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displaying the best, brightest, and most memorable moments from Fort Lauderdale... [more »](#)

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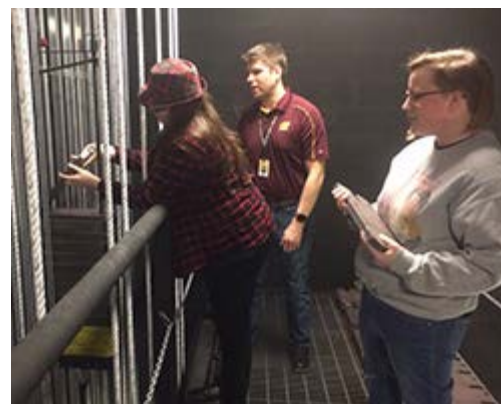
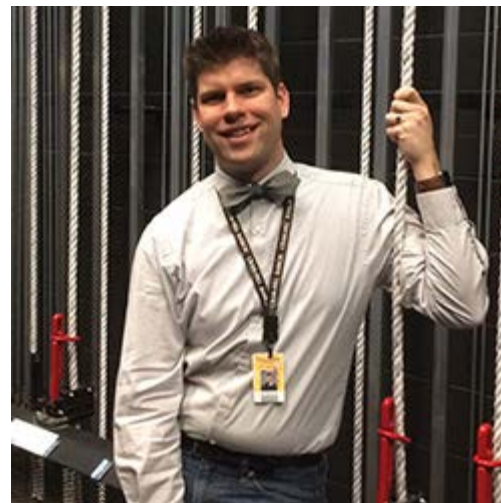
What made you apply for a Rigging Safety Initiative Grant?

Here at Hudsonville we have two performing arts facilities. One opened in 2015, which is what prompted the district to hire me, and we have a small high school auditorium built in the 60s that's just always been there and fell into my job as well.

I'm an entertainment electrician by trade, so I'm not a rigging expert, but there were some things that concerned me in both spaces. I have an annual maintenance budget of \$1,500, which is enough to fix maybe one thing. The district is committed to creating a safe environment for our students, obviously, but to divert more funding we have to pull it from classrooms and then it starts to become more of a, "Is this really something we need to do? The place was built in the '60s and it hasn't fallen down yet; is there really a problem?"

The Rigging Safety Initiative provided an opportunity to apply for funding to help us and it let me talk to the business superintendent and say, "We have inspectors here, let's have that new venue inspected out of the repair budget and make sure everything was installed correctly and done right while the building is under warranty."

We trust our contractors, but on a big project like that a little thing can go unnoticed and can turn into a very big problem later. It was a way for us as a school to get more done without taking money from our students in the classroom



where it's really needed.

What was the timeline of the inspection?

We contacted a couple of different vendors within our area and Beck Studios came back with the best quote with the other area we were paying for, but we also wanted to be smart with USITT's money.

We scheduled with Beck Studios and when Mark Wolfson arrived I wanted a full report of what was going on here but I was also hoping that we'd have an inspector who'd be understanding of what we're doing. I wanted help prioritizing things that need to happen very soon to immediately, what are things we should start planning and preparing for in the next couple of years, and ultimately help us to understand the difference between the two.

In the old venue it was good to hear from a specialist that, "Yes, the curtains are worn, but they probably have another 10 years in them. Set aside some money but don't feel like you must replace them all today." It helps the administration to have a prioritization plan.

Mark explained to us the difference between a code violation and what was legitimately dangerous. There were points where he said, "If we were installing your rigging today, we couldn't do it that way, but this was built in 1963 and it's been that way for 50 years." Basically, telling me here's what it should look like and this is the direction you should be moving in to keep this place safe and up to date for your students.

Was the application process simple?

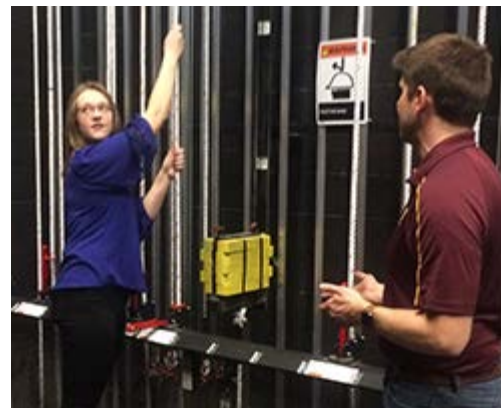
Absolutely! Hudsonville is not a school district that is in a budget crisis, but we applied for it because it certainly helped us and helped our bottom line in a huge way. It was worth the time and if there were schools that had greater need, we trusted that USITT would assign it to whomever had the most need first. I think everyone should at least apply and see where they fall within the spectrum.

Why do you feel the Rigging Safety Initiative is important?

It seems that a common theme in school districts is the schools themselves don't necessarily know much about their theaters. We're a lucky school district in that I have a degree in theatre technology, but not every school has an actual entertainment technician running their spaces.

On top of not necessarily knowing how the spaces work, there's a mentality of, "We've always done it this way and because it didn't fail it must be good enough. It might not be correct, but it's good enough."

A lot of times with rigging safety, the indication that something is wrong is when something falls down, and that's way too late in the process. By making



these funds available and by promoting the thought that this is something we need to be paying attention to gives us pause. In the case of our school district we have two venues, one of which it was not a tough sell to say, "It's been 20 years since a rigger has been in this building, we should have this building inspected."

The new building is just as important to have inspected even though it's only two years old. We need to take seriously that we're maintaining it properly. The awareness aspect of it and making the funding available was a way for me and my staff to get the administration on board with taking both venues seriously.

Did you get a chance to speak with Beck Studios one on one?

Because of my background in theatre technology, Mark and I had some conversations and we took some time to talk about the rigging. The basic training that he was prepared to give wasn't applicable to me. That being said, I'm glad that it's a part of it because until I was hired the person who coordinated the auditorium space was a teacher who has an acting degree and knows a fair amount about that side of the stage; enough to know that he doesn't really know how the rest of it works. That basic training would've been important for him if he was still the one person overseeing everything to have the opportunity to talk to a professional. That's a critical part of the program even though we didn't take advantage of it per se.

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 Jenn Shuron at jenn@usitt.org.

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News & Notices

#RigSafe on Arbor Day

David Grindle *USITT Executive Director*

Arbor Day is April 27. This is the sixth 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 (RSI) has helped 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 RSI 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



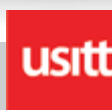
commitment to safety.

#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 April 27. Let the world know you #RigSafe.

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Rigging Safety Initiative Applications

USITT's Rigging Safety Initiative (RSI) is now accepting applications until April 20 for its spring funding cycle.

The RSI offers free stage rigging inspections and safety training for secondary schools nationally. All secondary schools nationwide are eligible.

Once a school's application is approved, they choose from a list of participating ETCP certified rigging inspectors in their area. USITT pays the inspector directly for the inspection and four to six hours of safety training for faculty and student stage crew.

The school receives a detailed status report on their rigging — what's working properly and what potential safety problems can be prevented with routine care. Free safety training for up to eight staff & students helps ensure safe operation of a complex system.

“Thank you so much for the support of USITT and the Rigging Safety Initiative,” said Hudsonville Public Schools Auditorium Director and 2017 RSI Grant recipient, Rob Matthews. “Without the grant, our school would not have been able to inspect and repair both of our venues in this fiscal year without diverting funding from student learning. Thank you for helping us keep our students safe!”

Apply for the RSI spring funding cycle.

Thank you to our Rigging Safety Initiative sponsors **H&H Specialties**, **ETC**, and **JR Clancy**.

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Jay O. Glerum Rigging Masterclasses

Entry, advanced, and new intermediate level tracks will be available this summer with the return of USITT's Jay O. Glerum Rigging Masterclasses.

The entry and intermediate level tracks will take place at the Dothan Opera House in Dothan, Alabama, June 4-5. The entry track is geared towards students and educators, while the intermediate track is for those familiar with rigging basics and safe operation of a counterweight system.

Registration deadline is May 30.

Both advanced and entry level tracks will take place August 20-21, in Seattle, Washington. The advanced track will be taught for ETCP renewal credit and will include training on the latest innovations in rigging as well as advanced safety such as life rescue and other topics.

Registration for August masterclasses will open May 1.

Learn more about Jay O. Glerum Masterclasses and register.

Jay O. Glerum Rigging Masterclass sponsors include **JR Clancy**, Promote Safe Sets (JR Clancy), **ETC**, and **H&H Specialties**.

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Book Signing: *The Designs of William Ivey Long*

Join us at [The Drama Book Shop](#) in New York City for a signing and discussion of *The Designs of William Ivey Long* with costume designer William Ivey Long and author Bobbi Owen.



The Designs of William Ivey Long is the 12th and final book in USITT's series documenting the work of America's best theatrical designers.

The monograph chronicles William Ivey Long's career from its earliest days and contains a chronology of his nearly 350 production credits — and his six Tony Awards.

More than 100 illustrations are included, among them renderings of Long's exquisite costume designs and photographs from some of his award-winning productions. The appendices contain his numerous awards and honors and the many exhibitions where his designs and costumes have been displayed.

Author of the book, Bobbi Owen, is the Michael R. McVaugh Distinguished Professor of Dramatic Art at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Event Details:

Thursday, April 19, 2018
5:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.

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

[Purchase your copy of *The Designs of William Ivey Long*, here »](#)

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#RigSafe Day

USITT is happy to partner with the Columbus McKinnon Corporation for #RigSafe Day 2018. USITT and Columbus McKinnon will be communicating safety tips all day, April 27, across social media to remind you to #RigSafe. Join in with USITT and our partners around the world to help celebrate Arbor Day on social media and online and tell us how you #RigSafe!

USITT Ohio Valley Section Supports Students Through Programing

By: Karen Glass, Ohio Valley Section VC of Communications

This year six student members of the Ohio Valley Section (OVS) received support to travel to USITT 2018.

Four students received Conference passes through the Peggy Ezekiel Design Expo. The expo is held each year during the section's fall Conference. Each Conference registrant is invited to submit an entry to the expo and the submissions are adjudicated. The top 10 submissions are used to create an exhibit that member organizations can display during the following year. The top three student submissions are awarded a complimentary pass to the Conference by USITT. This year, one of the top entries was a joint project. USITT graciously offered passes to both students so they did not have to split the prize. The students who received passes are Janhavi Chaudhari, Samantha Llanes, Liz Hastings, and Ariel Lacey.



Two students received cash awards of \$750 and internships that included Conference passes through the Travel Award Program. This year's recipients are Trenae Waller and Christopher Rees. Future Light, Inc. provided the internships and section membership fees supported the cash awards. The award committee consisted of OVS section board members Paul Sanow, Elynmarie Kazle, Melanie Mortimore, David Castellano, and committee chair Ken Clothier.

Event Safety Alliance to Host Crowd Safety Workshops

Event Safety Alliance is offering USITT members a 20% registration discount for April classes.

If your work involves planning to accommodate large groups of people, you need to know how to plan to mitigate these risks and keep your crowds safe. These courses will provide an understanding of basic crowd safety and techniques to plan and manage safe pedestrian flows in crowded places, even during emergencies. Mark your calendars for one of the workshops below:

- **Chicago, Illinois** on April 5-6
- **Nashville, Tennessee** on April 9-10
- **Austin, Texas** on April 12-13
- **Los Angeles, California** on April 16-17

Registration for each workshop is \$235 for ESA members/\$260 for non-members. USITT members are eligible for an exclusive 20% discount at both price levels. Please use the discount code USITT when registering to take advantage of this discount.

Registration for all dates is now open.

OSHA 10 Alliance Renewal

OSHA has renewed its alliance with USITT and IATSE. The alliance aims to protect the safety and health of workers in the entertainment industry.

During the five-year alliance, participants will provide USITT and IATSE members with information and educational resources that address falls, electrical hazards, ergonomics, and other industry hazards. USITT and IATSE will educate federal OSHA, state plan, and consultation personnel on industry safety topics, including fall prevention and the safe use of portable power distribution systems. The alliance participants will continue to share information about OSHA rulemaking, enforcement initiatives, and outreach campaigns, such as the National Safety Stand-Down to Prevent Falls in Construction and the Safe + Sound Campaign for Safety and Health Programs.

Learn more.

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International PQ 2019 Seeks Submissions

Submissions are being sought for USITT Exhibits for the **2019 Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space (PQ)**.

The curators of the USITT Exhibit for the 2019 PQ recognize the rich ethnic, cultural, and artistic diversity of the United States today, and are seeking to exhibit design work that mirrors this diversity. USITT is seeking work that represents the finest in artistic achievement presented in the United States between 2015 and 2019.



The work presented will be divided into three exhibitions:

- **IMAGINATION:** Emerging and Student Designers
- **TRANSFORMATION:** Exhibition of Countries and Regions, Professional Designers
- **PERFORMANCE SPACE ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITION – THEATRE OF OUR WORLD:** Architects/Space Creators

All American designers and architects who are living and working in the United States or abroad are invited to submit their work to the curators.

The Prague Quadrennial (PQ) is the largest performance design event in the world. By exhibiting thousands of designs from dozens of countries, and by bringing together designers, directors, students, as well as the general public, the PQ provides an unprecedented exchange of ideas that goes beyond the narrow confines of theatrical design and style.

Deadline: May 1, 2018

Details and submission requirements.

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Thoughts from Mark Shanda

USITT President

At the opening keynote address for our recent Annual Conference & Stage Expo on March 14, 2018, I shared the following with those in attendance. Many who heard these words expressed their appreciation and asked that I share with the whole membership.

The mission of USITT is to connect performing arts design and technology communities to ensure vibrant dialogue among practitioners, educators, and students. Let that mission statement roll around in your head for just a minute and please keep that central to your engagement for the balance of the week. Some key words that jump out to me include community and vibrant dialogue. In this past year, our community has faced challenges that we never imagined we would face and the need for vibrant dialogue is critical.

On the night of Oct. 1, 2017, a gunman opened fire on a crowd of concertgoers at the Route 91 Harvest music festival on the Las Vegas Strip in Nevada, leaving 58 people dead and 851 injured. Members of this organization were working and attending that event, lost friends attending that event, were working productions in nearby Las Vegas venues, and there are most certainly people in attendance at this Conference who were directly impacted by this heinous act. What is an appropriate response?

As an Institute, at this Conference we are offering a session entitled **Situational Awareness, Planning and Process for Active Shooter/Armed Aggressor Scenarios**. We have brought experts in the field on this topic, for which there is not a chapter in Burris-Meyer and Cole, or Gillette, or Wolf and Block. What, unfortunately has become essential training for those of us in the live entertainment industry, is being provided by USITT. What is an appropriate response?

Today, our Conference starts less than 30 miles away from the site of the most recent mass school shooting in our country. While this act of horror has affected us all, this week you may well encounter someone either attending this Conference or working at this convention center, at the hotels, and on the many busses transporting us around who attended a funeral for any one or more of the 17 people killed. All of us struggle to make sense of this senseless act and to determine how we move forward. What is an appropriate response?

As an Institute, we have reached out to students, faculty, and staff at Margery Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, offering them free Conference registrations. We have joined in an effort started by our brothers and sisters in theatre to share theatre memorabilia to make the school more welcoming by sending USITT-published materials and branded items to the school. We have begun talks about what additional training and educational programming the Institute might be able to offer in the future. What is an appropriate response?

This very day, the Women's March Youth Empower organization has called for a National School Walkout for 17 minutes starting at 10:00 a.m. One minute of silence and group response to reflect on each one of the lives of the 17

persons lost in this senseless killing spree and to call attention to needed action by those in power to address the issues of safety in our schools and in our society in general. What is an appropriate response?

On March 24, Survivors of the February 14 shooting at Margery Stoneman Douglas High School and other students are planning a protest in Washington, D.C., called the “March for Our Lives.” Sister marches are anticipated to take place in other cities around the world. What is an appropriate response?

On April 20, the nineteenth anniversary of the massacre at Columbine High School in Colorado, a nationwide walkout of schools, titled by some the “No Kids Left” event, protesting historic inaction to date and demanding new action, is urging parents to keep their children out of school for the entire day. What is an appropriate response?

Today, at 10:00 a.m., our stage manager for this morning’s keynote will call “Hold Please.” At that time, we will take a pause in our Conference schedule to honor all of those lives lost to violent and senseless actions in the last 12 months. When that hold is called, I would ask all who wish to and are able, to stand for a few moments of silence, until “thank you” is called. Following this shared act, our regular Conference programming will resume. An appropriate response? I don’t know for certain, but a necessary action given the bonds of our community and our basic humanity.

Each of us as individuals is called to make a choice as to how to respond to the events around us. As an Institute, we are called to embrace our community even more strongly than we have done in the past. To continue to offer a forum for vibrant dialogue and to offer quality education and training in not only how to prepare for such tragedies, how to deal with the aftermath of such events, but also how to work to prevent another violent act of senseless killing. We need to support the vibrant dialogue regarding issues of equity, equality, diversity, cultural understanding, and safety in our programming and interactions with each other throughout this week.

I struggle to find a personal way to appropriately respond to the tragedies that I have spoken of, but I do celebrate the fact that we are here this week, working together to improve our industry, working together to make stronger connections with each other, working together to understand the diversity in our membership, and simply working together to make the world a better place.



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

Please e-mail Mark at mark.shanda@uky.edu.

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Spotlight on Giving

"I support my home with time and money to maintain it because I care about my family who lives there with me, because I enjoy spending time there, and because I feel safe in, and sustained by, that environment.

Similarly, I support USITT with my time and money because I care about the people who have become my professional family, because I enjoy spending time in their company, and because I feel safe and supported by USITT in so many ways that have directly and indirectly helped me, both personally and professionally, over the years.

I fully expect USITT will long outlive me, and I want to do my part to help make sure it is in good shape for the next generation and beyond. "

- Andi Lyons, USITT's Vice-President for Members, Sections & Chapters



MAKE A GIFT

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Thoughts from David Grindle USITT Executive Director

Who belongs?

Humans, by our nature, want to form groups. We seek out people that have similar interests and try to bond with them. That's part of what has made USITT so successful — the ability to bring everyone together.

There are plenty of associations out there dedicated to theatre technology "groups," but USITT is the only one that brings together everyone. We have designers and technicians. We have all areas of design. We have end user and manufacturer. We have entry level and established professional. We have diversity of thought.

That diversity is on display whenever we meet. I sometimes joke that if you put five of our members together, you'll get eight points of view. But I think that's a good thing. In a world where digital media allows you to interact with people that share your identical points of view, USITT brings together people with a variety of perspectives, and we keep trying to make a space for all those people.

We aren't always going to agree with one another, and I'm thankful for that. The ability to hear one another's point of view or concern is important, but at no point should we always be in perfect agreement. That creates the "echo chamber" we are experiencing in our society today.

I was pleased to hear diversity of thought at the Annual Conference & Stage Expo in Fort Lauderdale. I'm excited to hear diversity of thought amongst our leadership. I love to hear points of view from the membership that we serve because all those diverse opinions strengthen USITT.

Don't read my words and think I'm living in a Pollyanna world. I have to remind myself that differing opinions are good because they inform my own. They help me strengthen my point of view or adjust it. That doesn't mean that I'm always in the mood to hear them. But I know they are good and good for the organization.



USITT needs you and your unique point of view to be the organization it was founded to be. Our founders created an organization “for the better interchange of knowledge in the field of theatre technology,” according to our charter. And that means being a space where everyone brings their point of view and it is shared.

I experienced that yet again at the Annual Conference & Stage Expo and I am excited to say that we are working on opportunities to make that happen online and in person throughout the year. But please bring your world experience to the table. Be open to learning from others with more and less experience than you. Because that open interchange is just as important in today’s world as it was in 1960 when those words were penned.

Thank you for making USITT the organization it is today and will grow to be in the future.

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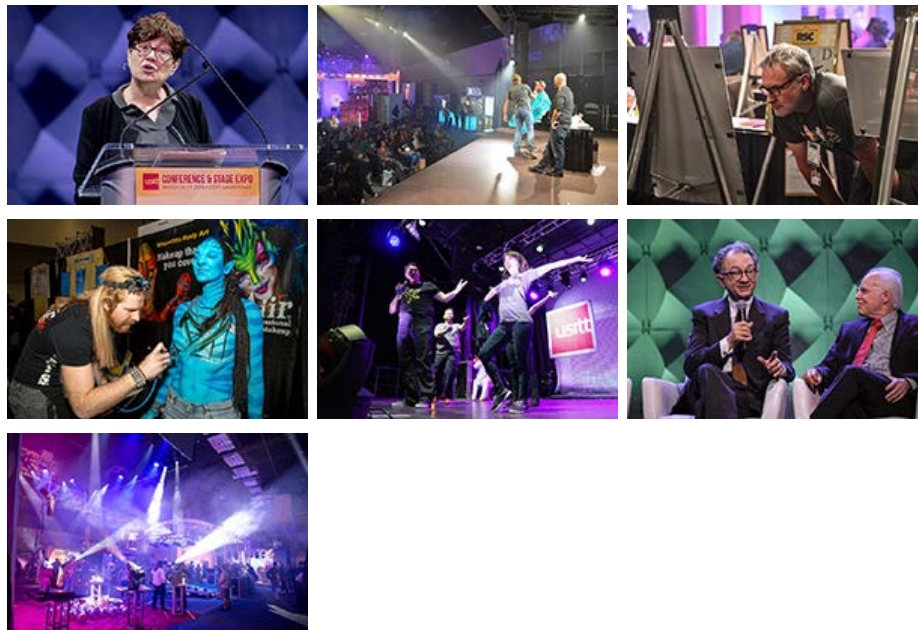
Last Word

Last Word: A USITT 2018 Photo Gallery

The 58th Annual Conference & Stage Expo in Fort Lauderdale was a success! Our largest Conference to date brought approximately 5,429 attendees, 315 exhibitors, and a myriad of technical theatre and entertainment sessions, panels, demos, and hands-on training to the Broward County Convention Center. This year was full of firsts for the Institute and we extend a thank you to everyone involved.

We look forward to seeing you in Louisville, Kentucky, for USITT 2019!





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