference & Stage Expo. The session will be presented by Autumn Casey and Richard Finkelstein.



The world of Second Life affords this very opportunity. Second Life is an ideal environment for virtual collaboration, research, design, experimentation, and training. Second Life is a research and prototyping tool for the masses. Its users include such diverse groups as the United States military and intelligence services, NASA, the medical professions, and educators and artists from around the world. Major filmmakers are using it as a real-time animation engine (with one such project earning an Emmy award nomination last year) .There's even a contingent of Broadway and West-End performers, directors, and others working on virtual performance projects.

This USITT session is designed to introduce participants to opportunities for full collaboration in education, research, development, and creation of both real-life and virtual performance from within this immersive tool.

To learn more or to begin an exploration, with a personal introduction Just download the free software at secondlife.com, move through the simple orientation, and then contact Mr. Finkelstein's virtual self, Leko Littlebird. He can be found "inworld" most evenings at 10 p.m. Eastern time. (Or write through more traditional means at finkelrs@gmail.com.)



Production photo from the 2011 premiere of Archidance, presented in SecondLife by Ballet Pixelle, the first virtual dance company in the world. The virtual dancers are controlled simultaneously by dancers at computers in eight different countries from Bahrain to Portugal as the performance is presented in real-time to audience members, themselves viewing from a host of additional countries. The process of creating such work is quite exhilarating.

[« Previous story](#)

[Next story »](#)

Volume LII, Number 12



FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Architecture Awards
- To the Editor: Time to Vote
- PQ Reprised at La MaMa
- Announcements
- Raymond Kent Goes Green
- Commissioners Meet
- Following a Fellow
- In Memoriam: Katherine Brants
- Offer Writing Prize
- The Last Word - 24 Hour Theatre

NEWS FROM:

- Around the Institute
- Contributing Members
- USITT's President
- Sustaining Members
- Executive Director
- Regional Sections

CONFERENCE & STAGE EXPO:

- To Feature David Gallo
- Dining in Milwaukee
- Virtual Designing
- Touring in Chicago
- New at Stage Expo

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »

CONTACT THE EDITOR »

Search the Archives

GO

Conference & Stage Expo

A Trip to Chicago Museums, Fabric Shop

Kate Wulle 2013 Conference Promotions Committee



Chicago has a number of well-known museums and other attractions. One of the Regional Attractions offered before the start of the 2013 Annual Conference & State Expo in Milwaukee will introduce several venues that are not as widely known. Signup for the day-long event can be completed along with Conference registration.

The Chicago History Museum is the city's oldest cultural institution, predating the Civil War. During the Great Chicago Fire, its first building was destroyed. The original Ontario and Dearborn site was in use until the late 1920s when the Historical Society's expanded collection and the city's centennial convinced them to build a new structure on the present site at the south end of Lincoln Park. Since then, that building has been expanded and renovated. The Museum's Costume and Textile Collection contains over 50,000 costumes and textile artifacts from the mid-18th century to the present.

Members will visit the new, one-of-a-kind exhibition "Inspiring Beauty: 50 Years of Ebony Fashion Fair" in the morning. This exhibition explains how Eunice Johnson brought couture fashion to African-American communities and raised millions of dollars for charity. The designers represented include Oscar de la Renta, Christian Dior, Stephen Burrows, Yves Saint Laurent, and Patrick Kelly.

After lunch at the museum café, the afternoon visit will be to one of Chicago's

SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE »

vibrant neighborhoods – Pilsen. German and Irish immigrants settled here in the 1840s, encouraged by the construction of the Southwestern Plank Road (now Ogden Avenue), the Illinois & Michigan canal and the Burlington railroad. Manufacturing, lumber mills, sweatshops, and railroad yards created thousands of jobs for unskilled workers in the 1870s. Pilsen was important during the many strikes in the late 19th century that led up to the Haymarket Riot in 1886. A Bohemian restaurant called The City of Plzen gave the neighborhood its name.

The Textile Discount Outlet, a subsidiary of LZ Fabrics on 21st Avenue near Cermak and Damen, is housed in one of the many old, multi-storied factory buildings in Pilsen. LZ Fabrics caters to the Chicago community and carries a wide variety of the more basic fabrics, along with beaded laces and leather pieces. USITT members will receive a discount on purchases that day.



During World War I dozens of new immigrant groups, including some Mexicans, moved into the area. The expansion of the University of Illinois at Chicago relocated more Mexicans into Pilsen in the 1950s and 1960s. Mexican artists began decorating the neighborhood with colorful murals and mosaics. Try to see the ones on 19th Street west of Ashland or on/in the former church at 18th Place and Paulina.

Pilsen residents have resisted the efforts of gentrification and have preserved the community as a gateway for Hispanic immigrants. The Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum, founded in 1982, aimed to establish an arts and cultural organization committed to accessibility, education, and social justice. In 2006, the name was changed to the National Museum of Mexican Art. It is considered one of the most prominent institutions for Mexican art and culture in the United States. The permanent collection traces the creative skills of the people of Mexico from pre-Columbian carvings, pottery, and textiles to the best that contemporary artists produce.



[« Previous story](#)

[Next story »](#)

Volume LII, Number 12



© United States Institute for Theatre Technology, Inc.

FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Architecture Awards
- To the Editor: Time to Vote
- PQ Reprised at La MaMa
- Announcements
- Raymond Kent Goes Green
- Commissioners Meet
- Following a Fellow
- In Memoriam: Katherine Brants
- Offer Writing Prize
- The Last Word - 24 Hour Theatre

NEWS FROM:

- Around the Institute
- Contributing Members
- USITT's President
- Sustaining Members
- Executive Director
- Regional Sections

CONFERENCE & STAGE EXPO:

- To Feature David Gallo
- Dining in Milwaukee
- Virtual Designing
- Touring in Chicago
- New at Stage Expo

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »

CONTACT THE EDITOR »

Search the Archives

GO

Conference & Stage Expo

Embracing the Excitement

Ron Procopio *Stage Expo Manager*



Members of the 2012 Rose Brand Design Competition show off their creation as part of the Long Beach experience.

Photo/Courtesy Rose Brand

Some of the dynamic parts of the Annual USITT Conference & Stage Expo event are the special areas of the floor and interactive programs from exhibiting companies. This year is no exception, and features more participation than ever before.

The Innovation Gallery & Stage (not to be confused with the New Products Showcase) is an area designed in a museum format – the gallery -- showcasing products released in the past year by exhibitors. Here participants will be able to get up close and personal with these unique pieces and learn about their use. Adjacent to the gallery is the Innovation Stage which will feature 20-minute demonstrations by the participating companies. These scheduled events will be open to all attendees and will show exactly why USITT's Stage Expo is the leader in technical innovation! (Limited to 12 participating companies; contact Ron Procopio for more information.)

Not to be outmatched, the New Products Showcase has been converted to a

SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE »

real showcase. The New Products Brag & Swag event is a party atmosphere where everyone reverts back to early elementary school days and participates in a short show and tell. Companies will get to tell the audience, in a very short three to five minutes, why their products and services are the coolest. In between the presentations, collect as much vendor swag as can be held. This party is a must attend event!

A recent addition to the Stage Expo floor is the Rose Brand Competition. Four teams of design students will participate in creating themed environments based on designations given to them by Rose Brand. In a Survivor-like setting, teams are only allowed to use the mystery items given to them or which they are able to borrow by negotiating. These exciting areas will be created before attendees' eyes, truly showcasing the talent and resourcefulness of USITT members.

Be in Milwaukee this March and be part of the excitement as the Institute comes together to learn and connect at this exciting event.

[« Previous story](#)

[Next story »](#)

Volume LII, Number 12



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Sightlines

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FRONT PAGE »

NEWS & NOTICES:

- Architecture Awards
- To the Editor: Time to Vote
- PQ Reprised at La MaMa
- Announcements
- Raymond Kent Goes Green
- Commissioners Meet
- Following a Fellow
- In Memoriam: Katherine Brants
- Offer Writing Prize
- The Last Word - 24 Hour Theatre

NEWS FROM:

- Around the Institute
- Contributing Members
- USITT's President
- Sustaining Members
- Executive Director
- Regional Sections

CONFERENCE & STAGE EXPO:

- To Feature David Gallo
- Dining in Milwaukee
- Virtual Designing
- Touring in Chicago
- New at Stage Expo

FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

VIEW ISSUE AS A PDF »

CONTACT THE EDITOR »

Search the Archives

GO

For the Record:

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- Rafael Jean
- Debra Garcia Lockwood
- Jill Maurer
- Stephanie Young

2011-2014

- Jack Feivou
- Jennifer L. Knott
- Andi Lyons
- Kevin Rigdon
- Loren Schreiber
- Joe Tilford

2012-2015

SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE »

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- Bill Browning
- Alessia Carpoca
- Michael Mehler
- Linda Pisano
- Carolyn Satter

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- **Ron Procopio**, Stage Expo Manager & Special Events Coordinator

Volume LII, Number 12



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FOR THE RECORD:

- Leadership
- Contributing Members
- Sustaining Members

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[CONTACT THE EDITOR »](#)

Search the Archives

GO

For the Record:

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■ [Contributing Members »](#)

■ [Sustaining Members »](#)

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- Kryolan Corporation
- Live Design Magazine/LDI Show
-

SIGHTLINES ARCHIVE »

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- Wenger Corporation
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- InCord Ltd.
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- Irwin Seating Company

- James Thomas Engineering
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As of October 15, 2012

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