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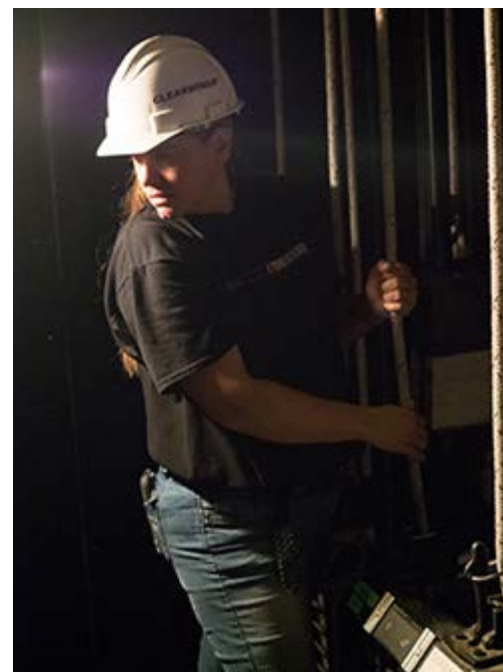
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Member Spotlight: Jill Maurer

Q&A with Clearwing's Jill Maurer

How did you get interested in technical theatre? What came first, being a techie or being a theatre person?

I wish it was a more professional story but my interest in theatre started because I was trying to impress a boy in high school. But by senior year my best friend, Colleen, and I ran the place. The last musical had us directing, stage managing, tech directing, sewing costumes and running backstage. I never wanted to be in front of the curtain and frankly have a horrible poker face so I can't imagine pulling off acting.



What did you study in college and what were your goals?

I attended the University of Delaware and earned a BA in Technical Theatre and English with a minor in History. I started out thinking I was going to teach English but after the first education class, I knew it wasn't for me. I think the only goal I had at the time was to work in every theatre in every aspect that I could which was a great experience and a huge benefit.

You have worked in lighting, AV and rigging – do you have a favorite discipline?

My strengths lie with lighting and rigging even though I have a CTS from InfoComm. I enjoy the nuts and bolts of the systems. The white board in my office is usually covered with lighting network one line diagrams or mounting details for specific equipment attaching to odd structures.

Please describe your job and what you like about it:

Well, my title is Systems Design Engineer which means that I visit facilities, talk to their staff and volunteers, determine what they need and then figure out how to deliver that solution in their timeframe and budget. I enjoy learning about my clients and how we can help them reach their goals. Of course, that means

knowing all the parts and pieces needed to create that solution including how to educate the client, draft the systems, inform the installers, run a jobsite and so much more.

How did you get involved in USITT?

I was introduced to USITT during my last year at Delaware. I had not heard of the Institute until Eileen Smitheimer told me I was going to Pittsburgh with the graduate students. I don't even remember having an option of attending, and if you know Eileen from the Sound Commission, you know what I mean. It was that conference in 1997 that truly opened my eyes to the varied and vast industry we call theatrical production. It was there that I learned about extensive options open to people who understand theatre, production, and event management.

How did you come to pursue ETCP Certification?

ETCP Certification became important to me while working as a consultant at Westlake Reed Leskosky. We decided, as consultants, that we should require in our specifications that the lead rigging installers be certified. Well, it seemed hypocritical to me to make that requirement without being certified myself so I took and passed the exam.

You have helped train high school theatre students via the Rigging Safety Initiative. What are the biggest concerns with safety at this level?

First, I must say that I love to visit high schools and talk to them about our industry. Having never had exposure to outside professionals while I was in high school compels me to educate possible technicians about how they could work and live in our industry. I am concerned about the high school teacher who doesn't know about technical elements. Too often teachers were educated in acting and directing and are winging the technical design and production elements, including the rigging.

Please tell us why you and Clearwing support this program?

Clearwing prides itself on being a resource for our industry. We offer free training series events, vendor showcases, and public equipment demonstrations. The Rigging Safety Initiative is a natural extension of Clearwing's education focus.

As a woman in the technical field, have you ever felt your gender was a disadvantage?

Gender is only a disadvantage if you allow it to be. When I encounter people who don't take me seriously due to my gender, or my age earlier in my career, I simply prove them wrong. It isn't difficult to be the most prepared in a meeting or the most knowledgeable on a jobsite; it just takes hard work and research. Stand up straight, throw your shoulders back and show them that you belong in that meeting, position, construction hard hat, speaking opportunity, etc.

What advice would you give young people considering careers in theatre technology?

Work hard and I mean 60-70 hours a week hard. Read all sorts of articles and books. Always listen more than you speak and maintain a great attitude. Be on time, be prepared with tools, and ask questions when you don't know or understand something. And of course, get involved in your local USITT section.

Suggest a USITT Member for the Spotlight!

If you know of USITT members whose work should be in the **Spotlight**, please feel free to suggest them. Contact Lynne Dundas at lynne@usitt.org.

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News & Notices

Innovation Grants

The USITT Board of Directors is excited to announce more details about the Innovation Grants program that was approved by the Board last year. The Innovation Grants are a commitment from USITT to invest in research that will move our industry forward. The Board has approved three grant cycles with each cycle offering up to \$110,000 of research funding to explore ideas that will adapt current technology for entertainment use or will create new technology for our industry.



The call is an open one, and while USITT members and member companies have preference, we want to fund the most promising ideas for innovation from across the nation. Partnerships are welcome to apply and corporate/academic partnerships are encouraged.

Applications open on April 17 and are due June 15. Winning projects will be announced in August.

USITT was founded 57 years ago as a place for the exchange of knowledge. Today we are growing as the place for quality, affordable education and training. The Innovation Grants program is a connection to our past while remaining focused on our future. Investing in the entertainment design and technology community today for tomorrow is how USITT continues to show its support for people at all points in our industry.

Please help us share the word of the Innovation Grants Program. Think big and see if you have an idea that will receive funding. For more details and application information visit <http://www.usitt.org/innovationgrant/>.

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USITT & ESTA Introduce INNOVA

Who has time to leave a show for continuing education? But who can afford not to keep up their skills?

Lost time, lost wages, and the expense of travel make it a challenge for people. USITT continues to strive to provide education and training opportunities throughout the year and across the nation, but time is always a factor. It's a big country, and getting education everywhere, to everyone, at all skill levels has proven a challenge.

At the Annual Conference in St. Louis, USITT was excited to announce a new partnership with ESTA to bring INNOVA, Online Learning for Professionals in Entertainment Design & Technology, to the industry.

INNOVA is a platform that will give you access to on-demand classes created by experts, vetted by experts, and delivered via a platform that meets standards for continuing education credits for certification renewals. With INNOVA, you will be able to purchase courses, view them on your schedule, and receive certificates of credit for certification renewal, or to submit to your employer for proof of continuing education.

INNOVA will offer courses at all skill levels, entry through advanced. In addition, we are working on providing short, free, "quick fire" courses that cover things like resume writing, interview skills, and basic technical standards in our industry.

The catalog for INNOVA will grow. At the time of its April launch, there will be 10-12 courses across disciplines. That catalog will grow quarterly as new courses are developed by professionals and evaluated by the review committees.

INNOVA is an exciting new partnership redefining education for our industry and showing how our two industry non-profits can work together to bring high quality learning at affordable prices for our entire industry.

Keep an eye out for the email notification launching INNOVA later this month. If you want to be first to receive notice, send an email to innova@usitt.org and we will make sure you are included in the announcement.

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Regional Section Agreements

Mark Shanda & David Grindle

USITT is happy to announce that after more than a year of working with the leadership of our Regional Sections, we are close to finalizing Affiliate or Licensing Agreements with each of them. Why is this important?

As USITT has changed over the years, so has the law. Our legal counsel, in a general review of

operations, noted almost three years ago that we needed to develop a legal agreement between the National organization and the sections. USITT sections go back almost to the founding of the Institute and have been and remain a vital part of our organization. Currently legal minds believe that if there is an affiliate organization using the name of a larger national organization, there must be a formal agreement between the two.

In an effort to accommodate the needs of our sections, USITT worked with our legal counsel to develop two agreements known as the Affiliate Agreement and the Licensing Agreement. Both Agreements have in common the biggest requirement, that anyone using the name USITT use it for the tax-exempt purposes that USITT was founded on. This was the largest legal issue. Both Agreements allow the sections to use USITT logos and name in marketing; again, something that has been going on for a long time, but legally protected by a formal agreement.

The Licensing Agreement stops there. It was designed for our sections that have a large structure and the ability to handle the financial and paperwork challenges of a non-profit organization. The Affiliate Agreement goes further and benefits our small sections.

In addition to the legal issues, the Affiliate Agreement allows those sections the ability to fall under the umbrella of USITT's charitable status. This allows them to receive tax deductible donations for their section. Gifts can be made to the section or through the USITT National Office. Affiliates also receive liability insurance in a group policy which makes it much more affordable than purchasing it on their own.



Finally, if an affiliate section wishes, USITT National can file the section's annual tax return on their behalf. This isn't a requirement, but an option.

All sections must provide proof each year that they have filed their tax return, which for most is a simple online filing. With that proof we then know that everyone is in good standing with the IRS.

As USITT grows we become, by our very growth, a more complex organization legally. Much appreciation is owed to the leadership of the various sections for their work in aligning bylaws, sheparding agreements, and helping us all stay abreast of the legal issues.

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News & Notices

Arbor Day is #RigSafe Day

David Grindle

Arbor Day is April 28. This is the fifth year that USITT has celebrated Arbor Day as a day of Rigging Safety Awareness.

Rigging Safety is something that we must be concerned with every day. Whether you are an ETCP certified rigger or walking on a stage for the first time, the safety of the world

around you, and in particular rigging, is something that we must all think of. Stage Rigging often goes unseen and the adage "out of sight out of mind" becomes more and more true.

USITT's Rigging Safety Initiative (The RSI) has helped almost 200 secondary schools get inspections and training that has improved safety for thousands of students and staff. The RSI grants have kick started annual safety inspections in some schools that had not thought about that aspect of safety and are now aware. It has improved the knowledge of the staff that manage the auditoriums, theatres, and performance spaces when those staff may have never had any training in the past. In short the RSI Grant program is one way USITT is helping establish a culture of safety for our secondary schools.

The Rigging Safety Initiative is supported by generous donors to the Rigging Safety Fund. One hundred percent of each donation goes to support the inspections offered to our grant recipients. If you want to support Arbor Day with a one-time gift to the RSI, please do. If you want to make a small, recurring donation each month that adds up over the year, that is also appreciated. Each \$1,250 raised supports an inspection and training at a school. The bigger the fund, the more schools we can support. We appreciate all our Rigging Safety donors and hope you will take a moment to become one. [To donate, click here.](#)

Arbor Day is a day for all of us to celebrate safety and training for everyone in the industry. From the school or community theatre to the touring shows and spectacles, rigging safety is taken seriously by everyone in our industry. Use Arbor Day to thank a rigger, to celebrate safe practices, or to promote a renewed commitment to safety.



#RigSafe every day, but join in with USITT and our partners around the world to help celebrate Arbor Day on social media and online. Help us celebrate and promote safety in our industry every day, but especially on Friday, April 28. Let the world know you #RigSafe.

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Jay O. Glerum Masterclasses

USITT's Glerum Masterclasses will take place this summer. The Masterclasses honor the memory of one of our industry's greatest advocates for safety and training, Jay O. Glerum.

These masterclasses have two tracks of learning, advanced and entry level.

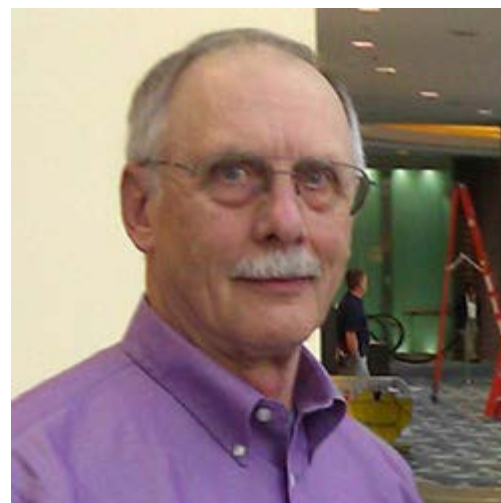
The entry level track, taking place in Atlanta [June 13-14](#) is geared towards students and educators and includes both counterweight and automated rigging safety and operations.

Both entry level and advanced tracks will be offered [August 14-15](#) at Hartford Stage in Hartford, CT. The advanced class will be taught for ETCP renewal credit and includes training on the latest innovations in rigging as well as advanced safety such as life rescue and other topics.

[Register here.](#)

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The Designs of Santo Loquasto Book Signing at Drama Book Shop

Event date:

Thursday, April 27, 2017 - 5:00 p.m.

Event address:

The Drama Book Shop
250 West 40th Street
New York, NY 10018

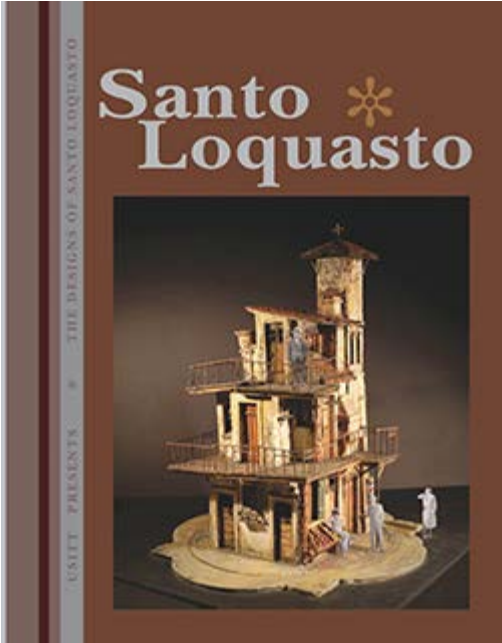
Join us at Drama Book Shop for a discussion with Santo Loquasto and author Arnold Wengrow.

The Designs of Santo Loquasto is the eleventh book in USITT's series documenting the work of America's best theatrical designers. It is profusely illustrated with almost 100 exquisite renderings, models, and production photographs and it includes a complete design chronology, as well as a listing of Mr. Loquasto's awards and honors. *The Designs of Santo Loquasto* chronicles his work, his collaborations, and his creative process.

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Volunteer Opportunities

Design Expo Opportunity

Members are invited to apply for the position of Design Expo/Cover the Walls Coordinator for USITT 2019. This person will work with staff to coordinate submission, judging, and operation of Design Expo (held in even numbered years) as well as submissions and operations for Cover the Walls (held in odd numbered years).

This position has support from the National Office staff. Applicants should be members in good standing with an interest in design.

If you are interested in applying, please submit a letter of interest briefly detailing your time in the Institute and your experience with design to Vice-President for Special Exhibits, [Eric Rouse](#). Applications are due no later than May 15.

2019 Prague Quadrennial Technical Director & Host

USITT's International Committee seeks a volunteer Technical Director and host school to produce the USITT exhibits for the Prague Quadrennial in 2019. This is a unique opportunity to involve students and universities in an internationally acclaimed theatre event. The Technical Director is charged with constructing the three displays sponsored by USITT to represent American theatre design in the National, Student, and Architecture Exhibits at PQ and beyond. The host has typically been a university or college theatre department with enough time, space, and labor to build the exhibits. USITT provides the funds for materials, shipping, storage, installation, dismantling, and disposal of the exhibits. The Technical Director must be employed at the host institution. Construction would take place between summer 2018 and spring 2019, and the Quadrennial is held in June 2019. Remuneration is made in the way of travel and housing support for two faculty and six student volunteers from the host school to install the exhibits in Prague, and to attend the event.

Contact [Eric Rouse](#) for further details.

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Costume Symposium Chicago

Costume Symposium 2017 takes on the theme of "The Use of Modern Sewing Technology in Period Costume Production" and will be sponsored by Bernina of America. There are only 32 spaces available, and they will fill quickly.

Registration takes place until June 20 or when all spots have been filled. [For more information, click here.](#)

THSA Conclave

The THSA Conclave Theatre Tour will take place in Los Angeles, California Monday June 26 - Friday June 30. Rich in arts and culture, Los Angeles is internationally recognized as the center of the film industry and historic theatres. The Broadway Historic Theatre District is home to nearly 20 theatres. Visitors will have the opportunity to explore some of the city's most iconic theatres of the Broadway Historic District, Hollywood Boulevard, the West Side, and Pasadena.

[For more information, click here.](#)

USITT Gets One of First IAEE Certifications

USITT is one of the first Expos in the world to attain this new IAEE Certification. By establishing a certified exhibition designation, IAEE is setting the "Gold Standard" for exhibitions and setting a broad set of best practices that all exhibitions should adhere to. This member driven initiative will certify an exhibition's compliance with minimum standards of conduct and performance. Standards include those that are fact based and easily confirmed and that bear upon customer service to attendees, exhibitors, contractors, and facilities in the broadest sense. Organizational candidates that meet all criteria will be awarded an IAEE "Certified Exhibition" graphic made available to them for their use on promotional materials.

SWE Magazine Features USITT Members

The lead article in the Spring issue of SWE magazine entitled *Engineering the Magic of Live Entertainment*, features Beth Martell, theater consultant at DLR/Westlake Reed Leskosky and USITT Board Director; Gemma Guy, senior

director of business development, TAIT Towers; and David Grindle, USITT Executive Director. The story is in print and online. [Click here for desktop or laptop viewing.](#)

If that doesn't work easily for you, there is a [free SWE Magazine app for phone and tablet viewing, here.](#)

David Grindle Featured in InPark Magazine

USITT's Executive Director was featured in an article in the February issue of InPark magazine. Grindle discussed advances in technology, USITT's affiliations with the theme park world and its many mentorship and diversity programs. "With new technologies and new ideas," says Grindle, "the number one thing we're fostering is the importance of taking a chance. We're becoming risk adverse as a business society. We're a broad group with members in lighting, costume, scenery, sound, management, architecture, technical production, design, and technology. We don't represent just one segment. For us, the joy of collaboration is bringing these disciplines together and seeing what we can learn from each other." [To read the full article, click here.](#)

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Thoughts From Mark Shanda USITT's President

We are storytellers.

We use our artistry and our passion, connected with the efforts of others, to explore the human condition through design and performance, putting to use the very best technology available. We impact audiences by challenging their thinking, celebrating their common humanity, and connecting with their emotions. Remembering our power to impact others is an obligation that we must respect and carry with us each day as we work together. The power of our story telling should not be underestimated, for it can expose issues, illuminate greatness, teach new ways of encountering the world, and even restore missing pieces of our life's journey.

The artistry and technology on display at our recent Annual Conference & Stage Expo was inspiring. New products were showcased; extraordinary costume, scenery, lighting, and sound designs were displayed; and equipment, both unique and familiar, was shared, all combined to increase our personal tool kits to respond to our next production challenge.

New friendships were made and old alliances renewed. On more than one occasion, I was greeted by a first-timer who felt overwhelmed by all that they had experienced, joyously committing to join us again next year in Ft. Lauderdale. With a record setting number of attendees and an unrivaled quality of programming, all who joined in the week returned to their daily routines both enthused and exhausted. We gathered as an ever increasingly diverse group, with folks from nearly a dozen countries, all fifty states, and ages ranging from high school students to seniors with continuous memberships of over a half a century. We recognized that the differences between us are our greatest strength and are in no way a threat.

The Institute's story remains a strong one with committed service to our members and ongoing educational and training opportunities the whole year round. Two sessions of the Jay O. Glerum Rigging Master classes are being offered this summer. Both a foreign and a domestic Costume Symposium have been scheduled. The Elite Training program celebrates its seventh year, and USITT Presents... events are being scheduled at various places throughout the country. Mentoring programs flourish and lives are being consistently improved. We are no longer just a loose association of artists, scholars, and theatre practitioners gathering for just four days each year. Rather, we are a year-round resource

leading the field of theatrical design and technology.

Our story is continually being revised and written as our members serve their local campuses, sales organizations, and manufacturers. Through both our individual and collective efforts, live entertainment engages audiences throughout the world and USITT becomes increasingly more relevant. I am so grateful to the hundreds of volunteers involved in leadership positions throughout the Institute, the Officers and Board of Directors for freely sharing their strategic wisdom to advance our organization, and for the national office staff for executing so much, so well for our benefit.

We are storytellers. We welcome diversity. We celebrate the individual artist as well as our collaborations. We inspire, we teach, we learn.

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

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



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Spotlight on Giving: Carolyn Satter

"I choose to financially support those organizations that, first, I volunteer with, and then those whose mission statements parallel with the causes I have a passion for."

- Carolyn Satter, Vice President for Commissions



December Sightlines Donations:
February 16, 2017 through
March 15, 2017

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- Andi Lyons
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Thoughts From David Grindle

USITT's Executive Director

Well, that was fun...

The Conference was an incredible week of learning, networking, and energy. Record numbers of attendees and exhibitors filled the America's Center in St. Louis and people were filling every hands on opportunity we had.

When we visit a city, we leave an impact. The Conference leaves a very tangible economic impact of about \$7 million in the week, which can be attested to by the fact that Sugarfire BBQ ran out of ribs and pulled pork and the Marriott bar set a new record for one day sales. But we leave a much deeper impact on the community than just money.



The Sewing Lab at Stage Expo made items for the Children's Hospital in St. Louis. A member walked in and said he couldn't sew, but wanted to make a Batman pillow for a child. People were signing their names on labels of their items, this member signed B. Wayne, so some kid got a pillow from Batman himself. I wish I knew who that member was, because that member epitomizes who we are as an association. He created a bit of magic for a young person, not through theatre per se, but still through imagination.

Over 50 high school students from economically challenged high schools visited the Conference on Saturday and interacted with our Gateway Participants. These students saw that there were options for people with their life stories in our industry. No one said it would be easy, but it did offer a chance for people to see what was possible. That's another part of our Institute, helping encourage one another and showing the way.

Outside of St. Louis, the participants of the Roundabout Theatre's Workforce Development Program registered for the Conference and new friends and networks were made. These young professionals got a chance to see the breadth of our industry and the possibilities that it can bring. For them it helped open a future of employment potential that may never have crossed their minds.

These are but a few of the people that made an impact locally and beyond.

I loved the chance encounters. I met a young sound designer and engineer in the Bookstore and happened to standing next to Abe Jacob, a legend in the industry.

I introduced the two and a conversation ensued that might have made an impact on both of them.

Conference week is a long week for many of us. The staff and volunteers that make the conference happen are going from early until late. It is like doing a show, just one that runs from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. with no intermission. But it is moments like these that I described that make those long days' worth it. Those days are exciting to see old friends meet, new networks develop, and people learning from one another. They give us all the energy to try to do more and better next year.

I didn't mean for this to devolve in to a sappy memory moment, but those memories remind me of the purpose of what USITT is, what it was founded on, and what propels it in to the future. The commitment of the people to one another, regardless of age or experience, is at the heart of the Institute. USITT moves forward because of fresh ideas and perspectives.

Moving forward we have the Innovation Grants, INNOVA online learning, and new live education coming in the months to come. All of those come from the ideas of the membership. Keep those ideas flowing, because those are the heart of serving people. And those are what makes the long days of conference seem to go by so quickly.

Thanks for the honor of serving you.

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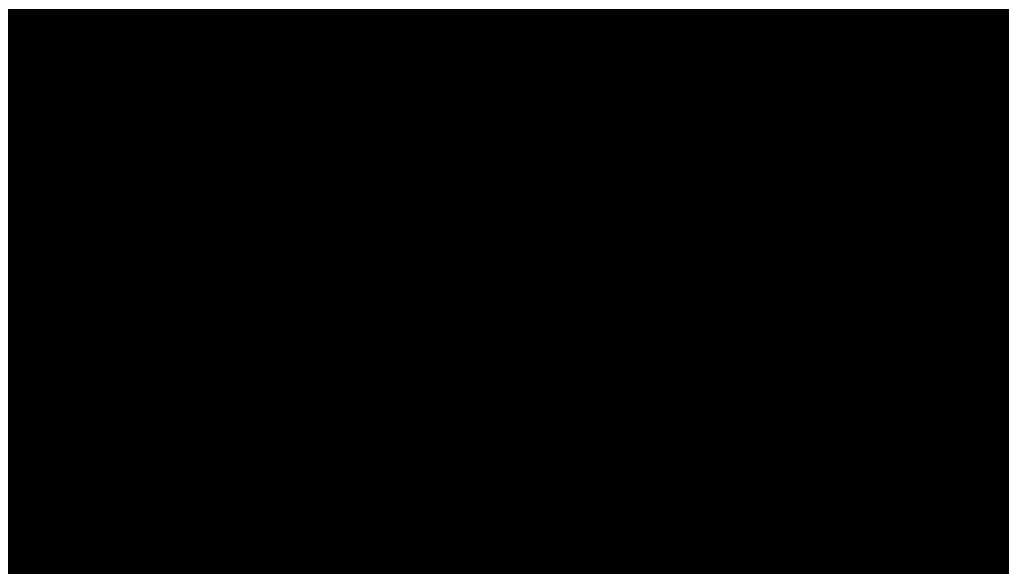
Conference & Stage Expo

Last Word: Ken Page Takes the Stage at America's Center

Stories of his youth and how that developed his appreciation for the backstage arts were at the center of Broadway star Ken Page's keynote address.

The Nightmare Before Christmas voice of Oogie Boogie lit up the room with personal anecdotes, along with stories of his time as a director. He even snuck in a short offering of *Oklahoma's* "Oh, What a Beautiful

Morning" resonating his voice through the ballroom. Ken Page was greeted after his address by attendees eager for an autograph and an opportunity to meet the Broadway veteran. Watch Ken's full keynote address below.



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