



Sightlines

The monthly newsletter for USITT members

August 2015

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News & Notices

Accepting Submissions for Best Theatre Architecture

Submissions for USITT's 2016 Architecture Awards, for outstanding performance spaces completed in the past 10 years, will be accepted until September 1. These are the only awards given for completed performance spaces around the globe.

The awards program, sponsored by USITT's Architecture Commission, honors excellence in the design of contemporary theatre projects by professional architects and consultants. Submit a project at www.usitt.org/awards/profarch.

New or renovated buildings housing performance spaces are eligible to enter if completed since Jan. 1, 2006.

A panel of peer adjudicators will consider submissions based on creativity, contextual resonance, functional operation, use of new technology, and community contribution. Panel members recommend recipients for Merit Awards or the top award, Honor Awards, to be presented at USITT 2016 in Salt Lake City, Utah, next March.

This year USITT bestowed 2015 Merit Awards to Milton Court, the performing arts building at the Guildhall School of Music in London, UK, and to the Reed College Performing Arts Building in Portland, Oregon.

The 2015 Honor Award went to the National Theatre of Bahrain, designed by A-S Architecture Studio in Paris, France, with Theatre Projects Consultants of London.

The USITT Architecture Awards were established in 1964 to recognize theatre architecture as a unique discipline and increase the interest of architects in USITT and designing for the performing arts.



National Theatre of Bahrain

Photo / Nicholas Buisson

USITT considers theatre architecture to be an important facet of performing arts design and technology. Besides the professional architecture awards, USITT and sponsor American Seating hold an annual competition for theatre and architecture students to design an ideal theatre for their college campus, and USITT offers many sessions carrying AIA/CES credits at its Annual Conference & Stage Expo.

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News & Notices

Rouse New VP Special Ops

 Janet Gramza *Communications Associate*

Eric Rouse has an impressive resume – technical director for the Denver Center Theatre Company, ETCP Certified Rigger and Recognized Trainer, flying director for Foy, rigging supervisor for Cirque du Soleil's *O*, and former tenured professor of scenic technology at Penn State University. And he credits USITT with helping him achieve it all.



That's why he jumped at the chance to serve as Vice-President for Special Operations, taking over from Dan Denhart on July 1.

He is in charge of special exhibits at Stage Expo -- from ideas to setup -- and a plethora of other operational areas (as the title implies).

He said he foresees more involvement by students and faculty, and a greater effort to promote diversity with Special Ops. He brings variety and enthusiasm for many disciplines to his post.

A native of Puerto Rico, Mr. Rouse wanted to be a marine biologist. He acted in high school plays – starring in *The Importance of Being Earnest* his senior year – but didn't discover stage technology until college.

"And that was purely by coincidence," he said. "I needed a work-study job, and the only one I could find was in the theatre department at Franklin & Marshall College" in Pennsylvania.

John F. Whiting, the college's resident scenic and lighting designer, became Mr. Rouse's mentor, and Mr. Rouse spent four years doing lighting and sound design as a French major. "My first professional gig was running sound for a Flamenco company," he said. "Since I knew Spanish, I worked well with them and ended up traveling with them as their SM."

After stints at several local theatre companies, he enrolled at Penn State in 1994 for his MFA in scenic technology. He joined USITT in time for the 1997 Annual Conference & Stage Expo in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He signed up for a job interview with Rick Stevens, then scene shop supervisor at the University of Texas at Austin.

“Rick (now a USITT Fellow and award recipient) was and still is a legend,” Mr. Rouse recalled. “I knew I was in way over my head, but I went anyway. The first words out of his mouth were, ‘You know you’re not qualified for this job, right?’ To which I answered honestly, ‘Yes.’”

They had a great chat anyway, and Mr. Stephens became a friend and advisor. “Honestly, that is what fuels my involvement in USITT,” Mr. Rouse said. “Mentorship and education are so important in our field. I want to be able to help folks starting out, just like Rick did.”

Mr. Rouse designed flying systems for Flying by Foy, was a rigging supervisor for Cirque du Soleil, served as TD at the University of South Carolina, and went back to Penn State to teach. In 2014, he and his wife, Cathy, moved their family to Denver, where he is TD for the Denver Center Theatre Company.

He’s helping organize the first Jay O. Glerum Rigging Master Classes to begin next year in memory of master rigger and USITT Fellow Jay Glerum.

Mr. Rouse’s personal causes within USITT include safety, mentoring, and diversity. His supportive family enables him to pursue his passions.

“Cathy and our four kids have followed me around to four different stages and hold down the fort when I’m away on business,” he said. “They know I love what I do, and they want me to do it. I couldn’t be luckier.”

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Petition Process Closes September 1

The deadline to add names to the USITT ballot for the 2016 elections is September 1. According to the Institute's Policies and Procedures, additional candidates can be nominated by petition with no fewer than 50 signatures of members in good standing by the close of nominations on that date. [Current candidates can be found here](#) and [additional information on the petition process is on the web here](#).

Launch Safety Hotline

The International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees recently launched its safety hotline so members can report hazards on the job.

When a member calls, toll free, 844-IA AWARE, (844-422-9273), the caller can either leave a message for or talk to a safety representative who will help handle the issue. Sometimes the safety representative will contact the Local's representative and assist them with the issue, or call the employer directly.

Because IATSE members commonly work for many different employers, the system of employers reporting hazards to OSHA sometimes breaks down. The IATSE Safety Hotline is a safety net.

The IATSE Safety Hotline is not intended to take the place of an employer's hazard reporting plan or to relieve the employer from their responsibility to keep jobs safe.

In [The Official Bulletin](#), IATSE provides more details on the safety hotline along with guidelines for members to follow.

CITT RENDEZ-VOUS Special 25th Anniversary Price

The Canadian Institute for Theatre Technology's (CITT) 25th anniversary conference, with a special \$25 registration rate, is set to be the largest since 2005.



CITT RENDEZ-VOUS 2015, the Annual Conference & Trade Show, will be held August 20 to 22 in Vancouver, British Columbia. It offers three days of sessions, workshops, backstage tours, trade show, social events and networking opportunities.

For more information, visit www.citt.org/annual_conference.html.

New Website, Seminars Lead Up to PLASA 2015

The PLASA Events Team recently launched a brand new website for the [PLASA Show 2015](#), which takes place at London's ExCeL Center October 4 to 6.



Following a redesign of the PLASA Show branding with a fresh, updated look and an exciting new focus to the event, the new website provides enhanced features and easier navigation, helping show visitors find information more quickly and efficiently.

As well as visitor registration (attendance is free for all registrations completed before August 1), a downloadable show floor plan and FAQs, and a news feed keep both visitors and exhibitors up to date with the latest developments from the industry and the show itself. Other highlights include:

PLASA 2015 will feature professional development program seminars for 2015. These seminars bring global experts together to share their insight and experience.

One of the PLASA Show's new initiatives for 2015 is a sector-specific zoned layout, which will make navigation around the show easier than in previous years. The show's seminars feature a similarly zoned theme, with sector-specific stages hosting over 150 speakers throughout the three days, highlighting case studies and advice on lighting, AV, audio, broadcast, and staging.

Further information on seminars will be available at www.plasashow.com/seminars.

NFPA Seeks Presentation Proposals for 2016

September 15 is the deadline to submit proposals for sessions at the 2016 NFPA Conference & Expo to be held June 13 to 16 at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nevada.

The NFPA Conference & Expo is regarded as the most comprehensive event in the industry. With approximately 5,000 attendees, it is the year's largest and most important event for the fire protection, life safety, and electrical industries.

To share knowledge and best practices for electrical, fire protection engineering, fire and emergency services, emergency preparedness/business continuity, building and life safety, health care, loss control/prevention, detection and notification, fire suppression, codes and standards, and public education, [submit a proposal online](#) by Monday, September 14.

For assistance or questions regarding content or format, contact [Stacey Moriarty](#); regarding the call for presentations process, contact [Andrea White](#).

Standard Directed at Power Feeder Cable Use in Canada

BSR E1.51 - 201x, The Selection, Installation, and Use of Single-Conductor Portable Power Feeder Cable Systems for Use at 600 Volts Nominal or Less for the Distribution of Electrical Energy in the Television, Film, Live Performance and Event Industries in Canada is available for public review through August 3.

BSR E1.51 is intended to offer guidance in accordance with existing Canadian standards and regulations on how to select, install, use, and maintain single-conductor portable feeder cables used to supply power for television, film, live performance, and special events. Affected parties are invited to review the document and to offer comments on it.

For more information, contact Karl G. Ruling, technical standards manager at PLASA, 630 Ninth Avenue, Suite 609, New York, NY 10036; 1-212-244-1505; standards.na@plasa.org.

Global Connections Grant Recipients Named

Supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation TCA's, Global Connections encourages reciprocity and cultural exchange through ON the ROAD, IN the LAB, and ON the STAGE grants. Now in its fourth year, this round of the program awarded a total of \$127,000 to 14 projects, with over \$574,500 awarded to date.

Awarded up to \$5,000 for unrestricted travel support via ON the ROAD grants were Chinese Theatre Works, Long Island City, New York; Imagination Stage, Bethesda, Maryland; Playwright Jeremy Kamps, Brooklyn, New York; Playwright and director Kyoung H. Park, Brooklyn; Riti Sachdeva, Brooklyn; and Indika Senanayake, New York City;.

IN the LAB recipients, each awarded \$10,000, were CalArts Center for New Performances, Valencia, California; Director/designer Tom Lee and collaborator

Josh Rice, New York City; and Gerard Stropnick, Danville, Pennsylvania.

ON the STAGE recipients, each awarded grants of \$10,000 to \$15,000, are Aquila Theatre Company, New York City; The Regina A. Quick Center for the Arts, Fairfield, Connecticut; Repertorio Español (Spanish Theatre Repertory Company, Ltd), New York City; Theater Breaking through Barriers (TBTB), New York City; and Yale Repertory Theatre, New Haven, Connecticut.

[More information about recipients and their programs is available here.](#)

Applications for the next round of grants will be accepted in the fall. Visit www.tcg.org/globalconnections for more information.

Order 2015 Behind the Scenes Holiday Cards Now!

The 2015 Behind the Scenes Holiday Cards feature five wonderful new designs by William Ivey Long, Robert Mendoza, Court Watson, Paul Weimer, and Paige Weintraut and the return of a favorite design from the past by Bruce Rodgers.

There are three ways to order cards: personalized cards with a company logo and custom message; card packs of 10 with a standard greeting; and electronic versions for delivery by email. Orders will be taken until September 14 to arrive by late October. View and order cards at www.behindthescenescharity.org/holidaycards.

All proceeds benefit Behind the Scenes, which provides financial assistance to entertainment technology professionals who are seriously ill or injured. For more information, contact 212-244-1421 or holidaycard@behindthescenescharity.org.

For more information about Behind the Scenes, to donate, or to apply for a grant, visit www.behindthescenedscharity.org.

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News & Notices

Exhibits Meet PQ15 Challenges

Margaret Mitchell *International Committee*

Opening ceremonies for the 2015 Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space.

The USITT PQ USA 2015 teams that brought national and student exhibitions to the Prague Quadrennial faced new challenges, including 14 venues in and around the Old Town of Prague. Designed by award winning designer Klara Zieglerova, the U.S. national exhibit was housed in St. Ann's Church. Veronika Vorel designed the sound and Ian Garrett coordinated the digital aspects. Paul Brunner of Indiana University was exhibit project coordinator.

The national exhibit's design work was curated by Kevin Rigdon, Carrie Robbins, and Tony Walton with Marketa Fantova as artistic director.

Tighter spaces and working in historically protected UNESCO World Heritage sites created installation demands that required careful planning. Students from Indiana University not only physically built the national exhibition but also served as managers: assistant designers, TD,



The USITT/USA National entry, *Vortex of Our Dreams*, in St. Ann's Church.

ATD, and electrics, props and soft goods coordinators.

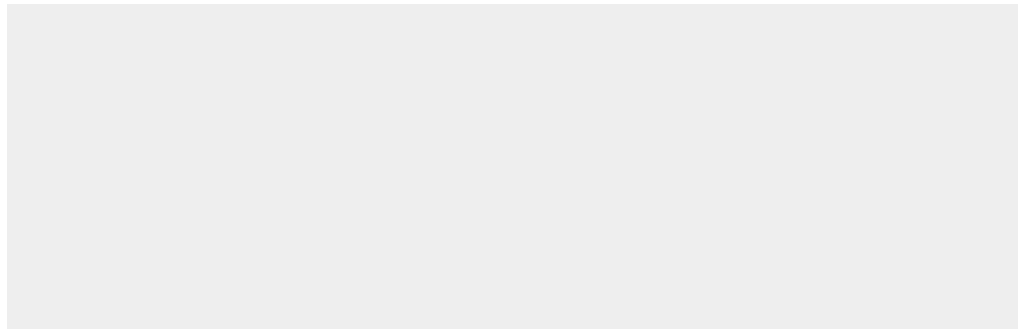
After two setup rehearsals in the U.S. the exhibitions were installed well ahead of schedule with few surprises. Student ATD Bradley Shaw said the toughest part of the process was getting the exhibitions to Prague.

The Indiana University student team also included TD Sandy Everett, assistant designers Kristen Martino and Bridgette Dreher, carpenters and electricians Aaron Bowersox and Katie Gruenhagan, carpenter Carrie Barton, and Kelsey Nichols, who assisted with scenery, props, and soft goods.

St. Ann's Church also housed exhibits from Romania, Sweden, Peru, Hungary, Slovakia, Croatia, Japan, Lebanon, and Bulgaria

The student exhibition, *Transcend: The Designer as Creator*, was designed by Tyler Kinney, a recent graduate of Emerson College; Joe Klug, an MFA student from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; John Mitchell, an undergraduate from Dixie State University; and Jenna Moran, a BFA student from DePaul University. Tom Burch, a regional theatre designer and assistant professor of scene design at Ithaca College, and Meghan Raham, an award winning set and costume designer now teaching at American University, were the student exhibition mentors.

Information about the [U.S. installations](#) can be found on the [PQ website](#). *Vortex of Our Dreams* will be installed at the Salt Lake City 2016 USITT Annual Conference & Stage Expo.





The USITT/USA student exhibition at Kafka House, *Transcend, The Designer as Creator*.

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Mehler USITT's New VP Communications

Janet Gramza *Communications Associate*



Michael Mehler with David Stewart, Management Commission, and Jack Faivou, VP Conferences.

"At this point, my relationship with USITT is about giving back," Michael Mehler, the new VP Communications said. He should know; he's been involved for almost 20 years, and he credits the Institute with helping him become a leader.

After serving as VP Programming, a Director at Large, on the Conference Committee, and more, Mr. Mehler is facing the challenge of filling the shoes of former *TD&T* editor David Rodger and art director Deborah Hazlett, who oversaw the magazine for more than 20 years.

Fellow Bill Browning is serving as Interim Editor during the search for a new editor and graphic designer. Once these hurdles are cleared, Mr. Mehler said his long-term goals include raising the caliber of articles in *TD&T* by supporting more writers with research funding, and using USITT publications to advance diversity in technical theatre.

"We've got an amazing journal in *TD&T*, and it can get even better if we assist our member authors every step of the way," he said.



Mr. Mehler's involvement in theatre began as a young boy with a bit part in *La Boheme*.

"I was one of the three scamps that ran in with the food basket," he recalled. "I remember eating out the middle section of a long baguette because the outside had been shellacked in a failed attempt to keep us from eating it. It was my first lesson in understanding that you never know what performers are going to do with the props!"

He embraced production and stage management in high school taking on scenic and lighting design for the school's eight shows as a senior. He helped take *Noises Off!* to the Illinois High School Theatre Festival. At Northwestern University, he was "probably one of the only students who intended to pursue design or production from the moment I hit campus."

He earned his MFA in scene design from the University of Texas at Austin, including a month-long intensive with Metropolitan Opera scenic artist Don Padgett, while designing a premiere production for Ballet Austin.

He taught five years at Allegheny College then pursued his Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh while freelancing as a lighting and scene designer, and production manager. In 2004 he landed the scene design position at the College of William and Mary in Virginia, teaching there four years before returning to Allegheny to be closer to family. He and his wife, Sara Angelino Mehler, have three children.

He joined USITT while a student at Texas, and became more involved once he began teaching. Besides his roles in Conference planning and as an Officer, he has embraced the issues of sustainability and diversity as personal causes.

He teaches sustainable design and production at Allegheny and serves on its Committee on Diversity and Equity. He also has co-chaired the Broadway Green Alliance Education Committee and is an active member of USITT's Diversity Committee.

He said he owes his commitment to diversity to his late friend Tayneshia Jefferson, who he promised to help "change the face of USITT" at the Long Beach 2012 Conference & Stage Expo.

"USITT is the primary documentary body of design, technology, and management," he said. "We need to make sure that we write about the diversity of individuals and companies that have made and continue to make theatre in this country and throughout the world."

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Scene Commission Seeks 2016 Poster Submissions

Brian Ruggaber *Scene Design & Technology Commission*



2015 Scene Design poster session displays

Photo / Tom Thatcher

Get ready to submit ideas for *I'll Show You Mine if You'll Show Me Yours*, the Scene Design & Technology Commission's poster session for 2016 Annual Conference & Stage Expo in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Submissions will be accepted through November 15.

The poster session is a way to become more active and involved in USITT and an excellent opportunity for seasoned professionals to share expertise. Academics can use the juried exhibit to help polish tenure files.

The adjudicators are looking for innovative solutions to scene design problems, the crafting of exciting props, the creation of new paint techniques, pioneering and exciting teaching methods, unusual and interesting ways to use products, and the application of old technologies to solve new problems or new techniques to solve old problems.

Submissions for the poster session can be made here. An abstract of 200 words

or less detailing the project and a short bio is required. One additional visual element may be submitted. Acceptable file formats include pdf, and jpg for the additional element, with files up to 18 by 20 inches at 200 DPI in PDF format. Do not include personal information in abstract or file names to ensure anonymity during the blind jury process.

Questions should be submitted to the session chair, Brian Ruggaber, at ruggaberdesign@gmail.com.

USITT members who are selected will receive a presenter ribbon on their conference badges and may fulfill a member's need to present at a conference to receive travel funds. Following the session, posters will remain on display throughout the conference and some outstanding posters may be published in *TD&T*.

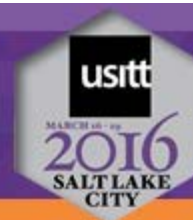
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Stage|Set|Scenery a Diverse Experience

 Randy Earle *International Committee*


David Grindle, Executive Director, at the USITT Stand.

Photos/Randy Earle

The Messe Berlin Exhibition Grounds partnered with Deutsche Theater-technische Gesellschaft (DTHG) June 9 to 11 for the biennial trade fair and congress, Stage|Set|Scenery. This represents a change for DTHG and a focus that is no longer just products but also projects. Four large halls were filled with 270 exhibitors, and more than 6,000 individuals attended.

USITT was well represented by Executive Director David Grindle, Greg Cook, Randy Earle, Marketa Fantova, Fred Foster, Daniel



Fred Foster from ETC.

Lisowski, Martin Moore, Michael Ramsaur, Kevin Rigdon, and Jenny Yeung, among others. Josafath Reynoso and Dan Lisowski, USITT award winners, presented sessions.

The International Stage Technology Conference included symposia on theatres and cultural spaces in urban centers, and their continuous metamorphosis and cultural adaptation in the 21st century.

OISTAT sponsored an architectural competition for design of a floating theatre on Berlin's river Spree. Two Canadian artists, Erin Fleck and Sebastian Bartnicki, shared the first prize of 5,000 Euros for their simple, creative, and elegant solution for the project. Mr. Grindle co-presented the award and sang a duet with Julia Hillens. For a complete list of submitted entries, go to www.oistat.org and click on 2015 TAC Digital Catalogue.

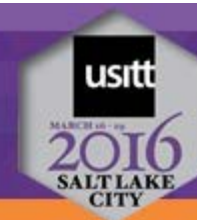
The Architecture Commission also conducted a business meeting on Wednesday and discussed plans for future meetings and locations. Reinhold Daberto led a small group walking around Berlin to visit various venues including Fredrichstadt Palast, Deutsches Theater, Berliner Ensemble and the massive new production workshops for Berlin's three major opera companies and two large theatre companies where all scenic, property and costume elements are constructed in a collaborative, joint facility.



Kevin Rigdon takes a turn sharing information about USITT.

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Learning from the Pros: My Elite Training Experience

Alexa Santiago *USITT 2015 Elite Training Class*



The Beatles LOVE

Earlier this year, I applied to the USITT Elite Training Program, designed for students and early career members who go to Las Vegas and learn from professionals, including Cirque du Soleil staff and related companies. I was accepted into the stage management track, one of five offered. Since I recently completed my second year as a BFA stage management major at The Theatre School at DePaul University, I was extremely excited to experience these three days of intensive training.

That first morning I could feel the excitement in the bus when we saw the Cirque du Soleil sun logo on the front door. After a quick overview, the stage managers traveled to the Cirque du Soleil Resident Show Division offices, where we met our incredible trainer, Stacey Myers, general stage manager of *KA*. After

introductions we received information about various productions, as well as the many legal issues managers might face. In the time before lunch, our knowledge had been broadened tenfold.

After lunch, Ms. Myers surprised us with five other Cirque du Soleil stage managers to look over our resumes. Having the opportunity to speak with not one manager but six was more than any of us could imagine. We were given feedback on ways to style a resume, what people tend to look for, as well as how to create a resume tailored to a specific audience. The day ended with a networking event with all Elite students and trainers.

Our second day started with Ms. Myers and colleagues sharing how they manage a Cirque du Soleil and a backstage tour of *O*. Seeing how professionals make this aquatic masterpiece come to life every night took our collective breath away. At the end of the tour, four of the eight students stayed to watch the first performance. But the surprises continued. Before parting ways, we learned the company manager of *LOVE*, Kim Scott, had offered all the Elite Training students tickets to their second performance of the night. Our excitement soared as high as *Lucy in the Sky*.

On our final day we met two members of the *Zarkana* team: artistic director, Ann-Marie, and general stage manager, Nog. They explained their relationship and how they work together to bring this show to life, especially with the various language barriers. This was particularly helpful for me, since I was about to go to Prague to help stage manage the Prague Quadrennial and interact with an international audience.

Ms. Myers ended our time together by talking about how to become the greatest manager possible -- how to know about ourselves as people and discover our own style of working before beginning to manage others. We were then treated to a backstage tour of *Zumanity*. Afterward, I sat in the audience for a close-up look at the sensual side of Cirque du Soleil. Watching from the house, I felt all of the lessons I had learned in the past three days come into play, and I realized I was seeing the show in a completely different way. I was not only watching it as a spectator, but analyzing it as a manager.



Elite Training Students, from left, David Millard (Automation), Alexa Santiago (SM), and Gabrielle Bucci (SM).

That night, while saying our goodbyes and making plans to meet up at the Salt Lake City 2016 Conference & Stage Expo, we all agreed that we could not be more thankful to Cirque du Soleil and USITT for giving us three of the most unforgettable days of our lives.

Elite Training opened my eyes to various styles of management and presented me with new tools and techniques that I will implement in my future work, helping me in my journey to become the best manager I can be.

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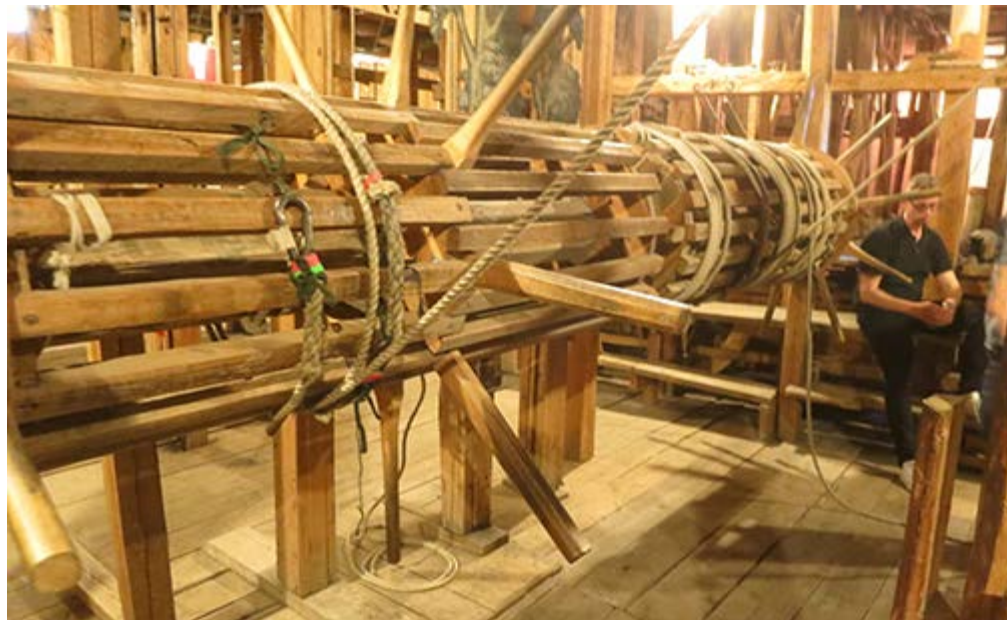
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OISTAT Technology Recap

 Fritz Schwentker *USITT OISTAT Representative*


The OISTAT Technology Commission (TC) met in Stockholm, Sweden from June 4 to 8, 2015. All USITT members are members of OISTAT and welcome to attend meetings like the Technology Commission and other commissions. A list of upcoming events can be found at www.oistat.org.

The Technology Commission was hosted by the Swedish Technical Theater Association, STTF. The event was extremely well planned, tightly packed with activities, and quite well attended. The almost 70 attendees from 20 countries included six USITT members.

Highlight of all three days were the tours which included:

- The Royal Opera House
- The Court Theatres at Drottningholm, Gripsholm, and Confidnzen - all with working baroque machinery
- The Stockholm Academy of Dramatic Arts.

For many attendees, the absolute best experience was the opportunity to interact with the vintage stage machinery at the Baroque Theatres.

The hosts and sponsors provided meals and experiences such as travel by boat to/from the court/castles and an evening meal at the Artipelag Art Museum. The generous sponsors all offered demonstrations and discussions of their services and products and included: Rexroth, NovoScen, Bright AC Technologies, ShowTex and VisualAct.

The Technical Commission business meeting on June 6 had 16 voting delegates in attendance. The highlights include –

- a report of upcoming PQ and World Stage Design activities in Taipei July 2017
- update on Digital Theatre Words progress (APP available at by searching OISTAT in the App Store or Android Play)
- Work on the International Standards and Regulations Project and Survey
- support for Cuban theatres affected by the destruction of recent hurricanes
- the Theater History working group Theatre Timeline project.

The discussion about historic theater machinery resulted in a formal resolution to provide a letter to the Bourla City Council in Antwerp, Belgium encouraging them to include preservation of the historic stage machinery as they contemplate a renovation of that city's historic theatre facility. A tentative announcement of the next meeting (date TBD) in St. Petersburg Russia was given.

The final day also included formal presentations at the Stockholm Academy of Dramatic Arts. These included –

- *Case Study of Chinese Stage Technology* by Ma Lu and Feng Qiyun (China)
- *Analysis of Current Situation and Prospect of Chinese Theatre* by Cao Lin (China)
- *The Possible uses of Baroque Theater Machinery* by Jérôme Maeckelbergh (Belgium)
- *Will you work safe?* by Chris Van Goethem (Belgium)
- *Event Safety Alliance* by Erich Friend (USA)
- *CEN/TC 433* (international technical standards) by Andreas Bickel (Germany)
- *Scenic stage, acting stage, orchestra pit and auditorium: a review of 20th century research and how these areas connect in European 18th century theatres* by Iain Mackintosh (UK)



Photos / Courtesy Fritz Schwentker

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The Last Word:

USITT and the Joys of Renovation



In a fog at the 2000 Annual Conference in Denver, Colorado -- Barbara E.R. Lucas, center, with Carol B. Carrigan, USITT's Director of Finance, and Michelle L. Smith, former Member Services Manager.

Photo/USITT Archive

How to say farewell?

I joined USITT more than 17 years ago. My elder son was almost a senior in high school, and a good friend was very positive when I asked whether I should apply for a job with the organization. It was the beginning of a rewarding journey.

Since then I have acquired a wealth of knowledge about entertainment design and technology, and amassed many, many good friends. I've added two daughters-in-law, two grandchildren, and a vintage Corvette to go with the vintage Thunderbird which was then (and still is) undergoing renovation.

Perhaps "undergoing renovation" is a good way to look at much of what has been accomplished during my time with this outstanding group.

For my first Conference registration deadline, the office staff stayed late to take all the call-in reservations making sure the fax machine was full of paper. Faxes would come in blank, and we'd diligently try to track down who sent them. Then,



Barbara E.R.
Lucas

as now, providing exceptional service to members was a priority -- one we did and continue to take very seriously.

That paper system, with the hours we all spent entering data, was soon updated, and then updated again, to ever more user-friendly online systems. It is evolving again this year into a rejuvenated website. The efforts to enhance communication and create a stronger community go on.

Celebrating the accomplishments of the organization -- sharing the stories of our multi-talented members -- has reached into new and different forums. I still hear that people miss the "paper" version of *Sightlines*, a publication I took over as editor in 2002, but I can't imagine having to wait literally weeks for that paper version to travel from our office across the nation and around the world. Now we "publish" online with only a second of delay between launch and availability.

We are constantly interacting with our 5,200+ Facebook friends, 2,200+ Twitter followers, 600+ Instagram followers, and 6,500+ LinkedIn group members. They bring us updates and connections worldwide.

During my tenure with the organization, I'm proud to have talked to thousands of them -- and their friends -- at meetings and Conferences and events. They have let me take their photos and helped me complete projects. They have answered my questions patiently and inventively. They have helped me renovate my thinking of what I see in the world around me and increased my enjoyment of my job and my life.

While I am sad to be leaving, I know that USITT's energetic volunteers, talented officers, and capable National Office staff are already figuring out new steps to keep the organization vital and evolving.

For me, the next steps will lead to accomplishing several personal projects which have long been deferred. After all, I can now read the wiring diagram that will convert that T-bird from a six- to a 12-volt electrical system.

Viva renovation!

Barbara E.R. Lucas, will retire as USITT's Director of Communication and editor of Sightlines on September 4. Until then, she can be reached at barbara@usitt.org or 315-728-2513.

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Verda Beth Martell Joins Board

We offer congratulations to Verda Beth Martell, who took office as a member of the Board of Directors on July 1. She is taking the place of a candidate who was elected but is unable to serve.

Visitors from California

It is always great when members stop to visit us. In mid-July we were delighted to give Jim Cooper, long-time Conference Committee member, and his wife Patricia a tour and a bit of conversation.

Jim and Patricia have recently retired and were on an extended road trip from coast to coast. We were glad to show off the National Office, and only wish their stay could have been longer. Central New York is a great place to visit, and we are always glad to see members.

Answering Questions

As editor of *Sightlines*, I've answered questions about events which took place long before I arrived, but now, as I contemplate departure, I am being asked about events which have not yet occurred. Does anyone offer training so that former editors can become psychics?

In Memoriam: Gretel Geist Rutledge

We note with sadness the death of Gretel Geist Rutledge, a USITT member

since 1976, who died in January in East Lansing, Michigan.

She was a costume designer and a professor in the theatre department of her alma mater, Michigan State University, for more than 30 years. She enjoyed fiber arts, print making, and silk painting. For information on contributions visit [Legacy.com](#).

Designing in Washington

The social sphere lit up when the White House turned into a rainbow following the announcement of the Supreme Court's decision on marriage equality.

Al Crawford, keynote speaker at ETC's CUE conference, mentioned that the rainbow colors on the White House were a Selador installation, and his company, arc3design, was involved in the installation. Nice work by all!

Jim Hutchison New Lighting Social Network 'Sheriff'

There's a new sheriff in town overseeing [ProLightingSpace.com](#), the social networking site run by PLSN parent company Timeless Communications. Jim Hutchison has taken over responsibility for the site from Nook Schoenfeld, who continues as editor of the industry-leading printed publication.

"Jim is known worldwide for dishing out the dirt, reporting on cool trends as well as events," Mr. Schoenfeld added. "His unique brand of writing is always entertaining, and when he's not working on his day job with Avolites, he can be seen chatting, and quite often ranting about the state of lighting these days."

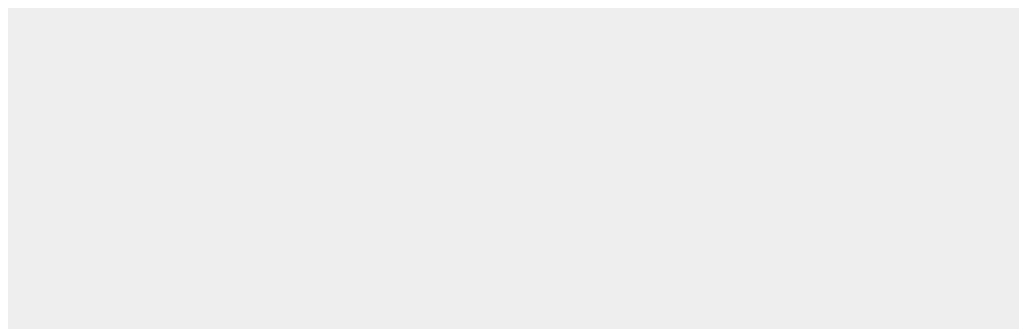
Mr. Hutchison, known by many for his lighting industry website [JimOnLight.com](#), joined Avolites recently. Before that, he held key communications gigs with such companies as Chauvet Professional and CAST Software while also developing [www.JimOnLight.com](#), which he founded in 2007.

"Oh, I'm thrilled to get started on ProLightingSpace," Mr. Hutchison quipped.

"We're gonna be talking light several times a week on the site, and getting an industry-wide chat going about what is up and how we feel in the business. I know that everybody's gonna check it out!"

An Introduction to Salt Lake Attractions

Wonder what Salt lake City has in store? [Here's a fast look at its nine top-rated attractions.](#)





Temple Square

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- **Meyer Sound:** Essential to Grateful Dead's Success, 'Fare Thee Well' Tour
- **ETC:** Celebrates Most Successful CUE Conference
- **Philips Entertainment:** Sponsors Educational Outreach with UNLV

Wenger Corporation: Focuses Acoustical Expertise, Targets Innovation

To leverage its unmatched history of acoustical experience with performing arts facilities worldwide and to accelerate new product innovation, **Wenger Corporation** has instituted a new organizational focus designed to provide customers with leading-edge acoustical solutions.

This initiative will be spearheaded by Ron Freiheit, director of product development and acoustics, who is a Fellow of the Acoustical Society of America and an internationally respected researcher and lecturer on acoustical topics. He holds a U.S. Patent related to virtual acoustic technology.

Mr. Freiheit will lead Wenger's team of product engineers and technicians as a key industry resource to assist consultants, architects, and facility owners. Recent acoustical innovations from Wenger include the Transcend Active Acoustic System using digital signal processing technology to make performance spaces more multi-purpose. Also launched in 2015, Transform Motorized Acoustical Banners provide affordable variable acoustics. These new solutions complement established products like the Diva Acoustical Shell and VAE@technology, an industry first, that redefines any rehearsal space.

"We've elevated our commitment to serve the acoustic needs of the performing arts market, building on our company's accomplishments in this segment," said Chris Simpson, president and CEO. "By leveraging our expertise and experience with both Wenger and J.R. Clancy solutions, we can better provide facilities worldwide with the industry's largest breadth of custom capabilities and specialized products."

Rose Brand Inc.: Rivet to Represent Hardware, Rigging

Line

After over 645 entries in its mascot naming contest, **Rose Brand Inc.** chose Rivet as the mascot for the its hardware and rigging line. The winning entry was submitted by Joe Dugan from Multi Image Group. Mr. Dugan won a \$500 Rose Brand credit.



Names were judged on creativity, appropriateness, and relevance to the business. Since the company uses rivets in its custom sewn productions, Rivet is fitting for the frog that represents the brand.

Many of the submissions came with memories about Rose Brand and customers' experiences with its products. The most submitted name with all its variations was Rigit, with a total of 130 entries. Other popular submissions were forms of Rosie, Gripper, and Crosby. Some other contenders deserving honorable mentions are Rosie the Rigger, Rigger Morris, Rigger Tony, Sir Leaps a Lot, and Handsome George.

For more information about products and services offered by Rose Brand, visit www.rosebrand.com.

Meyer Sound: Essential to Grateful Dead's Success, 'Fare Thee Well' Tour

Fifty years after forming their band at a Palo Alto music store, the surviving founders of the Grateful Dead kicked off their end-of-an-era "Fare Thee Well" mini-tour at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California with a **Meyer Sound LEO** linear large-scale sound reinforcement system driving a quadraphonic surround setup.

The two Silicon Valley shows were a landmark occasion with more than the 60,000 devoted Deadheads attending each evening. It also was a milestone in the band's decades-long association with Meyer Sound CEO John Meyer, a relationship spawned from a shared passion for audio experimentation and audience experience. The Grateful Dead's original sound engineer, Owsley "Bear" Stanley, first tapped Mr. Meyer to create acoustic solutions for the legendary "Wall of Sound" system in the 1970s.

The Meyer Sound LEO system with its accompanying 1100-LFC low-frequency control element delivered an immersive fan experience in the large football stadium and supported an experimental segment devised by drummer/percussionist Mickey Hart. Using the Meyer Sound system to transmit ultra-low frequencies in surround sound, Hart probed how the brain perceived audible and below-audible rhythms.

"John Meyer's 1100-LFC loudspeakers empower the rhythmic voice and enable percussionists to manifest new ideas," said Mickey Hart. "They are sonic tools

for reliably transmitting vibrations that affect neurologic function in a special way we are only beginning to understand, enabling us to explore healing properties embedded in low-frequency sound—a dream come true for us all."

Mr. Meyer's work with the Grateful Dead extends to the mid-1970s when the band's concerts were heard through McCune Sound Service's JM-10 systems designed by Meyer. The relationship continued through the band's last tour with Jerry Garcia in 1995, supported by Meyer Sound MSL-10 loudspeakers. Meyer Sound systems have been a staple for tours of reunion and spin-off bands during the interim, including the 2005 and 2009 tours equipped with a Meyer Sound MILO system when the core members were known as The Dead. In 2011, the band's Bob Weir installed a Meyer Sound Constellation acoustic system in his Tamalpais Research Institute (TRI).



ETC: Celebrates Most Successful CUE Conference

From Friday, June 26 through Sunday, June 28 more than 200 people from around the world joined **ETC** at CUE in Madison, Wisconsin, for lighting education, console training and certification, networking and special events.

The event kicked off with a keynote address by CEO Fred Foster about the growth of ETC over the last four decades and the company's focus on customer service and product innovation. Mr. Foster also unveiled new products, including the affordable ColorSource Spot profile LED luminaire and console programming wings that officially debuted in July.

Josh Allen, award-winning lighting designer from Theatre Consultants Collaborative, and Al Crawford, lighting director for the Alvin Ailey American Dance Company and CEO of arc3design, also spoke. Mr. Allen



covered the history of electricity in an entertaining and enlightening presentation that featured influences from pop culture, on-the-street interviews, and little-known conspiracy theories. Mr. Crawford talked about his time touring with the iconic Alvin Ailey troupe, and how he and his tech crew have worked in a constantly changing array of theaters in many different countries.

Both Mr. Allen and Mr. Crawford taught master classes. Mr. Allen partnered with GDS by ETC Product Manager Chris Patten to discuss easy ways to upgrade a theater with modern products like LED houselights. Mr. Crawford's master class touched on lighting for nontraditional installations. To demonstrate the possibilities, Mr. Crawford used images from some of the projects arc3design has designed, including corporate events, weddings, and building exteriors.

Emmy Award-winning lighting designer Patrick Boozer's class covered using the ETC Eos console for live music events. Packed with footage from concerts, the class gave practical advice on busking, device management, and other console features crucial to effective live-music lighting.

ETC and media partner LSA expanded the reach of the CUE conference by live-streaming several of the sessions, including the three keynote addresses and Crawford and Boozer's master classes. Hundreds of people around the globe tuned in to watch, and the sessions are now available at www.etconnect.com/CUE/archived-videos.

ETC's next CUE conference will take place in 2017. Information about other ETC training opportunities is available at www.etconnect.com/Support/Training-Events.



Philips Entertainment: Sponsors Educational Outreach with UNLV

Philips Entertainment chose the University of Nevada Las Vegas as a partner in its Educational Outreach and Sponsorship Program. As part of the sponsorship, Philips Entertainment has donated Philips Vari-Lite VL3015 Spot, VLX Wash and VL770 Spot luminaires along with Showline SL NITRO 510 LED strobe luminaires and a Philips Strand Lighting NEO lighting control console to UNLV for use in its educational programs and theatrical productions.

"We've dealt with Philips Vari-Lite and Philips Strand Lighting several times in the past so when we were approached about the sponsorship program, we jumped at the opportunity to participate," said Brackley Frayer, chair and executive director of the UNLV Department of Theatre and the Nevada Conservatory Theatre. "This sponsorship truly means a lot to us, but it's not only about the gear; it's also about the support it will provide to our educational programs. We are very excited about new relationship we will have with Philips Entertainment which will be essential to the educational and professional growth of our theatre students."

"The Philips Entertainment sponsorship program is a fantastic way for us to nurture the next generation of lighting designers and technicians," said Julie Smith, Philips Entertainment general manager of the Americas. "UNLV has a wonderful program with a tremendous professional theatre company that challenges the student designers to reach new heights of creativity."

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News From **Mark Shanda**, *USITT President* Opportunities Are All Around



An extra set of hands can make theatre jobs easier.

For many, August is the start of the production season. In higher education, faculty mourn the loss of last spring's graduates (now competing for regional theatre jobs or starting graduate school) and anxiously welcome freshmen to campus.

The typical freshman class includes many enthusiastic potential theatre majors still basking in the glow of their senior class play or musical. Each arrives on campus nervous about how to get engaged with a completely foreign group of theatre practitioners. Most fear not fitting in, but some fear pursuing their passion, hearing voices in the back of their heads asking, "You are going to major in *what?*"

The entertainment industry is both exclusive and inclusive at the same time. A typical show has only one stage manager. Only one Anne Frank can be cast in the production of her diary. Many an Anne want-to-be has been rejected and former outstanding stage managers from high school likely have to wait their turn.

By the same token, productions can almost always find a place for an interested student to work on a build, run crew for a show, work in the box office, or even usher. Production support roles are elastic in the numbers who can get involved.

We used to joke about our standard for backstage participation in a campus production. "Can the student stand erect and fog a mirror? If necessary, we can waive one of those requirements."

I'm not undervaluing the advantages of a skilled technical labor force to support a production; I'm just emphasizing other two considerations as the production season begins.

Everyone has to start a career in theatre somewhere, so remember to welcome one and all to this marvelous industry. Help them take pride in their work, so that they get hooked on the natural high that our productions bring.

I well remember the pride I felt in showing my parents the plywood bookcase back I had cut out for a production of Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* That was my first collegiate theatre technology experience and one that I won't forget!

Also, don't forget members of the Institute's partnership with IATSE, LORT, and CTE educators in developing the Essential Skills for Entertainment Technicians (eSET) program which by its very definition will catalog skill sets to assess individual competency in such areas as rigging, lighting and electrics, costumes, and health and safety.

Watch for details in the coming months as the eSET council works to establish materials for young professionals who will be able to strengthen their resumes by citing their eSET qualifications, and provide employers tools to assess potential employees' basic skills and knowledge.

There is indeed a place for everyone, but the more skilled we become the better our industry.

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

Please e-mail Mark at Shanda.1@osu.edu.



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iWeiss: David Rosenberg to Retire

After celebrating 30 years at the helm of **iWeiss** this year, CEO David Rosenberg will retire.

Mr. Rosenberg joined iWeiss after working as a carpenter, electrician, and stage manager. He was responsible for bringing the company back to the forefront of the Broadway world as well as resuming the company's work in theatrical rigging and theatre restoration. Though he is retired, he will remain on as a consultant to the company working with Jennifer Tankleff and Richard Parks as they lead the company into the next phase in its future.



"It is extremely gratifying and comforting to me to see the company under the very capable leadership of Jennifer and Richard," Mr. Rosenberg said. "They have shown – in their combined 30 plus years with the company – that they have the knowledge and drive to maintain the values and integrity of the company while moving it ever forward."

RC4: Dimmers Illuminate *20th Century*

Big musical numbers, whimsical props, flashy dance sequences are key parts of any Broadway musical, and the Roundabout Theatre Company's production of *On The Twentieth Century* delivers them. From the moment the immaculately detailed show curtain goes up, **RC4** Magic Series 3 Wireless DMX and Dimming

takes center stage, supporting a Tony Award winning production.

"Almost every piece of scenery in this show uses wireless dimming, along with several props, most of which have multiple fixtures requiring wireless dimming. And the show's main scenic element is a life-sized train automated on a free spinning turtle. This turtle transports the train up and downstage as well as left to right. The train contains over 50 individual lighting fixtures, and we certainly cannot have cables following it," explained Brian Maiuri, house head and production electrician.

Small size is something RC4Wireless has been skillfully addressing for more than 20 years.

Since its debut last October, the RC4Magic Series 3 system has taken the world by storm, appearing in four new Broadway productions as well as garnering the PLASA Award For Innovation and an Honorable Mention at the LDI new product awards.

Chauvet: Lights Recital Hall for Theatrical Experiment

Just as the Stephen Sondheim production *Company* won widespread acclaim when it debuted in 1970 for its departure from the traditional "linear storyline" that characterized musicals of its era, lighting designer William Kenyon thought outside the box when he illuminated the classic at Bucknell University's Natalie Davis Rooke Recital Hall. Mr. Kenyon, USITT's Education Commissioner, is from nearby Penn State.

Being designed primarily for recitals, Rooke Hall presented challenges that Mr. Kenyon met with **Chauvet** Professional COLORado 1-Quad Tour LED fixtures provided by 4Wall Entertainment.

"My design plans definitely had to account for factors that you don't normally find in a typical theatre," said Mr. Kenyon.

A collection of ten COLORado 1-Quad Tour fixtures helped him address his power draw issue while still providing a vast and vivid palette of colors for the production. In addition to the eight COLORados projecting light diagonally over the stage, Mr. Kenyon used two more of the Chauvet LED pars as cross-light washes to tone the band, which were positioned up center through a set of doors in the back wall where a piano normally is stored.

Like all successful projects, this one was the result of a team effort, said Mr. Kenyon, who thanked director Emily Martin-Moberley of the Bucknell faculty, Katie Kudrick of 4Wall Entertainment's Washington, D.C. office, Kalen Sowul from the Weis Center at Bucknell, and Heath Hansum at the Bucknell Theatre program.



Irwin Seating Company: New President, CEO Fourth Generation Leader

Graham Irwin has been named president and CEO of **Irwin Seating Company**, the 107-year-old, family-owned business. Earle S. (Win) Irwin will remain active as chairman of the board of directors.

Graham Irwin has assumed the day-to-day operating responsibilities for the company while working with the board of directors and executive team to explore new opportunities for continued growth.

"After more than 30 years as president, CEO, and chairman of the board, it is time to begin transitioning leadership to the next generation," said Win Irwin. "For a number of years, we have been working to ensure a smooth transition. Graham has the experience, energy and necessary skills to lead this company to continued success."



Graham Irwin

Graham Irwin began with Irwin Seating as an upholstery line worker in 1995. After earning an engineering degree from Vanderbilt University in 1998, he was a mechanical design engineer for EnviroDesign, Inc., then was a manufacturing engineer and production manager with Spectra Logic Corporation before returning to Irwin Seating in 2006 as a product development engineer. Since then, his leadership responsibilities have steadily increased as he worked his way to senior vice president of product and business development and a member of the board of directors.

He has an MBA from the Daniels College of Business at the University of Denver. He is also member of the Family Business Alliance – an organization committed to helping West Michigan family businesses succeed from generation to generation.

Graham Irwin is the fourth generation of the Irwin family to lead the company. Current CEO Earle S. (Win) Irwin took over leadership of the company in 1984 from his father, William Irwin, who had led the company since the end of World War II. The first Irwin to lead the company was Earle



Win Irwin

S. Irwin, one of three Irwin brothers who helped found the company more than 100 years ago. Three of Win and Kyle Irwin's five sons currently work for the company: Graham; Colin (Coke) Irwin, director of sales; and Andrew Irwin, continuous improvement manager.

For more information on Irwin Seating Company, visit

www.irwinseating.com



Coke, Graham and Andrew Irwin

Theatre Projects Consulting: Introduces New Paris Studio

Stop by to say "bonjour" any time at **Theatre Projects Consulting's** the new studio in Marais, at the heart of Paris.

The studio will be a second European base for planning, design, and equipment services, and it will be home to TPC's acoustical services. The studio is in Hôtel de Retz, 9 rue Charlot, 75003 Paris; +33 142 779 332; fr@theatreprojects.com.

The team is led by Seb Jouan, from AECOM and Arup, and senior acoustician, Victoria Chavez Thielemann, formerly of Xu Acoustique.

Stagecraft Institute of Las Vegas's (SILV): Blitz Trip Tours Ship, Resort

A 24-hour bus trip that included a full venue tour of the Carnival Cruise Lines' *The Miracle* and a fast-paced tour of Disneyland Resort was a new addition to **Stagecraft Institute of Las Vegas's (SILV)** 9th season.

The opportunity to experience venues not available in Las Vegas was a challenge. Participants showed that techs make attentive and appreciative audiences members, too.

Jerry Tomlinson, technical services entertainment manager at the Disneyland Resort, said, "It was absolutely my honor and pleasure to have been given the opportunity to expose your students to our backstage magic. They were one of the most attentive groups and asked some of the most intelligent questions."

GLP: X4 Bars Land at the Allianz Arena

Munich Allianz Arena hosted one of the largest corporate events that the impressive stadium, situated in the north of the Bavarian capital, is likely to have seen in its 10-year history. Creative Director Markus Katterle and Lighting Designer Jens Hillenkötter, of **Flash Art** and **Exponauts**, put together an extraordinary event including 16 brand new **impression X4 Bars** from **GLP**.

The 16 these battens included integrated tilt and zoom features. To run the lighting at the Allianz Arena, there were two Hog 4 consoles at FOH with four DP 8000 Extensions and two Rock Solid Technologies RockSwitch MK2.



Alcons: Sentinel Keeps Eye on Systems

The remarkable audio quality of **Alcons'** pro-ribbon technology is making significant inroads in the professional sound reinforcement market. But in order to get the very best from their systems, every component of the signal chain has to consistently deliver. With this in mind, Alcons developed Sentinel, a range of amplified loudspeaker controllers that precisely match the requirements of its loudspeakers.

Alcons engineers did thorough, calibrated 1:1 listening tests between the company's current ALC series amplified loudspeaker controllers and the products from various leading amplifier brands in developing the system. The Sentinel features 4-in/4-out input matrix routing, with internal 96kHz sampling rate.

Due to the custom-designed sample-rate conversion, Sentinel accepts any signal between 44.1 up to 192kHz digital AES3 format.

The future-upgradable powerful DSP engine enables minimal latency during processing of even the most complex (IIR, FIR) algorithms. The "linear" preset

enables the Sentinel to be used with third-party speakers, while maintaining full DSP functionality.

For more information, visit www.alcons.audio



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Spotlight on Giving

Emily Gill *costume designer and former member of the USITT Board of Directors*

As an artist and educator of artists, life-long learning is close to my heart. I am a regular donor to USITT because I feel that it is the most effective organization that enables the greater Design and Technology community to connect, share and learn.



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News From **David Grindle**, *USITT Executive Director* **The Learning Never Stops**



There are always new ways to look at and learn from colleagues, like Projection Designer Wendall Harrington.

School is starting. Let the learning commence!

August is when many schools return to class, and we often associate school with learning. Once school is done, no more learning, and I can go on with life.

I remember those thoughts, yet the hard fact is that learning never ends. The world changes, we change, opportunities come, and all of that means learning new things. That's why we have USITT. We get to work in a world that has new challenges and opportunities, and with that comes the need to learn. In 2016 there are going to be even more opportunities for learning, and the membership should be keeping an eye out for these.

eSET (Essential Skills for Entertainment Technicians) continues to develop its first round of qualifications. The working groups have submitted materials to the council, and the council is providing feedback to the working groups. Later this year, we will have information for comment, and the program will be set to launch in 2016. This is a world-wide initiative. Similar programs are being launched in Europe (the Erasmus Project) and in New Zealand (Entertainment & Event Qualifications). Each of these initiatives are supporting one another but not copying one another. The point is that entry level qualifications are equally important to certification at the higher levels.

The Jay Glerum Rigging Master Class will also launch in 2016. This class will have both an entry level basic rigging component for students and educators, and an advanced component for professional riggers. By offering both aspects of rigging education, we show our commitment to safety at all levels and honor the memory of someone who was dedicated to educating everyone at all levels. The details on this workshop will be announced in the fall.

These are but two examples of the continuing education USITT is developing for people “in school” and “out of school.” There are programs for designers in the works as well, just not far enough along to release information.

We may not call ourselves students, but we should always call ourselves learners. Learners show a natural curiosity to discover new things and reexamine what we already know. Those are the people who innovate and move our industry and the whole world forward. Those are the people who move USITT forward, and I thank you for being one of them.

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