



Sightlines

The monthly newsletter for USITT members

November 2013

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News & Notices

Threadgill Named Distinguished Achiever in Management

Janet Gramza *Communications Associate*

In her last conversation with her mentor, Susan Threadgill, Vice-Commissioner Tayneshia Jefferson gave her a gift. "She called to tell me she was nominating me for a Distinguished Achievement Award," Ms. Threadgill said. "It was a really nice conversation."

Days later, Tayneshia Jefferson died of a brain aneurism at 41. So it was with bittersweet joy that her mentor learned she'll receive the USITT Distinguished Achievement Award in Management at USITT's 2014 Annual Conference & Stage Expo in Fort Worth next March.

There were many "baby birds" whose careers Susan Threadgill helped take flight, according to the nomination letter.

"It is Susan's mentorship and her style of mentoring that has left the most indelible mark on our industry," Ms. Jefferson wrote. "Whether it was taping out a floor or learning to call an opera by spending act after act watching her call from over her shoulder, Susan's methodology instilled in those who worked with her the skills and the connections that would afford them the ability to build stellar careers."

At 53, Susan Threadgill is director of production for the Office of University Events at the [University of Texas \(UT\) at Austin](#). Before taking that job in 2010, she was stage manager for the [Austin Lyric Opera](#) for 22 years. She also freelanced for the Austin Symphony, Zilker Theatre Productions, and Conspirare, and served as production stage manager for the UT Performing Arts Center.

"Susan has elevated the level of management performance and redefined what it meant to be a stage manager for an entire city," Ms. Jefferson wrote.

Management wasn't Ms. Threadgill's first goal; she pursued theatre to become a playwright. "I wrote a novel when I was 13, and no one has ever seen that – nor will they," she said.

She attended Southern Methodist University for a three-year dual-major in creative writing and theatre. "Robert Chambers, then technical director at SMU,



Susan
Threadgill

said, "You are really organized. Maybe you should think about stage management," she recalled. "And I said, 'What's that?'"

She soon found she enjoyed overseeing the different elements to bring a production together. "I enjoy problem-solving, and I don't know if it's OCD or what, but I do like everything in its place," she said.

The gravy for her was calling shows, conducting a live orchestra of technicians awaiting her light, sound, or deck cues via headset. That meant having the trust and respect of all involved.

Her first chance to "fly free" came as an undergraduate assistant stage manager who stepped in last-minute when the grad student manager dropped out right before tech week. The play was *The Time of Your Life* by William Saroyan, and Ms. Threadgill did fine.

Shortly thereafter, a UT student stage manager at the then-new Austin Lyric Opera left the project during tech week – and Ms. Threadgill took over. The opera was *Albert Herring* by Benjamin Britten.

"It was great music, but pretty difficult, and that night was probably the worst rehearsal I called in my career," she said. "So I asked the director for tapes of the music – which at that time was on cassettes – and the next day I listened to it for six hours until I was like, 'OK, I get it.' The next night wasn't perfect, but it was strides better."

As a woman manager, she got some pushback from male stagehands until they saw how she worked. "Once the word got out about how I run things on headset, the tech crews knew I would advocate for them, so eventually more guys would step up to assist me because they knew I had their back," she said.

As a teacher and mentor, she is known for generosity in sharing her knowledge, arranging for students to shadow professional stage managers – including her – and even handing them jobs she's too busy to tackle.

Ms. Threadgill's best management advice is, "Make yourself as marketable as possible." That means developing organizational, communication, and management skills, maybe learn a foreign language, and definitely learn to read music – even if you don't work in opera.

"Music is important because all theatre is rhythmical," she said. "Even if it's not a musical, you need to be in tune with the rhythm of what the actor is doing. You need to be riding that wave because, if you're not, your cues are going to be wrong."

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[Webinars Feature Fall, Hearing Protection Programs](#)

Occupational Health & Safety will present a Voluntary Protection Programs Participants' Association (VPPPA) [SuperCast](#) on November 6. Two webinars will be presented in one day.

Fall Protection on Flat Roofs: General Industry & Construction will start at 11 a.m. EST. It will clarify the differences between general industry and construction work activities and will review OSHA's fall protection regulations for work performed on flat roofs, as well as different methods of compliance.

Establishing Hearing Conservation in the Workplace will begin at 1 p.m. EST and cover understanding how to implement such a program. From noise monitoring to equipping workers with PPE, this presentation details specific steps for creating and maintaining a successful program.

[Space Still Available for USITT Electrical Workshop](#)

There is still time to sign up for *Power Prep for a Day at the (Dimmer) Beach* with USITT Award winner Mitch Hefter and colleagues. The session is part of LDI 2014 on Tuesday, November 19 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:40 p.m. in Las Vegas, Nevada. Those who attend will be eligible for seven ETCP renewal credits.

This USITT Electrical Workshop — an ETCP Recognized Training Program — will start with a brief review of the fundamentals of electricity and hazards of shock, followed by rules of grounding and bonding. Then participants will delve into building a solid foundation in the National Electrical Code and NFPA 70E - Standard for Standard for Electrical Safety in the Workplace. The event will conclude with electrical load calculations and planning of portable lighting systems involving cable selection and sizing, voltage drop, tap rules, and short circuit current ratings.

Presenters include Jerry Gorrell, Mitch Hefter, Tyrone Mellon, Jared Saltzman,

and Ken Vannice.

Online Dictionary Celebrates First Anniversary

Theatre Development Fund's (TDF) fun and informative online theatre dictionary, at www.theatredictionary.org, is celebrating the first anniversary of its launch. During this first year the number of theatre terms more than doubled – from 20 to 43. To mark the occasion, TDF is premiering a new video defining the term "Commedia dell'arte" starring RuPaul's Drag Race 5th Season winner Jinkx Monsoon and Major Scales, her co-star in the hit NYC Stage production *The Vaudevillians* (currently at the Laurie Beechman Theatre through November 11).

The TDF Theatre Dictionary, at www.theatredictionary.org, is a video guide to common and not-so common theatre lingo. It defines theatre terms with short, original films that have been made by TDF or commissioned from performing arts institutions across North America. Two new theatre terms are added each month. The videos that describe these terms are paired with in-depth essays on the term being defined, letting the TDF Theatre Dictionary act as a reference tool as well as a video art project. A blog feature also lets users respond with comments, questions, or their own definitions.

Sample terms include [Cattle Call](#), [Catwalk](#), [Development Hell](#), [Dry Tech](#), [Eleven O'clock Number](#), [Gypsy Robe](#), [Performance Art](#), [Showmance](#), [thrust stage](#), and [voms](#).

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News & Notices

Still Time to Gather 'Ideal Theatre' Team

Scott Georgeson, FAIA *Competition Chair*



The deadline for this year's Architecture & Theatre Student Competition submittals is January 4. The competition is off to a great start. American Seating is back as a corporate sponsor. Teams from throughout the United States and Canada have made inquiries. And the jury is stronger than ever.

The jury will meet in January to select the three finalists to present to the Architecture Commission at the 2014 Annual Conference & Stage Expo.

There are two full months to work through and submit an entry. The beauty of the competition is that it can be done as a class project or as an independent effort. The program is flexible, and any type of performance space can be submitted. This year, in addition to being able to design a new theatre, the teams can choose to redesign and update an existing theatre. Get a team together and show the world what an "Ideal" theatre could be.

Go to the [competition web site](#) for additional information, schedule and full competition brief.

Rose Steele of Landry & Bogan Theatre Consultants, is leading the jury. Adam Shalleck, AIA of the Shalleck Collaborative, is a theatre architect and theatre consultant. Nick Nichols is the managing director of the San Jose Repertory Theatre.

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Fort Worth Opera's Darren K. Woods to Receive DeGaetani Award**Janet Gramza** *Communications Associate*

Each year at its Annual Conference & Stage Expo, USITT gives the Thomas DeGaetani Award to a person or organization whose work has greatly furthered performing arts in the region where the Conference is held. For 2014, planners agreed the obvious choice is Fort Worth Opera General Director Darren K. Woods.



Darren Woods

"Since arriving in Fort Worth in 2001, Mr. Woods's leadership and artistic vision have revitalized the **Fort Worth Opera**," Vice-President for Conferences David W. Will wrote in his nomination. "His work has contributed to the art culture of Fort Worth and aided in the economic impact of tourism."

USITT founded the DeGaetani Award in 1983 in memory of its first president. Mr. Woods will receive the award on Opening Night of the 2014 Conference at the Fort Worth Convention Center.

"I am honored and, for a change, speechless," he wrote on learning the news.

Mr. Woods is considered an opera hero, and not just in Fort Worth. He is credited with rescuing the Shreveport Opera in Louisiana in just two years at its helm (1999-2001) and with assuring his beloved **Seagle Music Colony** – in the Adirondack town of Schroon Lake, New York – a healthy spot on the musical map for years to come.

His Fort Worth position brought him back in his native Lone Star State. He grew up in Luling and graduated from the University of Houston in 1982. In 1980, as a 20-year-old tenor with the Houston Grand Opera, he spent a summer at Seagle, the nation's oldest summer vocal training studio. He went on to a professional career singing in such venues as the New York City Opera, Carnegie Hall, Washington Opera, Santa Fe Opera, and Dallas Opera.

His heart stayed at Seagle through many moves. In 1996, he took a one-year job as its general director and never really left. "Since that time, the Colony has experienced incredible growth in almost every aspect including budget, production quality, facilities, and faculty/staff," according to the Seagle website. "The caliber of young artists at the Colony continues to rival any other program

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in the world."

Mr. Woods retired from singing in 1999 to manage in Shreveport and then Fort Worth, but he still serves Seagle as artistic director. Last year, he and his partner of 33 years were married where they first met, on the Seagle stage.

His work in Shreveport and Fort Worth cemented Mr. Woods' reputation as a "turnaround master" (*Opera News*, August 2009). Under his leadership, Fort Worth Opera has made major changes and grabbed national attention for its artistry and focus on rarely-performed works. He scrapped a slate of old standbys in favor of newer works, launched the Fort Worth Opera Studio to train young singers and bring opera into schools, and streamlined the opera's season into a month-long festival that stages several productions each Spring.

Other creative programming includes Opera Shots (opera in bars), a new works competition called *Frontiers*, and Leadership FWOpera, a young professionals group to cultivate the next generation of opera lovers.

Last year, *Opera News* named Mr. Woods one of opera's top 25 influencers. In 2011, he was appointed vice chairman of the board of *OPERA America*, the national service organization for opera.

Perhaps his greatest achievement has been uniting Fort Worth arts organizations into a community that works together instead of competing.

"We began building new ways to connect with audiences, starting with having an 'Overture' at the Modern Art Museum that would include a composer talking about his work with singers performing it," he explained. "We formed partnerships with the Amon Carter and Kimbell Art Museums which interlocked exhibits with opera. In changing to the festival format in 2007, we wanted everyone in town doing something with, for, or about the opera. In all this, all the organizations realized we are much better together."

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2014 Elections Start October 30

Sherry Wagner-Henry *USITT Secretary, Nominations Committee Chair*

Electronic voting for 2014 Board of Directors positions began October 30. Current members should have been notified by e-mail when voting opens and will be able to cast ballots until December 10. The ballot includes a brief biography and a position statement for each candidate. [Click here to read about current candidates and their position statements.](#)

Members who do not have access to electronic communication will receive paper ballots. Any member who did not receive an e-mail about voting should check spam filters or call Shannan at 1-800-938-7488 ext. 101.

The USITT Nominations Committee presents the following slate for the 2014 election cycle:

Six directors are to be elected from among Shan Ayers, Joel Ebarb, MC Friedrich, Michael Gros, Carey Hanson, Mickey Henry, Rafael Jaen, Shane Kelly, Adam Klein, Karen Maness, Michael McNamara, and Vickie Scott. Those elected Directors will serve three-year terms beginning July 1.

Five officer positions are also open for election. They include President-Elect: Kevin Rigdon and Mark Shanda; Secretary: Jimmie Byrd and Tammy Honesty; Vice-President for Commissions: Andi Lyons and Carolyn Satter; Vice-President for Conferences: Jack Feivou and Michael Mehler; and Vice-President for International Activities: Marketa Fantova.

Thanks to the 2013 Nominations Committee for recruiting candidates and stewarding applications through the nominations process. This is a time-intensive procedure that involves a great deal of thoughtful observation and recognition of leadership potential.

The committee strives to ensure that the future leadership of the Institute is well-populated with candidates from all categories of membership, all areas of expertise, and all areas of geographic location, as well as experience with the organization, and other important approaches of diverse thinking and representation.

An equal measure of thanks goes out to the candidates themselves, who have been made aware of the important work required of them if elected to these positions.


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Four Sessions, Three Locations for *USITT Presents*



USITT Presents, USITT's affordable series of hands-on training workshops, is going strong with three new sessions planned in four locations around the nation in November and December.

RC4 Wireless will offer a one-day class, *Wireless Dimming & DMX in Practice*, in Los Angeles on November 20 and in Houston on November 25. Studio Gear will hold a three-day *Automated Lighting, Media Server and Console Course* in Green Bay, Wisconsin December 6-8. And Figure 53 will lead a daylong tour of its latest QLab3 audio software on December 30 in Washington, D.C.

All are offered at special *USITT Presents* rates -- just \$60 for USITT members and \$30 for student-early career members for the one-day sessions, and \$120 for USITT members/\$60 student-early career members for the three-day Studio Gear training. The rates double for non-members, but are still lower than most other organizations offer.

"These are an awesome value for a reasonable price," said USITT Education and Training Coordinator Christine Troscher. "Thanks to our partnerships with industry leaders, USITT is providing a variety of training opportunities at locations around the county."

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For RC4's training -- November 20 at California State University in LA and November 25 at The Alley Theatre in Houston – "electricians and propsmasters will benefit from a basic electricity and electronics refresher course," using RC4's wireless products, with a focus on bandwidth and frequency management and battery maintenance. "Attendees will walk away with a metric ton of widely applicable information," promises RC4 President and Chief Product Designer James David Smith, who will teach the class with propsmaster Sean Dane.

Audio designers and programmers interested in the latest QLab3 software can get a complete tour of its capabilities and a discussion of techniques and concepts at Figure 53's December 30 workshop at The Shakespeare Theatre Company in D.C. Presenters Sam Kusnetz, a sound and projection designer, and Andy Lang, sound designer and computer systems specialist, will guide attendees in exploring QLab3 and its many uses in designing, programming, managing, and fine-tuning productions.

For more information on USITT Presents, contact Christine Troscher, christine@usitt.org or visit www.usitt.org/usittpresents.

USITT launched *USITT Presents* early this year to help members stay on top of the latest equipment and techniques in their fields with low-cost year-round training opportunities around the country. One of the first was a two-day Studio Gear Hog4 Training in Milwaukee, leading up to USITT's 2013 Annual Conference & Stage Expo last March.

That session sold out to rave reviews, so Studio Gear expanded to the three day seminar for the December 6-8 training at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, led by lighting specialists Mike Atkins and Tim Cooksy. Day One starts with a 4-to-8 p.m. session on set-up and troubleshooting of a complex automated lighting and media server show; Day Two will squeeze the Hog 4 Console Training into an accelerated 12-hour day, and Day Three will offer attendees design and programming exercises to practice what they learned.

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Alliance Plans USITT Session, Webinar

Safety & Health Commission "spoiler alert": at the Fort Worth 2014 Conference & Stage Expo, the Event Safety Alliance's *Event Safety Guide* will be highlighted at one of the conference sessions.



Those who haven't yet downloaded a copy of the guide can go to eventsafetyalliance.org for a copy and for information about the Alliance. The Guide has been out in draft form for review and comment since February, and input from the entertainment industry is critical to its success and completeness.

Among ESA's many activities and programs, the Alliance is partnering with Take1 Insurance to host a webinar on Live Event Safety. This webinar, expected to be the first of series, "will detail the importance and responsibilities of live event safety for those who promote, produce, and insure live events." The Live Event Safety webinar will be held on 2 p.m. EST Wednesday, November 13.

More information about the ESA and a link to register for the webinar are available at the ESA website. Reading the *Event Safety Guide* and participating in the Live Event Safety webinar will help prepare you for the ESA session at the USITT Conference.

The ESA will also host a presentation at LDI 2013 in Las Vegas, Nevada November 22 to 24.

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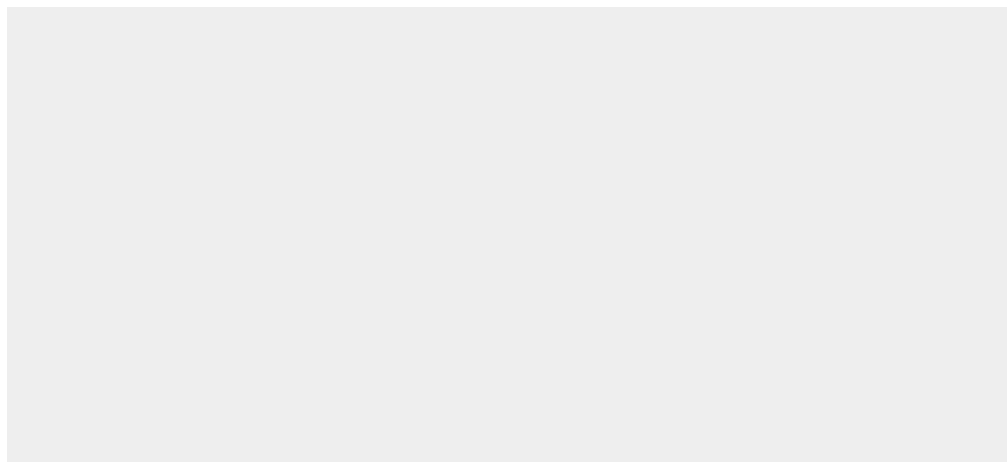
Five Represent Institute at PLASA

Executive Director David Grindle brought three National Office staff and a 2013 YD&T Award winner to represent USITT at PLASA London, held at ExCel London October 6 to 9.

Stage Expo Manager Ron Procopio, Education and Training Coordinator Christine Troscher, and Communications Associate Janet Gramza helped David staff USITT's booth, handing out swag and information on USITT programs. Ethan Vail, winner of the 2013 USITT Lighting Design Award for Young Designers & Technicians sponsored by Barbizon, showed his portfolio and fielded questions by British students interested in technical theatre careers.

USITT's group got to check out the many sound, lighting, projection, and effect products being offered by 200-plus companies and greet lots of Institute members, including some 30 companies that are Contributing or Sustaining members!

Among other friends were a contingent from DTHG, our German counterpart, shown here. From left are DTHG CEO Hubert Elkhart, Gabrielle Hoegg, Karlheinz Mittelstaedt, and David Grindle.



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Riders Schedule 11th Event

The 11th annual Long Reach Long Riders charity ride, dubbed *Carpe Diem! Carpe Twisty! 11 Great Years of Riding*, is scheduled for July 12 to 19. The ride will begin in Baltimore, Maryland and meander through the West Virginia mountains, the horse country of Virginia, and the rolling hills and cornfields of central Pennsylvania before returning to Baltimore.

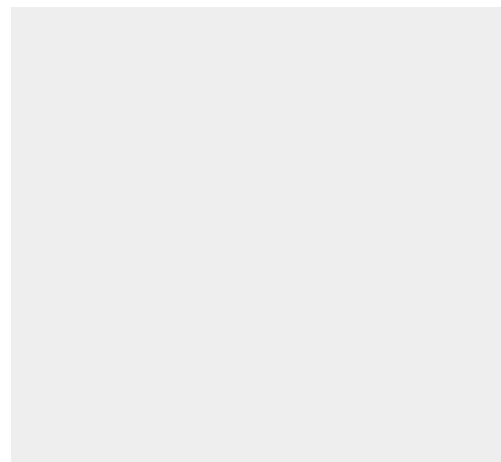
Building on the success of last year's ride through the Great Lakes, Ride Marshals Kacey Coffin and Moe Conn are hard at work finalizing the route and organizing lodging and meals for what is shaping up to be the largest group of riders yet.

The Long Reach Long Riders began riding for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS and The ESTA Foundation's Behind the Scenes program in 2004. Since that first ride the LRLR, which is made up of entertainment industry professionals, has raised more than \$400,000.00. For more information, visit lrlr.org.

Member Serves on Jury for Columbian Theatre Competition

The Colombian Ministry of Culture asked Scott F. Georgeson, FAIA, of Workshop Architects, to serve as the Ministry of Culture's representative for the Teatro de Cristobal Colon - Bogota, International Design Competition jury.

The two-stage Colon Theatre Competition is a joint effort between the Colombia Ministry of Culture and the Colombian Association of



Architects. Located in the heart of Historic Bogota, the 1892 "Italian style" theatre has been declared a National Cultural Heritage Building. The competition's design goals are to maintain the historic qualities of the site, respect the adjacent cultural monuments, and make an architectural statement for the 21st century.



The jury of five international theatre architects met in Bogota August 12 to 14 to review 49 submissions. Five teams were selected to refine their design and resubmit them for a second round of judging. Mr. Georgeson returned to Bogota October 22 to help select the winning team. He was asked to join the jury to share his expertise in theatre design, sustainability, historic buildings, and understanding of fitting complex programs into an existing urban context. With over 150 theatre projects in his portfolio, he has focused his practice on building a knowledge base for every aspect of performing arts architecture.

For further information on the competition go to www.sociedadcolombianadearquitectos.org.



Scott Georgeson with his colleagues in Bogota, Columbia.

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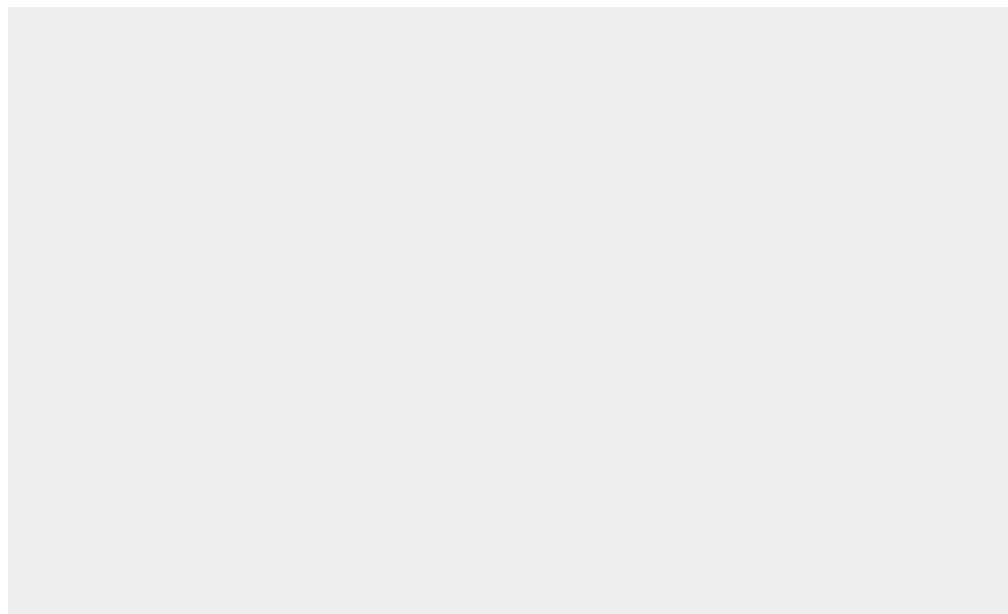
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- **PLASA:** New Venue, Much Success for London Event
- **City Theatrical:** Introduces LED Tape
- **ETC:** Updates Belgian Venues
- **Creative Stage Lighting:** Lemery Named Controller
- **Meyer Sound:** Offers Tutorial Videos, Adds Products to Exploratorium

Daktronics: Washington State School Gets Automated Rigging System

Audiences in Woodinville, Washington, will experience their 2013 opening performances at the new Woodinville High School Theater equipped with a **Daktronics** automated rigging system. The new 450-seat theatre was part of a multi-phased building and renovation project.

The high school is included in Seattle's Northshore School District, well-known for its excellence in theatre productions and already operating a performing arts center on one of its campuses.



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Barbizon: Adds Lighting Systems to Offerings

Barbizon is now a distributor of Darklight Precision Lighting Systems.

Darklight was founded in 2010 as a manufacturer of special effects lighting equipment catering to the themed attraction industry. It specializes in illumination in low-light and space constrained environments where traditional theatrical luminaires are not suitable. The "Precision" series of LED fixtures were developed with compactness, safety, modularity, and ease of use in mind. In 2012 the "Gantom" series of fixtures was launched catering to the professional lighting and architectural markets. For more information [check out the website](#) or call to schedule a demonstration.

PLASA: New Venue, Much Success for London Event

The annual **PLASA** event, [PLASA London 2013](#), proved a great success with exhibitors and visitors alike at its new home at ExCeL London. Over 11,000 visitors attended the show with more than 3,000 attending on multiple days. International interest was high, with more than 2,200 visitors from 84 countries.

USITT's stand, which included Lighting Design Award by Barbizon winner Ethan Vail, saw much traffic.

The PLASA Awards for Innovation, sponsored by *Lighting & Sound International* magazine, congratulated 10 winners. Other award ceremonies included the Knight of Illumination Awards, and the inaugural Technical Theatre Awards.

The 4th annual Rigging Conference which ran alongside PLASA London 2013 was a great success with 140 delegates representing 15 countries. The conference was opened by a highly engaging key-note delivered by industry legend Robin Elias of Unusual Rigging, and for the first time, the event covered structures as well as rigging issues, which proved very popular.

PLASA London 2014 returns to ExCeL on October 5 to 8.

City Theatrical: Introduces LED Tape

City Theatrical recently introduced QolorFLEX LED tape, a revolutionary product allowing lighting users to put light in places that were impossible in the past and to create lighting fixtures and lighting effects in new and inexpensive ways



The tape is manufactured to City Theatrical's exact specifications for professional use in theatrical, film, and video applications. QolorFLEX LED tape is available in a variety of types such as single color, RGB, RGBA, and RGBW.

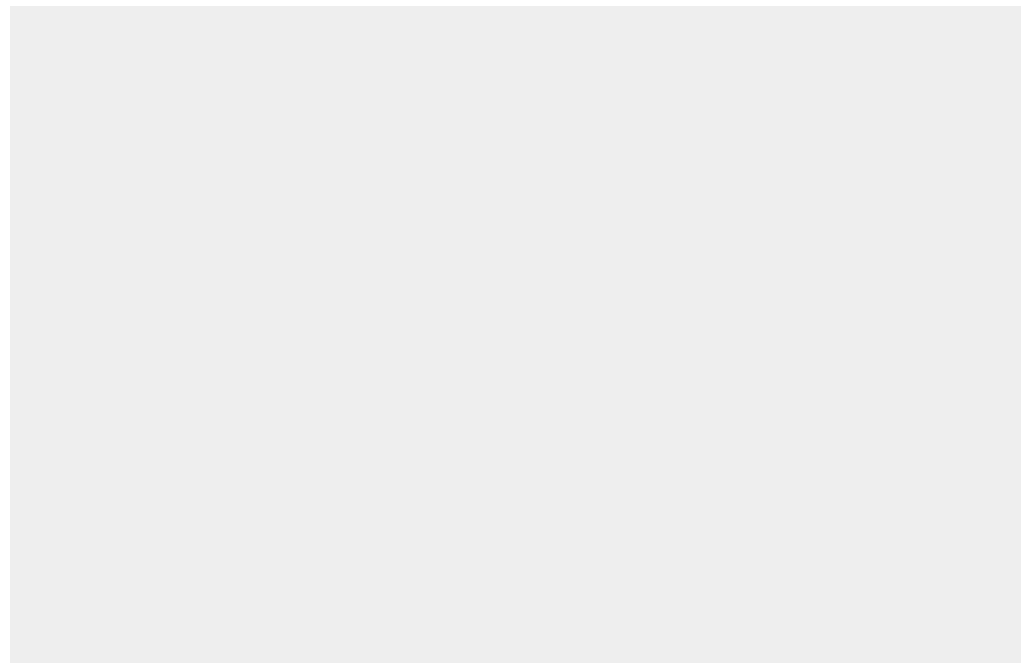
[QolorFLEX LED Tape Product Information can be found here.](#)

ETC: Updates Belgian Venues

Antwerp, Belgium's De Vlaamse Opera and Koninklijk Ballet van Vlaanderen (Royal Ballet Flanders) – two venues that are set to merge – were looking for new lighting control systems at the same time. After trying out options from a range of different manufacturers, both venues chose **ETC** Gio.

The Opera's old desk was coming to the end of its life, and the venue's managers wanted a newer, modern desk, that could easily handle conventional lights, moving heads, LEDs, and media servers.

For more information about ETC Rigging and all of ETC's award-winning products, visit www.etcconnect.com.





De Vlaamse Opera, Ghent.

Photo/Tom Dhaenens

Creative Stage Lighting: Lemery Named Controller

Creative Stage Lighting has hired Jason Lemery as controller.

Mr. Lemery's responsibilities will include overseeing financial components of the organization. He will also lend his talents to CSL's general management.



Jason Lemery

Meyer Sound: Offers Tutorial Videos, Adds Products to Exploratorium

To expand its training support for product users, **Meyer Sound** has released two new online tutorial videos focusing on the use of the MAPP Online Pro acoustical prediction program and the Compass control software for the CAL column array loudspeakers. [These videos are available on the Meyer Sound website and on YouTube.](#)

These new product training resources complement Meyer Sound's comprehensive education program, which dates back to the 1980s. The program offers audio education seminars and webinars for practitioners of all skill levels, and includes topics from technical fundamentals to sound system

design and optimization.

Billed by the New York Times as "the most important science museum to have opened since the mid-20th century," San Francisco's Exploratorium recently opened its new multidisciplinary theatre, the Kanbar Forum, and has been the first museum facility to install a Constellation acoustic system, supplemented with a palette of other audio tools from Meyer Sound.

Visit www.meyersound.com for more information.



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- **L-ACOUSTICS:** System Supports Austin City Limits Festival
- **iWeiss Theatrical Solutions:** Dusek Named Project Manager

Fox Studios: Welcome New Member

We welcome **Fox Studios** as a new Sustaining member of USITT.

At 20th Century Fox Studios, the production departments are best known for the sets, signs, and facades they have created for favorite television shows and motion pictures over the years.

For the last decade, the Fox Studios staff shop has been supplying these skins and ornamental details to theatres and university drama departments nationwide. The Fox staff shop has the largest vacuum-form and state-of-the-art fiberglass spray booths in Hollywood.

For more information, visit www.foxstudios.com.

German Light Products: Company, College Partner to Enhance Training

The lighting design program at Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance in Outer London, United Kingdom, and **German Light Products** (GLP) are collaborating to enhance training for the next generation of lighting designers and technicians.

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GLP's Udo Künzler and Mark Ravenhill have supplied the college with six Impression 90 LED moving heads on a long-term loan. The units have been installed in the college's unique lighting training and research laboratories, and are available to the lighting design students for general assignments as well as to augment their designs for a range of innovative lighting projects.

Rose Bruford and GLP are collaborating on developing a close partnership, working together to provide the best possible training to students and professionals.

Nemetschek Vectorworks, Inc.: Releases Updated Software, Apple Mobile System Support

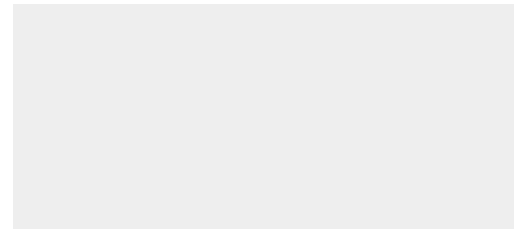
Nemetschek Vectorworks, Inc. announced the release of the 2014 version of its award-winning Vectorworks line of design software.

The software includes more than 130 improvements that were developed for better modeling, BIM management, interoperability, usability, performance, and quality. It also features new BIM tools for architects, increased site design capabilities for landscape architects and designers, and enhancements to lighting devices, documentation, and graphic controls for entertainment designers. Additional information about the 2014 release is available at www.vectorworks.net/2014.

Nemetschek Vectorworks also announced mobile support for Apple iOS 7. This means that the company's mobile application, Vectorworks Nomad, will support the new iOS 7 mobile operating system and match the new user interface look and feel. Current Vectorworks Nomad users can switch to the new iOS 7 by updating from the app store, and new users can [download it here](#).

Stagecraft Institute of Las Vegas: Sound Leader, Consortium to Direct Session

Industry leader Jonathan Deans and the Las Vegas Sound Consortium will take the lead on the **Stagecraft Institute of Las Vegas's** audio session in 2014.



Aaron Beck from Cirque du Soleil's *Michael Jackson's 'One'* and the LV Consortium have already outlined the 2014 program and are ready to roll as the SILV third week of training on June 23 to 27. Audio will again be housed at Solotech with the gracious assistance of Francis Leroux.



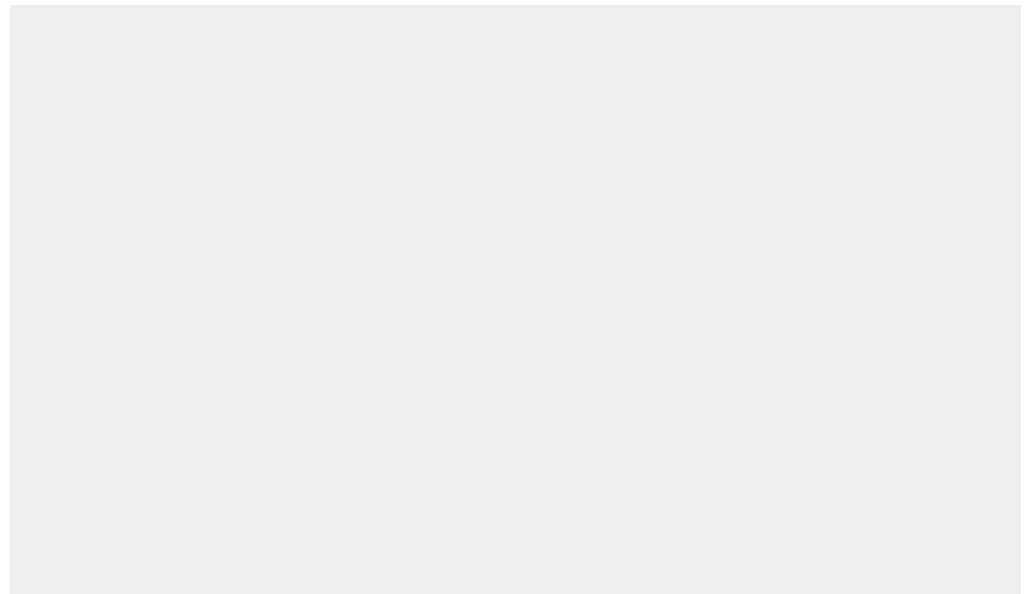
Jim Rogers and Jamie Ruggio during SILV Audio Week 2013

L-ACOUSTICS: System Supports Austin City Limits Festival

Following in the footsteps of Coachella, the 12th annual Austin City Limits (ACL) Music Festival doubled its attendance at Zilker Park this year by expanding its usual three-day concert to two identical lineups on consecutive weekends in early October. For sound reinforcement duties on one of the festival's largest stages – known as AMD on the first weekend and Lady Bird on the second – Houston-based LD Systems chose to deploy a full **L-ACOUSTICS** K1 loudspeaker system.

Out of the more than 140 groups performing at this year's ACL Music Festival, AMD/Lady Bird hosted some of the biggest headliners including Depeche Mode, The Cure, Vampire Weekend, fun., The National, Passion Pit, and Atoms For Peace, featuring members of Radiohead, Red Hot Chili Peppers, and Beck.

For more information on LD Systems, log on to www.ldsystems.com. Named after the long-running PBS concert television series, Austin City Limits Music Festival featured eight concert stages and completely sold-out both weekends this year. For more details on the event, visit www.aclfestival.com.





iWeiss Theatrical Solutions: Dusek Named Project Manager

Russ Dusek will join the staff of **iWeiss Theatrical Solutions** as a project manager to better serve clients and projects in the Chicago Mid-West region.

Mr. Dusek comes to iWeiss from Reed Rigging, bringing over 25 years of experience, not only in rigging and permanent installation, but with extensive work in the ETCP program.

He will manage a rigging installation at the new Sun Theatre in St. Louis, Missouri. In addition, he will manage a project that involves an F/A 18 Hornet currently housed at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Quantico, Virginia. The company will partner with Century Aviation who will complete the restoration in Wenatchee, Washington followed by the design to support the re-installation of the jet.



Russ Dusek

Visit www.iweiss.com/about/meet-the-staff.html for contact information.

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News From **Lea Asbell-Swanger**, *USITT President* **The Twists and Turns of Life**



Sometimes the path ahead is obvious, sometimes it is a bit more complicated, and sometimes it depends on your viewpoint of the situation.

"Life is what happens to you while you are busy making other plans."

~ From "Beautiful Boy (Darling Boy)," a song written and performed by John Lennon.

This quote, or a variation of it, has been attributed to a variety of people from Allen Saunders to Betty Talmadge to Lily Tomlin in addition to John Lennon. Perhaps part of its staying power is because most of us have had a point when we thought we were headed in one direction only to end up somewhere else. I'm not talking about issues with Mapquest or the sometimes infuriating voice on your GPS device ("recalculating"), but the bigger choices involving careers, relationships, and family.

Each year I offer a tour of our facility to a group of first year students who all live in Discover House, which is an interest house for students who might be a bit undecided about their major. The residence life coordinator responsible for this group always requests that I tell the students the path I took to get to the job I

currently have. She believes that it's valuable to the students because it not a traditional route. What she's saying, in a nice way, is that I didn't have a plan.

In my role as a manager, I plan most activities to a fault. All my life, I've been accused of being organized, so how in the world did I not have a plan for my career?

At one point I did. It involved math and physics and engineering and then suddenly, for reasons that are both simple and complicated, it suddenly involved the performing arts, a completely different university, and the goal of graduating with a B.A. within a specified period of time. So the end point was determined, but there was no time to map out too many details. All I knew was that the work and the people had to hold my interest even when difficult and, along the way, I should probably find a way to get paid for it. So within those rather broad parameters, I started down the path that ultimately led me to where I am and what I do today.

I would love to be able to say that, at some point, I had a plan that resembled a straight line since that would have been the shortest distance between where I was and where I thought I wanted to be, but that was not the case. I did manage to achieve the B.A. degree in a timely manner and; while there were actual career-related opportunities available, as the lyrics above suggest, life had its own plan. A corollary to this should be life changes you, which also changes your plan.

I recognize that I was very lucky to have a lot of support along my path. My parents didn't freak out (at least not so that I noticed) when the original plan changed completely. They and many other mentors provided guidance if requested and lots of opportunities. They didn't require me to succeed in every effort, but to at least learn something from the experience. They taught me to be comfortable with the notion of being strategic when recognizing and choosing opportunities, even if I didn't have a clear sense of exactly what would or should be next.

Somewhere along the way, USITT joined the process that was determining my future. By that point, I wasn't even conscious of needing a developmental plan. I had a job with work that I loved and people I respected, but USITT always kept me moving forward and learning. For that I will be forever grateful, and it is part of why I offer my service to the organization today.

But back to "life happening." In September, my father H.W. "Bubba" Asbell passed away after a brief illness. First, let me thank all of you that were supportive in thoughts and deeds during that difficult stretch of time.

It's difficult sometimes to express or even realize the impact USITT has in one's life. While I am both honored and humbled to be the President, nothing could have prepared me for the way my father received that news. I don't think there had been any single accomplishment in my life that made him more proud. It gave us a lot of new things to talk about, and I think this finally made my change of direction in college so long ago make sense to him. That will always give me great comfort.



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

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- **Ohio Valley:** Fall Conference Offers Variety, Ezekial Winners Announced
- **Desert State:** Holds Backstage Tours, Fire Safety Presentation
- **Southeast:** Master Classes, Design Expo Focus on Hands On Art!

Midwest: To Tour *Wicked* and *Million Dollar Quartet*

The Midwest Regional Section will host an exclusive, behind-the-scenes tour on Saturday, November 9 to see how the 10th anniversary production of *Wicked* is "Defying Gravity" in Chicago at the Oriental Theatre. Then we'll scurry on up to the Apollo for a tour of *Million Dollar Quartet*. A discounted showing of *Million Dollar Quartet* will be available at 5 p.m. Space is limited. More information is at midwest.usitt.org/programs.

Heart of America: *Adding Machine: A Musical* Explores Virtual Reality

In 1995, an internationally recognized production of Elmer Rice's *Adding Machine* established the University of Kansas theatre department as a leader in the use of virtual reality as scenographic medium. KU is a member of the Heart of America Regional Section.

The efforts were supported by a \$2,000 grant to Mark Reaney to support a life-size, virtual reality interface as a scenographic tool and performance medium.

This November, the University Theatre will stage the latest in its series of virtual reality experiments with a production of *Adding Machine: A Musical*. The production will build on past experiences of using real-time computer simulations (virtual reality, or VR) as the primary scenic media but will further the experiment by using real-time video control and data projectors as the principal source of lighting for the production. *Adding Machine: A Musical* opens Nov 15.

For more information and updates visit the [University of Kansas website](#).

Ohio Valley: Fall Conference Offers Variety, Ezekiel Winners Announced

The Ohio Valley Regional Section held its fall conference September 14 at Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio. The conference included 17 sessions in a wide variety of subject areas, including a focus on the Skelton Archives, an overview of international theatre festivals, and introductions to new and original design and construction methods. This year's conference broke the section's attendance record and included presenters from all around the United States.

Part of the conference was the annual Peggy Ezekiel Design Exhibit. This yearly event showcases excellence in educational and professional design from the Section. Ten entrants were judged Distinguished and will be displayed at this year's USITT Annual Conference & Stage Expo. In addition, three winners were chosen as Board's Choice and awarded Annual Conference passes.



The top ten were Ben Williams, scenic design *Midsummer Night's Dream* (education category); Glen Vanderbilt, scenic design for *After The Fall* (professional); Ricky Lurie, for *The Rose Tattoo* at Ohio University (pro); Deanna Smith, prop craft/metal arts (education); Aaron Contreas for *Mr. Marmalade* (education); Katherine Behrens for Valkyrie helmet/armor showcase (education); and Susan Williams, costume design for *Gently Suspended* (education).

Boards Choice winners were Thomas Fiocchi, prop design for *Three Musketeers* (pro); Andie Hoffman, lighting design for *Midsummer* (edu); and John Salutz, lighting design for *Lysistrata* (edu).

The Ohio Valley Section would like to thank BGSU for its generous contributions of hosting, helping to plan, and facilitating the conference.

Desert State: Holds Backstage Tours, Fire Safety Presentation

On September 14, members of the Desert State Regional Section had a backstage tour of Jobing.com Arena, the home of the Phoenix Coyotes Hockey Team, followed by a backstage tour of the Tempe Arts Center and the opening performance of Childsplay's *Robin Hood*.

As part of Fire Prevention Month, the fire marshal at Arizona State University conducted a workshop for the Desert State Section on September 29 on various aspects of fire safety including how to talk with a fire marshal, the set up and safety of temporary structures, fire prevention and safety, CPR/AED awareness, and compression only training.

The Desert State Section will present several workshops at the Arizona

Thespian Festival in November.

Southeast: Master Classes, Design Expo Focus on Hands On Art!

The Southeast Regional Section's annual Master Classes and Design Expo were hosted by the University of North Carolina School of the Arts in Winston-Salem, North Carolina September 13 and 14. Hands On Art! was the theme of this year's classes which covered a wide variety of topics and allowed participants to experience working with the techniques, materials, and equipment discussed and demonstrated in the sessions.



The Section also held its fall business meeting where it welcomed Zachary Stevenson (UNCSCA) as its new Vice-Chair for Membership. Members thanked Doug Brown for his incredible years of dedication and service as Vice-Chair for Membership.

The Southeast Section would like to thank the faculty, staff, and students of UNCSCA for being such gracious hosts. Thank you also to the all the presenters, adjudicators, volunteers, and organizers of this incredible event. Sustaining sponsors were Barbizon, Charlotte; BMI Supply; Sculptural Arts Coatings; Stage Rigging Services; and Stage Decoration & Supply.



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

Research – The Questions that Need to Be Asked

Failure Is Not an Option

That is one of my son's favorite t-shirts. It features those words and the logo of the Apollo 13 mission. In that case, yes, failure was not an option.

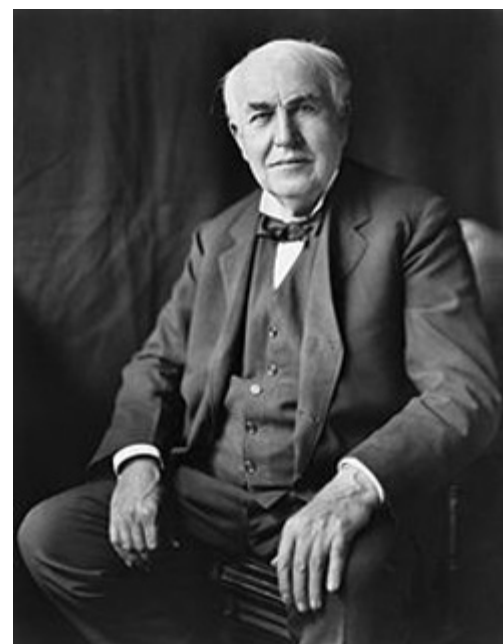
I think we have come to the intransigent thought that this is now always the case. I wholly disagree. Failure is an option, and much can be learned from it.

Thomas Edison famously said, "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."

USITT offers grants for research, and each year the pool of applicants is, frankly, too small. Our academic theatres say they are constantly fighting to show their worth in research institutions, but where are the grant applications? We do research every day thanks to the marvelous brains of designers who come up with amazing, creative ideas. So how do we realize them? Research. Trial and error. Putting ideas to work.

USITT has funded the research that gave us LEDs in stage lighting and created the DMX code and gave it to the world. We are home to some great research opportunities for individuals whether in an academic situation or not. We must seek to research not only our past (most of our applications are for historical research) but must seek to advance the future. That is the heart of what this Institute was founded on – sharing ideas and exploring to advance the art. Our oldest fund in the Institute is the Edward F. Kook Fund, which is there to provide funding for research!

Failure is an option in research, but somewhere the pressures of life have made us think this is not true. How many plays, musicals, or operas come to the stage and flop only to soar with rewriting and restructuring (or recasting, or *re* - lots of



Thomas Edison

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things). That's artistic research. Failure is painful and, in a world that is expected to produce instant profit, under-valued.

Perhaps that is part of our issue. In a world where we get impatient if e-mails take more than two seconds to cross the room or even the globe, perhaps we aren't patient enough to research and see if something works. Perhaps we see failure of an idea or experiment as a condemnation of our intellectual ability rather a small step forward in furthering understanding.



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

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

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International

WSD Packed with Events, Excitement

Randy Earle *Chair, USITT Fellows*

New members of the OISTAT Executive Committee are, from left, Louis Janssen (Netherlands), OISTAT president; and Executive Committee members Aby Cohen (Brazil), Milijana Zekovic (Serbia), Michael Ramsaur (USA), Duncan Chang (Taiwan), Sean Crowley. (UK), Marina Raytchinova (Bulgaria), and Bert Determann (Netherlands).

Photo/LIN Yu-quan

World Stage Design (WSD) 2013 was held at the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama in Cardiff, Wales September 8 to 14 under the leadership of Sean Crowley, director of drama, and Ian Evans, technical director. The hospitality and facilities provided by the college were superb and provided an environment that allowed most of the events to be connected and participants to interact.

This was the inaugural combination of three major events: WSD 2013, the Congress of Organisation Internationale des Scénographe, Techniciens et Architectes de Théâtre (OISTAT), and Scenofest, an event previously held in conjunction with the Prague Quadrennial (PQ). Estimated total attendance was 2,000 individuals. There were a wide variety of workshops, performances, and seminars along with a costume day tour to Bath and an architecture day tour to visit Welsh theatres.

A puppet show, *The Stolen Heart*, worked its way around Bute Park; two exciting pieces by the Welsh National Ballet premiered; and interactive

performance art was among the many events offered. The work of over 100 international performance designers was on exhibit and awards presented.

Exceptional Achievement Across All Categories:

Gold – Sophie Jump, Silver – Ulla Kassius, and Bronze – Conor Murphy.

Categories:

Set Design – Jamie Varatan, Costume Design – Simona Rybakova, Lighting Design – Xochitl Gonzalez Quintanilla, Sound Design – Igor Drevalev, Interactive and New Media – Tung-Yen Chou, Performance Design – Ulla Kassius, Installation Design – David Shearing, and Temporary Sustainable Theatre "The Willow Theatre" – Tim Lai and Brad Steinmetz .

OISTAT election winners:

President - Louis Janssen (Netherlands); Vice President - Duncan Chang (Taiwan); Treasurer - Michael Ramsaur (United States); Secretary - Sean Crowley (UK – Wales); Liaison to Governing Board - Marina Raytchinova (Bulgaria); Liaison to PQ - Aby Cohen (Brazil); and Committee Members - Bert Detterman (Netherlands) and Milijana Zekovic (Serbia).

For more information, visit www.oistat.org or www.wsd2013.com.

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International

Research Commission Highlights Projects

Carl Walling *USITT International Activities Committee*

During World Stage Design 2013, on September 12, OISTAT's Research Commission held its annual business meeting. Twenty-five OISTAT members from Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Finland, Georgia, Greece, Italy, New Zealand, Portugal, Serbia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, and the United States attended. Several projects were discussed.

TESTing 2013 explored topics in performance design and space over a five day span. There were nine research projects involving 13 researchers. They were peer-reviewed and selected from 30 applications.

Each TESTing research project was presented as research in-progress and received feedback from OISTAT Research commission members, invited distinguished researchers, and conference guests. Projects included Xristina Penna's *Making Up Two Minds – a scenographic experiment*; Rat Western's *Machine for Living, Part One: A Devised Divination*; a collaboration between Anna Birch, Rachel Hann, Kathleen Irwin, and Athena Stourna titled *Mother Tongue - Adapting/Translating/Transcribing/Performing Food*; and Sam Trubridge's *Oro – the vanishing point*. [Click here for more information about each individual TESTing 2013 project.](#)

The research commission discussed a new publication proposal, *5x5 In Time*, which would focus on 25 international performance design projects from the past four years. *5x5 In Time* would investigate five



The main lobby of the RWCMD

Photos/ Carl Walling

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potential categories of performance design and consider five contemporary projects within each category. The project is in the final proposal stages with plans to publish the first series of essays by PQ 2015. Future publications would follow at two year intervals.

The commission discussed methods to use the OISTAT web page to share current research projects among OISTAT members. The commission will update its web page with current research projects and publications by commission members to facilitate further research collaboration.

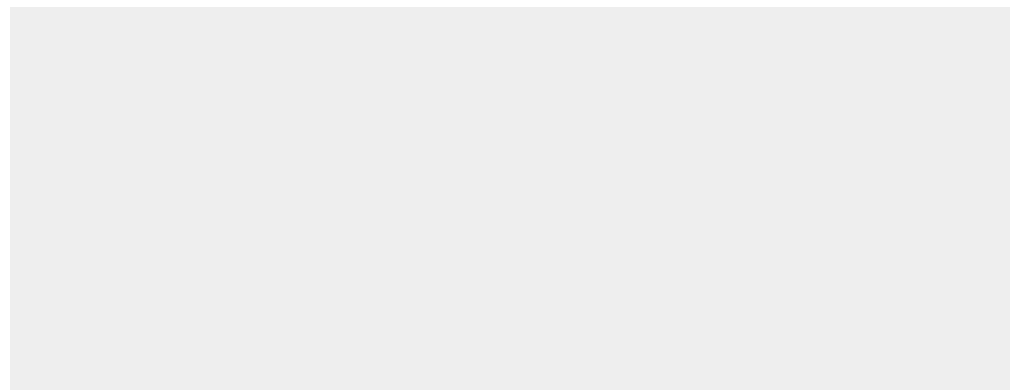
The Research Commission proposed a theatre publications database that will include books, book chapters, and essays recommended by OISTAT members. More information about submitting recommendations to this project will be forthcoming.

The Research Commission welcomes all USITT members (including student researchers) to attend OISTAT Research Commission meetings. All members are encouraged to submit presentation abstracts and proposals when the call for papers announcement occurs.

The next OISTAT Research Commission business meeting will be August 10 to 15, 2014 in São Paulo, Brazil during the joint OISTAT Performance Design, Research, and Education commission meetings. For more information about OISTAT, please go to www.oistat.org. For more about USITT – International Committee and the Institute's international activities, visit the Facebook page USITT – International Activities.



Dr. Kathleen Irwin and Dr. Rachel Hann presenting their segments of the research project *Mother Tongue: Adapting / Translating / Transcribing / Performing Food*. The project is a collaboration between Dr. Anna Birch, Dr. Hann, Dr. Irwin, and Dr. Athena Stourna.





Group discussion during the first TESTing group session, *Amuse-Bouche: TESTing the Palate*, on September 9 at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

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International

Theatre of Squatters

Robert Eastman-Mullins *USITT International Committee*

This September, OISTAT held its World Congress in Cardiff, Wales in conjunction with World Stage Design 2013. New members of the executive committee were elected, and many working groups met to discuss past and future activities. But it was a brief presentation by scenographer and longtime Peter Brook collaborator, Jean-Guy Lecat, that captured the attention of those who attended the OISTAT Performance Design Commission meeting.

Mr. Lecat's career in theatre and the performing arts spans nearly 50 years. He has worked extensively as a scenographer for a variety of theatre, dance, and opera productions around the world. A true theatre artist, he has also worked as a technical director, stage manager, actor, designer for television, theatre architectural consultant, and self-described space designer. However, Mr. Lecat is best known for his 24-year association with Peter Brook. During their extensive collaboration, Mr. Lecat designed, built, or transformed over 200 theatrical spaces, including La MaMa in New York, Copenhagen's East Gasworks Theatre, and Glasgow's Tramway.

Mr. Lecat shared photographs and stories that show artists employing derelict theatre spaces to mount all manner of performances and art exhibitions from a number of new theatre endeavors around the world. In some cases, artists occupy the theatres (in the *Occupy Wall Street* sense of the word) seeking to save a historic but abandoned space marked for demolition to make way for condominiums. In other instances, the occupiers seek to force the local government's hand in making use of neglected theatres. The activities often fall in grey areas of the law. Though these theatres are often architecturally significant spaces, with decaying elegant boxes and flaking frescoed ceilings, the emphasis is not on restoration but utilization. With public money increasingly scarce, theatre artists are seeking to make use of spaces "as-is" instead of waiting for building rehabilitation that may never come.

A dilapidated and long-unused theatre located in an Italian castle in Gualtier was deemed safe for occupation. The space was cleaned up and minimal electric and heating service was brought in. No effort was made, however, to restore the original splendor of the architecture. In fact,

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the house was razed and a stage was constructed from found materials where the audience once sat; the former stage now served as a seating area. The issue that frequently arises when confronting an abandoned theatre space—it will cost too much to restore—was circumvented by not seeking to renovate to a past glory or even to a familiar modern standard.



Mr. Lecat told the story of another theatre space in Lido, Italy, located in a publicly owned, abandoned hospital. The space was initially occupied illegally. The local police were even called out to evict the squatting artists. After a plea to the court, however, the eviction was halted, which Mr. Lecat attributed to the building being a public asset rather than private property. Since the stay of eviction, the theatre and parts of the hospital have hosted concerts, theatrical performances, art gallery shows, and even a Catholic mass.

Mr. Lecat cited many other examples of performance spaces: a Russian beach resort, a slaughterhouse, a Roman cinema, a train roundhouse, a boat storage facility, and a Paris theatre already partially demolished to make room for a parking garage. He asserted that often it is the technically minded theatre practitioners who seek to "over-restore" a space; an effort to establish a facility resembling something familiar with all the trappings they may have enjoyed in other theatres. The report posed the question, "Is it better to utilize the space or restore the space?" Which is more likely?

Mr. Lecat's presentation follows up on his 2007 OISTAT publication, *Un Spectacle, Un Public, Un Seul Espace (One Show, One Audience, One Single Space)*. Ultimately, the emphasis of his talk was less on individual accomplishments in any one theatre or project, and more of a push for younger artists to create their own spaces and theatre work rather than relying on established organizations. It was a call to the established theatre professionals to teach emerging artists that the play's the thing, and they have the ability to create their theatre art on their own, even if it means prying out nails from boarded-up windows.

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Conference & Stage Expo

Watch Them Work Shows Artists in Action

Janet Gramza *Communications Associate*



Desmond Heeley was one of the initial participants in Watch Them Work in 2013.

At last year's Annual Conference & Stage Expo, USITT's Education Commission tried something new – a space for theatrical designers to draw, paint, or draft ideas live on the Stage Expo floor.

They didn't expect world-famous set and costume designer Desmond Heeley to stop by and sketch for excited fans. But that's how *Watch Them Work* got off the ground.

"We thought it would be cool if we could invite people to come and draw as a way of showing the creative process at work," said Vice-Commissioner for Programming Ashley Bellet. "Desmond Heeley was a happy accident."

Mr. Heeley, who received 2013 USITT Distinguished Achievement Awards in both costume and scenic design, helped ensure *Watch Them Work* a place at the 2014 Conference & Stage Expo, to be held March 26 to 29 in Fort Worth, Texas.

While last year's planners liked the concept, they weren't sure how it might work,

Ms. Bellet said. They approached Dan Denhart, Vice-President for Special Operations, who set up a work area with two drafting tables, two standard tables, and a camera to project the work on a nearby monitor.

They stocked the spot with pens, pastels, and charcoal, and hoped to schedule different artists every 45 minutes or so to create in public, then display the works on 4-by-8-foot corner panels for the rest of the Conference.

"We thought, 'Yeah, we're going to bring in all these people,'" Ms. Bellet said. "But last year was the first year, so nobody knew what it was yet, and people were very busy with other events. So scheduling people was pretty difficult."

She said she asked Mr. Heeley's assistant if he might participate, thinking his fragile health and tight schedule wouldn't allow it. "But she said, 'He would love that!'" Ms. Bellet recalled.

Shortly after Stage Expo opened that Thursday, Mr. Heeley showed up and quickly attracted an audience.

"It was wonderful to watch," Ms. Bellet said. "He was there maybe 12 minutes, and he made two quick drawings, of a figure and some flowers. He made them very loose and messy," yet easily identified as a musketeer and a bouquet of yellow roses.

After his appearance, "I had people calling and asking to be part of it," Ms. Bellet said. "At one point, we had the tables filled with seven people drawing at once," she said. "Students would come by, grab a pen and paper, sit on the floor and start sketching."

Artists who participated last year included scenic and lighting designer [Christopher Sousa-Wynn](#), costume designer [Linda Pisano](#), former Hollywood set designer [John Paul](#), and Ms. Bellet, a costume and set designer at [Oklahoma City University School of Theatre](#).

"John Paul had some renderings he was working on for *South Pacific*, and he brought them and finished them at the show," she said. "I was sketching on *Love's Labours Lost*. I brought some renderings and colored them there."

Future exhibits will offer more materials, the ability to videotape the work session, and maybe even themes such as Scenes from Shakespeare, Ms. Bellet said. "We may even have people rendering or drafting on computer versus by hand. We could hold a drafting race in the spirit of fun."

She said the artists may donate their work to USITT's archives or take it home,



Joe Aldridge displays his drafting skills at Watch Them Work 2013.

whatever they choose. "This is more about the act of drawing than the product they create," she said.



John Paul at the 2013 Watch Them Work event in Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Photos/ Barbara E.R. Lucas, R. Finkelstein

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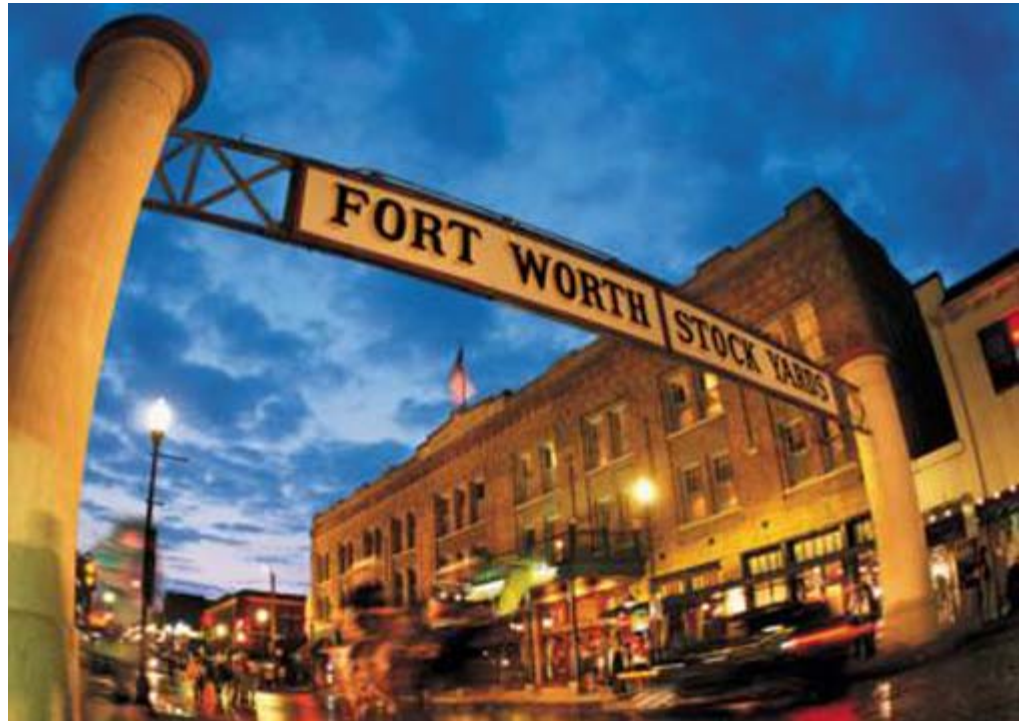
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Conference & Stage Expo

Night Life in Fort Worth

Benjamin Shurr *Fort Worth Promotions Committee*

Thinking ahead to March, a great day of Conference sessions and conversation is winding down and thoughts turn to what might be available for nighttime activities. Whether it be relaxing with a glass of wine or kicking up your heels at the local honkytonk, Fort Worth has something for everyone. Like most cities around the country there are sections that are defined that have a grouping of bars, restaurants, clubs and what have you.

Fort Worth is no different. In a relatively short article, there is no possible way to list everything, but, here is a good start.

Let's start in downtown. Located in the heart of Fort Worth, **Sundance Square** is a great place to go to find a variety of things to do. Someone who likes beer and wishes for a broad selection of choices will enjoy The Flying Saucer. Voted by GQ as one of the 12 best bars in the US, The Flying Saucer is a great place to kick back and enjoy a drink in the beer garden. Those who want a laugh should head to Hyena's Comedy Night Club and check out the talent that Hyena's always brings in. Need something on the cool (shades not temperature) side? Check out Scat Jazz Club located in the historic Woolworth Building. Don't

miss the artists that grace their stage and provide the best of traditional jazz.

Located near the cultural district, **West 7th Street** is our next destination. If you are looking for a neighborhood feel with some cool photography and styling for possibly a martini or a microbrew or wine, then you need to hit up Bar Louie. Need a movie? Need a movie and some food? Need a movie and some food and some (adult) drinks? You need Movie Tavern, a full dining experience with the latest film out. Maybe you want a completely new experience, then grab some friends and go to Lucky Strike Lanes – a combination of a bar, bowling and great art.

Rounding out this list is, of course, **The Stockyards National Historic District**, one of the most recognized areas of Fort Worth. And, within The Stockyards is Billy Bob's Texas "The World's Largest Honky Tonk." Billy Bob's offers over two acres of interior space featuring live music, dance lessons, pool tables, more bars than you can count. On Friday and Saturday you can take in live bull riding. Want the honky tonk, but not two acres worth? Head over to the White Elephant Saloon. At 100+ years old, it will take you back into the saloon days of old with its rustic interior and grand history; you'll hear some good music too! Another trip to the past is the Historic Stockyards Hotel in which you can find Booger Red's Saloon and sit atop your bar stool in a saddle!

This is just the tip of the iceberg. I hope it gives you a good start!

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Conference & Stage Expo

Seek Creative Drops to Display in Fort Worth

Janet Gramza *Communications Associate*



A wall of drops at Stage Expo 2013 inspired a new opportunity for scenic artists to display their work in 2014.

USITT is seeking submissions of creative backdrops to display on a giant section of wall at its 2014 Stage Expo in Fort Worth, Texas. The **Scenic Artist Showcase** will highlight scene design and painting by professional, academic, and student artists as well as digitally printed drops. The deadline for submissions is November 15.

"The Scenic Artist Showcase came out of last year's Annual Conference & Stage Expo, when we honored the work of Cobalt Studios," said Executive Director David Grindle.

"We took one end of the Stage Expo and covered it in drops that Cobalt and its students had designed and painted. It gave a fabulous nod to art on a scale that we use regularly, but don't often get to appreciate in a context where you can see over 120 feet of drops in one place."

The positive reaction to the Cobalt display prompted Mr. Grindle and Vice-President for Special Operations Dan Denhart to suggest a "wall of drops" by various designers and painters for 2014. The juried exhibit is open to work

produced or built between October 2012 and October 2013. At least one member of the team of designers/painters/presenters must be a USITT member.

The four submission categories are **Professional** designers and painters, **Academic** teams of faculty and students, **Student** designers and painters, and **Printed Drops** by any designer. Submissions must be made electronically and include one full photo and one detail photo of the backdrop. A submission form can be found [here](#).

A jury of scenic painters and designers will choose the drops for display in Fort Worth based on creativity and quality.

Having a showcase of drops at Stage Expo injects additional artistic elements into Stage Expo and provides a great canvas for the work, Mr. Grindle said. "Scenic art is part of who we are – it's a wonderful blend of design and technology. For a designer to design such a large-scale work of art is a great thing, and then for a scenic artists to realize it is amazing. Sometimes the designer is the person painting, and sometimes it's a whole team of painters."

"To really be able to see this kind of art, you have to have vast amounts of space," he added. "So a convention center is the perfect place to show it."



Rachel Keebler with some of the scenic drops from Cobalt Studios on display at Stage Expo 2013.



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Conference & Stage Expo

Learning Opportunities for Projection Technology

Scott Olinger *Special Events Coordinator, USITT Conference Committee*



Setting up USITT's major events involves more technology each year. Coordinating them allows an exploration of new techniques, especially projection.

Photos/Richard Finkelstein

Projections of one form or another have been a part of performance for as long as theatre has existed, but relatively recent advancements in technology have led to an explosion of activity in the field of projection design. Along with these advancements have come opportunities for learning. USITT's Annual Conference has seen an expanding role in projection for its major events, paralleling what is happening within the industry. Sessions on the topic keep expanding.

The vocabulary alone of projection design can be intimidating for the uninitiated. While many are now adept at projecting still images by means of Power Point and a classroom LCD projector, the field encompasses so much more. So, what's the next step in developing a projection toolbox?

Programs of study are becoming more common in the United States and across the pond. Live Design's Master Class series has offered an annual projection class since 2005, providing access to innovators like Wendell Harrington and

Zack Bovary. USITT's programming continues to increase each year, and 2014 promises to bring more opportunities to connect with projection manufacturers, vendors, and designers than ever before. Sven Ortel's website (www.projctn.com) offers tutorials alongside philosophical approaches into his own professional work as well as a burgeoning community archive to trace past and ongoing development. Regional theatre conferences are now featuring excellent seminars like those offered at SETC in 2013 by Patrick Pagano of the University of Florida and University of Tennessee Professor Joe Payne.

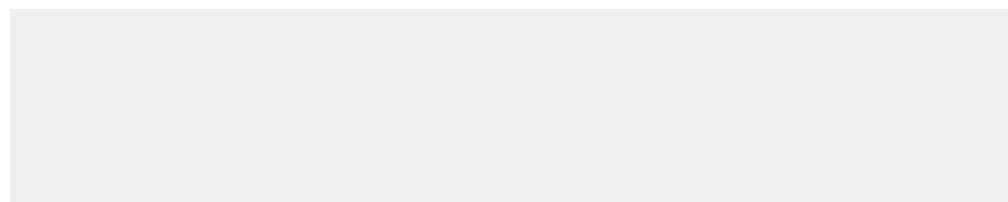
While there are stunning examples of visionary projection work from legendary artists such as Erwin Piscator and Josef Svoboda, projection in the theatre prior to the last 30 years was relatively limited by time, money, and the quality of the technology itself. In the 1980s, new materials and progress in transistor manufacturing allowed the development of the first liquid crystal display (LCD) and digital light processing (DLP) projectors which offered significant improvements in brightness and expense. The emergence of affordable computers and digital media sources allowed designers to set aside their 35mm slide projectors or large format projectors in favor of this new, more flexible medium.

Since then, projection design (or *video design* to some) has come to envelop more complicated technology in pursuit of storytelling. Most projection designers now generate original content, drawing upon experience in film or animation. Content can be played back from dedicated media servers, packaged as all-inclusive hardware and software solutions, or from a laptop running server software like Isadora, WATCHOUT, or QLab, all designed with flexibility and performance as a priority.

Multiple video cards and an appropriately powered computer processor allow live capture to be added to the mix. Images can be mapped onto specific shapes or spread seamlessly across multiple shapes with software packages like MadMapper or TorsionBlend. Users have quickly integrated input tools like the iPad and the Xbox Kinect sensor as triggers for truly interactive projection work.

Like all productions, those creating special events at USITT's Annual Conference have had to expand their roles and responsibilities. In 2013 the team included Jason Winfield, Jason Winfield (Media director), Kristen Geisler (lighting director), Mo Stroemmel (NPS Video artist), and Andrew Trow (technical director) as well as myself. For 2014, Chuck Hatcher will be handling sound, and Ms. Geisler (Lighting Director), and Mr. Stroemmel (TD and NPS Video Artist) will be returning to assist.

The 2014 Annual Conference will use projection in new ways, as technologies shift and expand. See www.usitt.org/2014 for sessions and exhibitors targeting this advancing field.





Scott Olinger oversees the main event room coming together for the 2013 Annual Conference in Minneapolis, including projection and lighting.

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Sightlines

The monthly newsletter for USITT members

November 2013

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