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Crowds lined up to purchase copies of *The Designs of Tharon Musser* and have them signed by authors Del Unruh, Jeff Davis and Marilyn Rennagel (two of her assistants) left to right, during USITT's Annual Conference & Stage Expo in Phoenix, Arizona. Now, through the generosity of Ms. Musser's assistants and friends, copies of the monograph have been placed in college and university libraries throughout the United States. Read more about this moving tribute, which will share Ms. Musser's work with lighting designers and students of theatre design and technology in all 50 states, [here](#).

Photo/Tom Thatcher



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## USITT Heading to Cincinnati For 2009 and 2015 Events

**Barbara E.R. Lucas**  
*Sightlines Editor*

A doubleheader in Cincinnati!

Baseball fans will recognize the reference as USITT has chosen the midwest city as the site of two upcoming USITT Annual Conference & Stage Expo events -- 2009 and 2015.

Choosing one city for two dates has been very popular with USITT members and guests in the past. Such forward planning allows people to become more familiar with a venue and nearby amenities.

As a bonus, dates for the two Conferences will also be the same. In both 2009 and 2015 the Annual Conference will run Wednesday, March 18 through Saturday, March 21 and Stage Expo will be held Thursday, March 19 through Saturday, March 21.

USITT VP-Conferences Joe Aldridge said that securing dates for both years can increase the flexibility of what USITT offers. "We'll have people who will already know what the Convention Center and hotels have to offer after our first visit in 2009, which will give us even more room to be creative for 2015," he said.

Cincinnati has many benefits for those attending USITT's Annual Conference & Stage Expo. Cincinnati's Playhouse in the Park, University of Cincinnati's College Conservatory of Music, and many other theatre, dance, and music programs all enrich the arts scene.

Details of programming will be released at the conclusion of the 2008 Annual Conference & Stage Expo in Houston, Texas.

Duke Energy Center in Cincinnati, Ohio will be a bustling place when USITT visits the city in both 2009 and 2015. Cincinnati has been chosen to host the event both years.

Photo/J. Miles Wolff, courtesy Cincinnati USA

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Robert Smith, left, has his book signed by Rafael Jaen at the 2007 USITT Member Author Book Signing at Stage Expo in Phoenix, Arizona as Martha Marking, center, looks on. USITT is seeking member authors to participate in the sixth year of the program.

Photo/R. Finkelstein

## Promote New Books at Houston Conference

David Rodger  
TD&T Editor

USITT members are experts in their fields and many of them share their expertise by writing books. The fine books written by USITT members again will be acknowledged and promoted at the USITT Conference & Stage Expo in Houston, Texas.

All members who published a book about some aspect of theatre design or technology in 2007 may participate. To qualify, books must be available for sale in the United States now or by December 31.

The first step to participate in Houston is to contact David Rodger as soon as possible at david\_rodger@usitt.org or 502-426-1211. USITT will make arrangements to buy copies of the books to have on hand at the book signing event. The event is scheduled for 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Thursday, March 20 at Stage Expo. The deadline to submit a request to participate is December 14.

This is the sixth year USITT has held "book parties" for its authors. So far, 32 members have participated.

The first year, in Minneapolis (2003), members celebrated publication of 10 books: Bill Byrnes' *Management and the Arts*, Ben Sammler's *Technical Briefs Collections*, Craig Wolf and Dick Block's *Scene Design and Stage Lighting*, Patrick Finelli's *Sound for the Stage*, Linda Essig's *Speed of Light*, John Holloway's *Illustrated Theatre Production Guide*, Harry Donovan's *Arena Rigging*, Jim Moody's *The Business of Theatrical Design*, Michael Farewell's *FFMG Stages*, and Bert Morris's *Followspot Operators Handbook*.

In Long Beach (2004), five books were highlighted: Jody Blake's two new books, *Le Tumulte Noir: Modernist Art and Popular Entertainment in Jazz-Age Paris, 1900-1930* and *An Eye for the Stage: The Tobin Collection of Theatre Arts at the McNay Art Museum*; Bobbi Owen's *The Broadway Design Roster*; Patricia MacKay and Richard Pilbrow's *Walt Disney Concert Hall - The Backstage Story*; and Marty Gallagher's self-published CD *Wireless Mics in the Theatre*.

In Toronto (2005), the focus was on eight books: Robert Bell's *Let There Be Light*; Peter Beudert and Susan Crabtree's *Scenic Art for the Theatre*; Jody Blake's *High Drama: Eugene Berman and the Legacy of the Melancholic Sublime*; Richard Brett's three-volume *Theatre Engineering and Architecture*; Linda Essig's *Lighting and the Design Idea*; Miodrag

Tabacki's self-titled monograph, *Miodrag Tabacki*; and Paul Thompson's *Character Make-up*.

In Louisville (2006), four books were celebrated: Linda Sparks's *The Basics of Corset Building*; Rebecca Cunningham's *Basic Sewing for Costume Construction: A Handbook*; Robert Doyle's *The Art of the Tailor*; and Randy Davidson's *Practical Health and Safety Guidelines for School Theater Operations: Assessing the Risks in Middle, Junior and Senior High School Theater Buildings and Programs*.

In Phoenix (2007), five books were highlighted: David Conte's *Theatre Management: Producing and Managing the Performing Arts*; Richard Cadena's *Automated Lighting*; Rafael Jaen's *Developing and Maintaining a Design-Tech Portfolio*; Michael Mell's *Building Better Theatres*; and Hugh Hardy's *Building Type Basics for Performing Arts Facilities*.

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**Conference Deadline December 6**

Save money by registering for the USITT Annual Conference & Stage Expo before the Very Early Registration deadline on December 6.

Members and non-members are eligible for discounts on the cost of Conference attendance by completing the registration process online or mailing forms before midnight on that Thursday.

To learn more about all that is available, including a day-long behind the scenes tour of NASA, a trip to San Antonio's famous McNay Art Museum, and Professional Development Workshops held before the start of the Conference, visit [www.usitt.org/houston](http://www.usitt.org/houston).

And don't forget to secure a hotel reservation when registering to get the low rates negotiated for USITT guests in Houston.

[To Top](#) ↑**Grants Deadline Looms**

The applications deadline for the 2008 USITT Grants Program is fast approaching.

All grant applications for the 2008 funding cycle must be submitted by January 10, 2008. For more information on the process and application requirements, visit [here](#).

[To Top](#) ↑**ETCP Exams at USITT**

The opportunity to distinguish yourself and become ETCP certified just became easier! The ETCP Council announced that all three ETCP examinations will be offered, in pencil and paper format, at the Annual USITT Conference & Stage Expo on March 21 and 22 in Houston, Texas.

The schedule for the exams is:

- Entertainment Electrical, 2 p.m. March 21;
- Arena Rigging, 9 a.m. March 22; and
- Theatre Rigging; 2 p.m. March 22.

Interested applicants must submit their application, along with supporting materials and fee, postmarked by February 15. Space is limited. For more information or for eligibility requirements or applications, contact Meredith Moseley-Bennett, ETCP certification coordinator, at [certification@esta.org](mailto:certification@esta.org) or 212-244-1505. Complete information is also available on the [ETCP website](#).

Those unable to attend this test administration can apply to take an examination at a local computer testing center. All three exams are available at over 190 testing centers in the United States and Canada on most business days

[To Top](#) ↑**\$50,000 Challenge for Behind the Scenes****This month:**

- Conference Early Deadline
- Grants Deadline
- ETCP Exams at USITT
- BTS Challenge
- Costume Posters Wanted
- New Standards

Electronic Theatre Controls recently challenged the entertainment technology industry to step up to the plate at LDI for ESTA Foundation's Behind the Scenes program.

In announcing the ETC \$50,000 Challenge Grant, CEO Fred Foster said, "Our industry runs on the flexibility, skills, and artistry of people who dedicate themselves to creating the magic of the theatre. Sadly, this means that many times an illness or crisis can catch one of us without the support of full benefits and insurance. Behind the Scenes provides a perfect way for us, as an industry, to provide a much needed backstop to this shortfall."

During LDI, November 16 to 18 in Orlando, Florida the Foundation raffled off the beautiful custom bike known as the "Broadway Chopper" as well as \$2,500 and \$1,000 Visa gift cards. LDI's first ever Texas Hold 'Em Tournament's proceeds went to Behind the Scenes, and Behind the Scenes Holiday Cards were available.

For more information about Behind the Scenes, to donate, or to apply for a grant, visit [here](#).

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### **Costume Posters Wanted for 2008**

Heading into the home stretch of 2007, keep in mind the deadline to submit proposals for the 2008 Costume Poster Session is February 1.

The Poster Session is a time when costume designers and technicians are able to share information that is probably not well-known or perhaps of their own invention.

Poster presentations are widely accepted as meeting the requirements for scholarly publication. While preparing ideas and/or posters, the committee requests a final version of the poster and related information (i.e. handouts) in a digital format.

All submissions are juried by the Costume Poster Selection Committee. Ideas need to be presented in the form of an abstract -- a brief, concise summary of the information to be presented in the poster and no more than 200 words typewritten. Mail, e-mail, or fax an abstract by February 1 to Donna Meester, University of Alabama, Dept. of Theatre & Dance, Box 870239, 235 Rowand-Johnson Hall, Tuscaloosa, AL 25487-0239; 205-348-9032; Fax 205-348-9048; e-mail [dmeester@bama.ua.edu](mailto:dmeester@bama.ua.edu).

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### **Two Lighting Standards Approved, Available**

In October, the ANSI Board of Standards Review approved as American National Standards two new documents from ESTA's Technical Standards Program: *E1.35, Standard for Lens Quality Measurements for Pattern Projecting Luminaires Intended for Entertainment Use*, and *E1.36, Model Procedure for Permitting the Use of Tungsten-Halogen Incandescent Lamps and Stage and Studio Luminaires in Vendor Exhibit Booths in Convention and Trade Show Exhibition Halls*. They are now available for purchase on the website of The ESTA Foundation at [www.estafoundation.org/pubs.htm](http://www.estafoundation.org/pubs.htm).

*ANSI E1.35 - 2007, Standard for Lens Quality Measurements for Pattern Projecting Luminaires Intended for Entertainment Use*, describes a method for measuring stage and studio luminaire lens quality with particular emphasis on contrast and perceived image quality (sharpness). It also offers a way for presenting these results on a datasheet in a format readily understood by a typical end-user allowing the end-user to directly compare lenses in a meaningful way.

The download version of E1.35 is a ZIP file that includes the standard as a PDF and an EPS graphic file of the test pattern described in the standard. The test pattern is presented in three common gobo sizes, but the graphic is scalable. The print version is the standard only.

*ANSI E1.36 - 2007, Model Procedure for Permitting the Use of Tungsten-Halogen Incandescent Lamps and Stage and Studio Luminaires in Vendor Exhibit Booths in Convention and Trade Show Exhibition Halls*, is a model set of procedures that can be used by convention center and trade show exhibition hall staff to mitigate the risks that may be associated with the use of tungsten-halogen lamps and stage and studio luminaires helping promote their use a safe manner.

Both standards were developed by the Photometrics Working Group, part of ESTA's Technical Standards Program. Information about ESTA's Technical Standards Program is available [here](#).

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## Tsypin Named USITT 2008 Golden Pen Winner

**Martha Marking**  
*Co-chair, USITT Golden Pen Committee*

USITT's 2008 Golden Pen award will be presented to George Tsypin, set designer and author of *George Tsypin Opera Factory: Building in the Black Void* (Princeton Architectural Press, 2005). Julie Taymor and Grigory Revzin provided supplemental text.

The USITT Publication Committee's Golden Pen Subcommittee reviewed eight excellent nominations for the 2008 award. The award is determined by a poll of the members of the Publications Committee and was ratified by the Board of Directors in October.

The Golden Pen Award is given annually to the author of an outstanding publication, written within the previous three -year period, in the field of design and production for the performing arts. This award has been presented annually since 1986. The criteria specifies that the work recognized is an outstanding example of one or more of the following: scholarly research and critical thinking, presentation of the work and methodology of exceptional practitioners for theatrical arts and crafts, and description of the methods, skills and technology involved in creating works of theatre and crafts.

*George Tsypin Opera Factory: Building in the Black Void* is a stunning representation of Mr. Tsypin's scenic designs for some of the most renowned opera houses in the world. The nominator's comments on the book were: "A truly exciting book on Tsypin's innovative designs as well as a view into the world of opera from a design perspective as defined by this noteworthy artist. The images are lush and compelling and invite the reader to learn more and participate in these worlds."

A member of the committee stated the book is "simply breath-taking! Whether you have designed one opera or one play, or 100 operas and 100 plays, you will find inspiration on every page. The *West Side Story* images will be a continual reminder of September 11 and are scarily reminiscent of the ruins of the World Trade Center. Bravo!" It is even more eerie that the model for those images was presented six months before the September 11, 2001 events. Another committee member found "this book to be exciting and beautiful -- something I enjoy reading, paging through, and referencing."

Mr. Tsypin transforms theatrical spaces into magical environments. The book is divided into sections representing the elements: water, air, earth, and fire. In addition to the *West Side Story* production, there are breathtaking images of *Oedipus Rex*, *Boris Godunov*, *Pelleas et Melisande*, and *Fiery Angel*.

Mr. Tsypin is Russian born and began life as an architect, which he claims is a "main impulse" in his work. He studied at the Moscow Institute of Architecture with some of Russia's most well known avant-garde artists who were teaching sculpture. Mr. Tsypin writes in the prelude to the book that "this book is about the alchemy of making an opera as the most synthetic form of spectacle from the point of view of the visual artist. While the musicians have the score, the artist has to start from scratch -- every time. From the blackness of the Void, the universe is created."



Mr. Tsypin has been invited to the USITT Annual Conference & Stage Expo in Houston March 19 to 22, where a book signing is scheduled. A Conference session also will be held 10 a.m. on Friday, March 21 to discuss this book and Mr. Tsypin's work. Martha Marking and Michael Monsos, co-chairs of USITT's Golden Pen selection sub-committee, will moderate.



*George Tsypin Opera Factory: Building in the Black Void* has been named the USITT 2008 Golden Pen Award winner. It will be the subject of a session as part of the Annual Conference & Stage Expo in Houston in March and be available in the USITT Boutique.

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## USITT Offers Electrical Workshops

**Michelle Smith**  
*Membership & Ad Sales Manager*  
and  
**Mitch Hefter**  
*USITT Electrical Workshops*

NEC, NFPA, Arc Flash, Arc Blast -- for some these terms have little or no meaning. But for those in the industry who work with electricity, they are vitally important. Knowing how to work safely with electricity is essential and requires education and training.

USITT has begun offering that training, conducted by Engineering Commission members and ETCF recognized trainers Mitch Hefter, Jerry Gorrell, Ken Vannice, and others.

The first session was originally presented in October exclusively to a small group of Cirque du Soleil employees in Las Vegas, Nevada. The two-day training workshop covered several topics including a review of the National Electrical Code (NEC), an overview of Arc Flash and Arc Blast, and Personal Protective Equipment, as well as a review of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 70E Standard for Electrical Safety in the Workplace.

USITT is making this workshop available to other organizations for a fee. To inquire about pricing and availability, contact Michelle L. Smith, Membership & Ad Sales Manager, at 800-938-7488, ext. 102 or [michelle@office.usitt.org](mailto:michelle@office.usitt.org).

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Katherine Marshall, left, talks with Costume Design & Technology Co-Commissioner Joel Ebarb during *An Evening with Katherine Marshall* during the 2007 Annual Conference & Stage Expo. The session was just one of those selected for presentation by Commission members.

Photo/Casey Kearns

## Seeking Ideas for 2009 Costume Sessions

**Kate Ellis**  
*Costume Design & Technology Commission*

As the cooler winds of autumn blow and the impending cold of winter approaches, it is hard to believe it is already time to start planning for the 2009 USITT Annual Convention & Stage Expo in Cincinnati, Ohio.

As most Costume Design & Technology Commission members know, the group will vote on the costume sessions which will be offered during 2009 at the annual Commission meeting in Houston, Texas. Now is the time to submit session proposals. The deadline is February, just three weeks before the start of the Annual Conference in Houston. All the necessary information, including a session proposal form, is located on the [Commission web site](#).

If any Costume Design & Technology Commission member wishes to present a session but is not sure what to offer, or to find out if other Commission members might be interested, visit the Commission web site's HOT TOPICS list. This is a list of sessions suggested by Commission members. If any topic arouses interest or inspires a member to present that topic at the Conference, please use the Costume Info list to find those who have expertise in that area.

For information about how to create a proposal, as well as chairing or participating in a session, contact Kate Ellis at [cathryn.ellis@nau.edu](mailto:cathryn.ellis@nau.edu).

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## "Musser University" Grads Put Monograph in Libraries

**Del Unruh**  
*USITT Publications Committee*

Ten of Tharon Musser's assistants traveled to Phoenix, Arizona in March to participate in the events surrounding the launch of *The Designs of Tharon Musser* at the USITT Annual Conference & Stage Expo.

The book, the third in the USITT Designer Monograph series, was written by Delbert Unruh with Marilyn Rennagel and Jeff Davis, and was based in part on extensive interviews with Musser's assistants -- or the Alumni of Musser University as they often called themselves.

At the end of the Conference, the assistants desired to do something that would memorialize Ms. Musser in a more permanent way. The first idea was to purchase the Barrymore's sign. Barrymore's was a bar on West 45th Street across from the John Golden Theatre in New York -- a favorite watering hole of Ms. Musser on Broadway. "Let's go to the bar," was her legendary invitation to the electricians and the assistants at the end of every rehearsal of the Broadway show she was working on at the time.

At Barrymore's they would all sit and joke and, more importantly, discuss what had to be done before the next rehearsal in a relaxed environment. And of course they had a drink -- or two -- or three.

For Ms. Musser it was Cutty Sark Scotch only. Every one of the assistants could recall at least one happy memory there with Ms. Musser. Barrymore's had closed and was slated for demolition. The sign was available for sale on e-bay. Very quickly the assistants raised almost all the money for the purchase of the sign; and then someone asked the obvious question: "What are we going to do with it once we buy it?" No one seemed to have an answer.

Ken Billington offered to store the sign in his warehouse, but the more everyone thought about it, that project just didn't seem worth doing. Then David F. Segal suggested, instead of buying the sign, the assistants buy copies of *The Designs Of Tharon Musser* and distribute them free of charge to college and university libraries in all 50 states.

This idea attracted even more interest, and contributions were received from a total of 19 assistants and friends of Ms. Musser. Kendall Smith coordinated the project and, with the help of USITT VP-Communication Bobbi Owen, arranged the purchase of monographs as gifts to approximately 250 university libraries. The books carry a bookplate identifying it as a gift from the Alumni of Musser University.

The project was made possible by the generous contributions of Ms. Musser's assistants and friends and is a fitting memorial to one of America's greatest lighting designers.

Many of Tharon Musser's former assistants and friends gathered in Phoenix, Arizona as part of the 2007 Annual Conference & Stage Expo to celebrate the publication of the 2007 USITT Monograph, *The Designs of Tharon Musser*.

Photo/Buddy Combs

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## Save on Training on Rigging, Hoist, Fall Protection and More

**Michelle L. Smith**  
Membership & Ad Sales Manager  
**Rigging Seminars**

Save \$50 off the regular registration rate for these informative and instructional seminars. Learn important rigging principles taught by the best in the business! For information about future seminars, visit [www.riggingseminars.com](http://www.riggingseminars.com) or call 888-248-8491. Members must identify themselves when they register.

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Save \$75 off the regular price for hosting a day-long seminar. Negotiate the contract and provide the facility so seminars can be scheduled at your convenience. For more information or to arrange a seminar call 800-727-7471, e-mail [sales@sapsis-rigging.com](mailto:sales@sapsis-rigging.com), or visit [www.sapsis-rigging.com/seminars.html](http://www.sapsis-rigging.com/seminars.html).

[To Top](#) ↑**TOMCAT Workshops - NEW**

\$75 off the regular price for TOMCAT workshops in hoist, rigging, truss, and fall protection (Texas location only). For more information or to download an application, visit <http://www.tomcatglobal.com/home.htm>, select "Latest News," then "Workshops." Questions? Contact Lisa Jebesen at 432-694-7070 or [ljebesen@tomcatusa.com](mailto:ljebesen@tomcatusa.com).

Click [here](#) for a complete list of member discounts. For instructions on accessing a discount, select the item of interest and enter user name (USITT member number) and password (last name) at the prompt.

If you have questions or suggestions for a new benefit, contact Membership & Ad Sales Manager Michelle L. Smith at 800-938-7488 or [michelle@office.usitt.org](mailto:michelle@office.usitt.org).

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### MacKay Honored at LDI

**Patricia MacKay**, a USITT Fellow that some consider a maverick in the industry, was honored this year as part of the trade show she founded 1988. Ms. MacKay was involved as the entertainment technology industry was starting to come of age. This year, as LDI celebrates its 20th anniversary, Ms. MacKay was honored with a Light in Life Award for the vision, dedication, and insight that helped put the industry on its feet. The award, sponsored by Theatre Projects Consultants, was presented November 17 at the LDI Awards Ceremony in Orlando, Florida.

The publisher of leading industry trade publications, Ms. MacKay purchased *Theatre Crafts* in 1981 from Rodale Press, where she started working in 1970 and became editor in 1975. She remained at the helm of the publication until 1996. She had added *Lighting Dimensions* to her holdings in 1986, and expanding it from its roots in rock and roll lighting to include theatre as well as architectural projects as lighting designers began to cross over from one discipline to another.

In 1988, Ms. MacKay added another publication to her list when she acquired *Cue*, a small British technical theater publication, and renamed it *Cue International*. This was eventually folded into *Theatre Crafts* to become *Theatre Crafts International (TCI)*. The publications have evolved into the current *Live Design*.

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### Fred Foster Chosen for Wally Award

Fred Foster, CEO of Electronic Theatre Controls (ETC), was unanimously chosen by the board of directors of the Wally Russell Fund to receive its 2007 Lifetime Achievement Award.

Mr. Foster, who is also a USITT Fellow, is the youngest person to receive the award. "Fred's visionary leadership has propelled ETC into the top rank of the world's leading manufacturers of stage lighting equipment. ETC has been constantly innovative in technology with such products as the Source Four spotlight, the Sensor dimmer and the EOS and Obsession control systems. From the outset of ETC in 1975, Fred knew that the stage lighting industry was a people-oriented one, and he has constantly attracted the brightest talent in the world to his rapidly growing international business." said Richard Pilbrow, chairman emeritus of the Wally Russell Fund.

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### NATEAC Plans Lineup

The North American Theatre and Engineering Conference (NATEAC) has announced the panel lineup for its upcoming conference. The conference, to be held July 20 and 21 in New York City, will include panels on topics ranging from Designing Alternative Spaces to the Role of the Consultant in the Design Process.

List of topics, along with other conference information, can be found at [www.NATEAC.org](http://www.NATEAC.org).

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### Student Assists Pre-Broadway Musical

Maureen Hanratty, a third-year MFA lighting student at San Diego State University, is currently assisting lighting designer Donald Holder on the pre-Broadway musical *Ray Charles Live* at the Pasadena Playhouse.

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### Holiday Greetings

The *Sightlines* staff wishes all our readers the warmest holiday greetings for enjoyable projects throughout the year.

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#### This month:

Patricia MacKay  
Fred Foster  
NATEAC  
Maureen Hanratty  
Holiday Wishes





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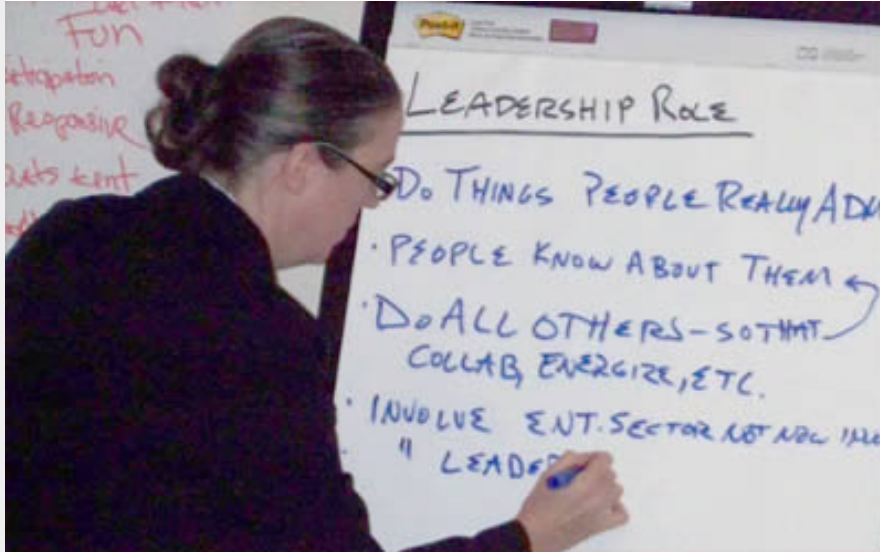
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Kerry McCarthy, right, facilitated a lively and thought-provoking discussion by USITT's Board of Directors during the group's recent meeting in Syracuse, New York.

Photo/Barbara E.R. Lucas

## Board of Directors and Others Meet in Syracuse

Sylvia Hillyard Pannell  
USITT President

The Board of Directors of USITT held its annual fall meeting, along with some exciting social events, in Syracuse, New York October 11 to 14. Heretofore, the annual fall meetings have taken place on the site of the LDI tradeshow so members could attend events in one trip. This year, however, USITT chose Syracuse instead, to see and hold meetings in our new office space (detailed in October *Sightlines*) with its spacious, and comfortable conference room that easily accommodated many of the weekend meetings.

The beautifully restored Genesee Grande hotel, a block from the South Crouse Commons office location, provided housing and additional meeting space for Board members and guests. Also meeting were: the Finance Committee, Travis DeCastro, chair; 50th Celebration Steering Committee, Bobbi Owen, chair; Prague Quadrennial Task Force, Bruce Brockman, director; Publications Committee, Ms. Owen, chair; and the 21st Century Task Force, and Bill Byrnes, director. In addition, several members of the Archives Committee were hard at work with Rick Stephens, chair.

The weekend began with an early bird party at the new office space to give members the opportunity to see the staff's new digs. Following the party, many took the opportunity to visit Syracuse Stage, also conveniently located a couple of blocks from the office, where the professional company was performing *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* and Syracuse University's Department of Drama was presenting *Lucky Stiff*.

Friday morning began with the Board of Directors retreat conducted by Kerry McCarthy and Helene Bleiberg of McCarthy Arts Consulting (MAC). (For more information on our organizational assessment process, please see my article [here](#) in the September 2007 *Sightlines*). For two hours, in a lively conversational format, board members and MAC representatives deliberated strategic directions and possibilities for USITT to explore.

The Board of Director's input provided invaluable insights to consider as we continue our yearlong organizational analysis and our long-range strategic planning. While many important ideas and initiatives for the future were considered, the need to take a leadership role nationally with other constituencies in the entertainment industry was considered the top priority.

Friday afternoon board members and guests experienced a fascinating tour of J.R. Clancy's nearby facilities, with gracious hosts President Bob Theis, VP Marketing Tom Young, and Special Projects Manager Rod Kaiser.

The Finance Committee met twice to consider the USITT 2008-09 budget. Because the meetings were in Syracuse, accountant Jim Bandoblu and financial consultant George Chrisogonou were able to join the Finance Committee meeting to review the 2006-07 audit and discuss and review the Institute's financial health.

Friday evening held much excitement as USITT hosted a big party to celebrate its new office space in Syracuse's Connective Corridor. The Connective Corridor is a community-wide effort to link the vast array of arts and cultural happenings, businesses, and neighborhoods in the City of Syracuse. We all had a marvelous time meeting and greeting old friends and new neighbors, including many members of the theatre and arts community, and the sponsors and supporters of the Connective Corridor.



The party was held at the fabulous Milton J. Rubenstein Museum of Science & Technology where current exhibit, K'Nex: Building Thrill Rides, provided an exciting backdrop for the event and appealed to the inner techie in us all. As you can see from the pictures, the party was beautifully planned by our staff, well attended, and a great success.

On Saturday, the Board of Directors held its business meeting where recognition was given to Lawrence J. Hill for his service as treasurer, and four staff members were recognized for many years of service to USITT.

Bruce Brockman, director, presented the report of the Prague Quadrennial Task Force with recommendations to the Board of how the 2011 United States entries should be developed and structured.

The board accepted changes to the By-Laws concerning the nominations process, intended to streamline and improve the work of that Committee, as well as updates to the organization's financial controls.

Exciting announcements included an update on the forthcoming USITT Monograph, *The Designs of Abe Jacob* by Rick Thomas, and the success of the 2007 Prague Quadrennial exhibits. The Board congratulated Mitch Hefter, Jerry Gorrell, and the Standards Committee -- some 10 years after USITT first published it, Underwriters Laboratory is now adopting the USITT Standard for Stage Pin Connectors.

All in all we came away from the weekend with the feeling that USITT is advancing along all fronts. This is a period when we are studying challenges and issues carefully and contemplating new horizons. Our progress is palpable and our future is bright thanks to the good work of the office staff and the many tireless volunteers who make our organization the premiere theatrical design and technology enterprise model for the 21st century.



Members of USITT's Board of Directors gathered at the Milton J. Rubenstein Museum of Science & Technology to celebrate their time in Syracuse, New York.

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### Institute Welcomes Morris Architects

We welcome **Morris Architects** as a new Contributing member of USITT. The firm, based in Houston, Texas notes that architecture, landscape architecture, planning and interior design are the core disciplines practiced by seven Morris Architects studios. Designated as civic, corporate, education, entertainment, healthcare, hospitality and public assembly, each studio is distinct. To learn more, visit the company's website at [www.morrisarchitects.com](http://www.morrisarchitects.com).

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### d&b audiotechnik Increases Support

We appreciate the enhanced level of support shown by **d&b audiotechnik** which has become a new Contributing member of the Institute. The company takes what it describes as a holistic approach to the quest for excellence in sound reproduction. It has consistently and successfully championed a complete system concept by developing loudspeakers, control electronics, and amplifiers designed to be used together to satisfy the most demanding sound reinforcement applications. d&b audiotechnik is based in Asheville, North Carolina. For complete information, visit [www.dbaudio.com](http://www.dbaudio.com).

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### H & H Furnishes Concert Hall

**H & H Specialties Inc.** recently completed the supply of stage equipment for the Renee and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall in Costa Mesa, California. The hall is the latest addition to the Orange County Performing Arts Center (OCPAC). H & H Specialties Inc. provided over 2,500 feet of motorized variable acoustic tracks in the concert hall and 600 feet of manually operated tracks for the rehearsal rooms and music theatre.

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### Texas Scenic Earns Honor

**Texas Scenic Company (TSC)**, for the second year in a row, was named to the *Engineering News Record (ENR)* Top Specialty Contractors. ENR recognizes the top 600 specialty contractors in the construction industry who have met or exceeded qualifying criteria.

Qualifications are based upon yearly gross sales, scope of work, timely completion, and customer satisfaction. TSC is the only stage equipment contractor/systems integrator to have been named to this prestigious list since its inception.

Texas Scenic Company, established in 1936, is a stage equipment contractor and systems integrator based in San Antonio, Texas.

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### Creative Stage Lighting Giveaway

**Creative Stage Lighting** hosted a giveaway at LDI 2007. Three prizes -- a Columbus McKinnon Prostar Hoist, a pair of Wireless Solution W-DMX Micros, and a Leprecon ULD-360 Duplex dimmer unit -- were given away to visitors at the company's booth. The giveaway was possible courtesy of Columbus McKinnon, Wireless Solution AB, and Leprecon.

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### Apollo Produces Playbook

#### This month:

Morris Architects  
 d&b audiotechnik  
 H & H Specialties, Inc.  
 Texas Scenic Company  
 Creative Stage Lighting  
 Apollo Design Technology, Inc.  
 Electronic Theatre Controls  
 City Theatrical  
 PRG

**Apollo Design Technology, Inc.**, a leading manufacturer and distributor of lighting effect products for the entertainment industry, has developed the *Apollo Playbook* to aid high school or college drama teachers and students, and those involved in community theater.

The *Apollo Playbook* is an instructional guide to designing visual effects for popular productions by offering color and gobo recommendations for each act of the play. Volume 1 includes *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Our Town*, *The Crucible*, and *The Glass Menagerie*. Volume 2 includes *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *Death of a Salesman*, *The Miracle Worker*, and *The Odd Couple*.

To request a playbook, go to [www.internetapollo.com](http://www.internetapollo.com) and click on Marketing Materials Request. It also is available as a PDF in the downloads section of the website.

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### **ETC Shows Off Ion**

**Electronic Theatre Controls** unveiled its Ion lighting console at LDI 2007 in Orlando, Florida. Ion is the follow-up and smaller sibling to ETC's award-winning Eos console which was recently used for the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's latest world tour.

Like Eos, Ion is designed for multimedia lighting rigs delivering seamless control over conventionals, moving lights and LEDs. Eos replaced the dance company's older Obsession II console.

For more information about Ion and all ETC lighting products, go to [www.etconnect.com](http://www.etconnect.com). For more Alvin Ailey info, visit [www.alvinailey.org](http://www.alvinailey.org).

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### **Kleissler Joins City Theatrical**

Paul Kleissler recently joined **City Theatrical, Inc.** in the newly created position of Senior Engineer.

Before joining CTI, Mr. Kleissler spent eight years designing audio/video control systems for retail environments at Creative Realities Inc. Before that, he worked for BASH Theatrical lighting for 13 years, starting out as a bench technician and working his way up to department head in electronics. At the same time, he co-founded Logical Lighting Interface where he co-developed the wireless dimming system that became the de-facto standard for Broadway use. In 2003, Mr. Kleissler and CTI's Head of Engineering Larry Dunn invented the WDS Wireless Data System.

Mr. Kleissler has a BSEET degree from DeVry University and has training in circuit design, network administration, audio and video systems, and AMX control systems.

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### **PRG Adds Staff, Launches Software**

**Production Resource Group, LLC**, (PRG) recently appointed a new product manager, launched a software upgrade for Virtuoso, and refurbished most of its Vari-Lite VL6C inventory.

Tom Celner was named controls and networking product manager. In the newly created position, he will serve as PRG's national resource for two proprietary products -- the Virtuoso lighting control console and the Series 400 Power and Data Distribution System. He will work with PRG's Research and Development and Marketing teams and will be based in Chicago.

Mr. Celner joins PRG after working as a freelance programmer and designer. He worked for many years for Vari-Lite/VLPS. While there, he was closely involved in the development of Virtuoso and its subsequent upgrades. He is a graduate of the Goodman School of Drama at DePaul University where he earned a BFA degree in lighting design.

PRG recently launched the version 6.0 software upgrade for the Virtuoso control console. Two major features added in 6.0 that were asked for by users are a wave-based effects engine and multiple cue lists. Controls have been added in the upgrade expressly designed for media servers and allowing for room to expand.

PRG has nearly completed a makeover of its entire 1,200-plus rental inventory of VL6C units. Each unit has been overhauled to improve both cooling and reliability, even receiving a new moniker: the VL6C+. For more information on PRG, visit [www.prg.com](http://www.prg.com).

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### Welcome Theatre Victoria

We welcome **Theatre Victoria** as a new Sustaining member of USITT. Based in Victoria, Texas, it is the resident company of the Leo J. Welder Center for the Performing Arts. Theatre Victoria produces musicals and plays as well as presents professional artists and companies to the regional communities, and supports theatre education. Theatre Victoria acts as facility manager, operator, and technical consultant for the Welder Center. To learn what's happening in Victoria, visit [www.theatre victoria.org](http://www.theatre victoria.org).

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### UT PAC Scene Shop Upgrades

USITT appreciates the University of Texas Performing Arts Center Scene Shop upgrading its level of support to that of a Sustaining member. The Performing Arts Center regularly presents in six venues: Bass Concert Hall, Hogg Memorial Auditorium, Bates Recital Hall, B. Iden Payne Theatre, McCullough Theatre, and the Oscar B. Brockett Theatre, named for one of USITT's Fellows and honored members.

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### TOMCAT USA Helps Complete Church

Earlier this year, **TOMCAT USA** completed a project with **Texas Scenic** for the Houston Baptist Church. TOMCAT fabricated two connected truss circles designed to hang over a cross in the sanctuary like two halos. The circles were hard wired internally for lighting and future expansion and the truss had to be covered on three sides.

The project included design considerations to support a projection screen hung from the structure, and support frames were designed and fabricated for nine plexiglas acoustic reflectors (provided by Texas Scenic).

For more information, contact TOMCAT's web site at [www.tomcatglobal.com](http://www.tomcatglobal.com).

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### Wybron Launches Net-IT, Adds Hudgins

**Wybron, Inc.**, a leader of entertainment, houses of worship and architectural lighting technology, launched the Net-IT PS600 at LDI 2007 held in Orlando, Florida, and announced the promotion of Dusty Hudgins to sales manager.

The Net-IT PS600 is a 600 watt, 24 volt power supply for Wybron products and other popular lighting accessories. The Net-IT PS600 receives DMX via DMX over Ethernet protocols and acts as an Infotrace Gateway, providing all the benefits of RDM to the devices powered from it.

The Net-IT PS600 has two standard DMX outputs, making it a network node as well. It features an LCD display of user settings, the IP address, and the protocol used.

Mr. Hudgins will be responsible for the day-to-day management of Wybron's sales force and will assist Wybron dealers and customers with their questions and issues. He has been involved with lighting design projects since 1978 and joined Wybron in 2005 as a regional manager covering the Southeast and Western United States. Mr. Hudgins has a broad background of lighting design and direction experience on Broadway, houses of worship, video, sporting events, and trade shows. Previous to joining Wybron, Mr. Hudgins was an account executive with High End Systems and president of the entertainment division of Bankston-Hudgins & Associates. Before that, he was assistant lighting designer and director for Willie Nelson.

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### Theatre Projects Opens Three Facilities

#### This month:

Theatre Victoria  
 University of Texas PAC Scene Shop  
 TOMCAT USA  
 Wybron, Inc.  
 Theatre Projects Consultants  
 Stage Technologies

September was an exciting month for the team at **Theatre Projects Consultants (TPC)** with the opening of three major projects: the Auditorio Telmex (September 1), the Tempe Center for the Arts (September 8), and the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre (September 15). TPC collaborated on the design, planning, and equipment specifications for all three facilities providing services from programming through construction. With a diverse set of requirements and functions, each of these new facilities meets specific needs for these growing communities.

These new facilities are only the beginning in a series of openings for Theatre Projects before the end of the year. A new visual and performing arts center at River Campus for Southeast Missouri State University (Cape Girardeau) celebrated its opening on homecoming weekend on October 20th. On October 22, the Philadelphia Theatre Company kicked off its inaugural season in the Suzanne Roberts Theatre. The Cleveland Institute of Music welcomed the opening of its new recital Hall, Mixon Hall, on November 11. Finally, the renovation of the Stanley Theatre (Utica, New York) will usher in a new chapter in its 77-year history late this fall.

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### **Stage Technologies Assists Witches**

In a story of desire, seduction and scandal, three female protagonists impressively display their magical powers, actually provided by **Stage Technologies'** stage automation. The audience can anticipate something special is about to occur as the three *Witches of Eastwick's* feet begin to lift from the stage floor. Encouraged by their mysterious, charismatic seducer, Darryl Van Horne, the witches -- Alex, Sukie and Jane -- rise into the air, fly out above the audience, and prompt applause.

Stage Technologies again worked with Toho Co Ltd's Theatrical Division to create the flying effects for Japan's third production of *The Witches of Eastwick*. Nine BigTow winches were installed by Stage Technologies to achieve the flying effect. Each performer is flown by a group of three winches.

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**Upstate Plans Workshops, Job Fair**

Mark your calendars. It's official. The Upstate New York Regional Section will hold its fourth annual Job Fair and day of Technical Workshops hosted by SUNY-Oswego on Saturday, January 26.

The unofficial start of the day will be coffee and a meet-and-greet at 9 a.m. Workshops will commence at 9:30 a.m.. In addition to technology-focused workshops, there will be time devoted to resume and portfolio review. Lunch and a brief regional meeting will be noon to 1 p.m. followed by job interviews and workshops from 1 p.m. on.

Johan Growled, technical director at SUNY-Oswego Department of Theatre (growled@oswego.edu) is co-organizer for the event with Glimmer glass Opera Technical Director Abby Rodd (abbyrodd@glimmerglass.org).

[To Top](#) ↑**Southwest Plans Symposium & Design 2008**

The Southwest Regional Section will hold its Winter Symposium & Design 2008 event January 19 to 20 at West Texas A&M University in Canyon, Texas.

Sheila Hargett, of Texas State University, is the featured artist. Workshops will include: corset construction; work saving and innovative shop tools; joining USA, IATSE, etc.; EOS Console workshop using panorama power cyc, cyberlights, Nexaras, Mac II, etc.; emphasis control lighting system; choosing color for the production; scene painting on a motorized paint frame; generating concept studies using Photoshop; foundations and futures of stage architecture; stage rigging techniques; and sound mixing and microphone techniques. The event will feature a tour of the 186,000 square foot WTAMU fine arts complex.

Professional, academic and student design displays in set, costume, lighting, and sound will be accepted. Design prizes will be awarded to exhibitors. The deadline to enter is December 30.

The event is hosted by the WTAMU Department of Art, Theatre, and Dance along with the USITT student chapter, and sponsored by the Sybil B. Harrington College Of Fine Arts and Humanities.

Go to [www.usitt-sw.org](http://www.usitt-sw.org) to register online and enter designs. For more information contact Jim Kemmerling at 806-651-2814 or John Landon at 806-651-2815.

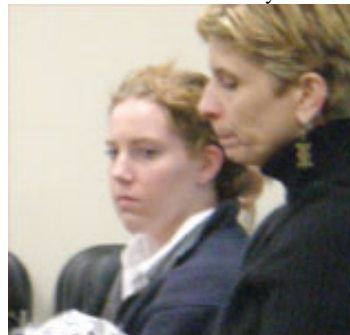
[To Top](#) ↑**Ohio Valley Fall Conference**

USITT-Ohio Valley held its Fall Conference October 13 at the renovated Boyd Cultural Arts Center on the Wilmington College Campus. The 65 attendees chose from workshops covering nine different design and technology spectrums.

Stirling Sheldon demonstrated how to build Blinky LEDs. Richard Wolpert, president of Union Connector Co., Inc., taught a workshop on Electricity 101. Kathie Brookfield, Gina Neuerer, Tamara L Honesty, and Jim Hill conducted a sequence of three workshops on Resume/Letter Writing, Interview, Portfolio Pages, and Electronic Portfolio. Kelly Yurko presented Wig Design and Fitting, right. Regina Truhart presented Time Management and Communication Tools for Student Designers and Technicians, and Raymond Kent gave a detailed overview of Planning for Video/Projection Systems.

At the closing ceremony, Matthew Benjamin, chair of the Ezekiel Awards Committee, announced the awards for the annual design and technology exhibit. Section Chair Jim Hill presented the Peggy Ezekiel Career Service Award to Katie Robbins of Otterbein College and Steve Wexler of the University of Cincinnati College, Conservatory of Music.

Other Ezekiel award recipients can be viewed on the [Section web site](#).

**This month:**

Upstate  
Southwest  
Ohio Valley

The Section thanks Becky Haines, Wynn Alexander, Lois Hock and their students at Wilmington for their help in setting up this conference.



Stirling Sheldon demonstrated how to build Blinky LEDs for the Ohio Valley Fall Conference.

Photos/Courtesy Tammy Honesty, Ohio Valley Board Member

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## Tobin Collection Offers Stunning Opportunities

Wow, wow and wow!

That's truly the only way for me to describe what I saw, or was awed by, at the McNay Art Museum's Tobin Collection of Theatre Arts. I was not prepared for the incredible depth of the collection's holdings -- unfortunately a well kept secret but certainly not by intention. Those taking part in the two-day USITT event preceding the 2008 Annual Conference in Houston will have a wonderful opportunity to remedy any lack of knowledge of all that the Tobin Collection has to offer.

In fact, Robert Lynn Bates Tobin wanted his remarkable collection to be available to more than just theatrical scholars. Mr. Tobin's educational mission for the collection was availability to everyone, but particularly to students and working designers to serve as an inspirational fount.

I arrived at the McNay, or more properly the McNay Art Museum in San Antonio -- the first museum of modern art in Texas -- not knowing what to expect and certainly with many other things on my mind including an appointment later that afternoon elsewhere. I was about 30 minutes early as I approached an ochre hued traditional Spanish style house with very typical red tile above and ornate wrought iron covering the windows.

The most singular thing I noted were the odd architectural appendages here and there, of a form seemingly incoherent with the conventional style of the house. Still non-plussed and a bit road bedraggled, I took advantage of the few minutes to myself to rush through some of the galleries. Not a fan of impressionists, I hastily strolled through the first couple of galleries only taking note of some fine craft pieces.

I did spend some time in a touring exhibit of Mexican (or Mexican wannabes) prints. I did my due diligence in purchasing the Tobin Collection book -- *An Eye for the Stage* before enjoying a few softly sunny moments in the sculpture courtyard.

I was then led to the curator's office where I was met by an impish dark haired woman full of enthusiasm and with a touch of "you don't know it yet but I'm about to share with you something so wonderful."

Jody Blake does indeed know the value of the collection placed into her care. Although one can't tell from first impressions, the Tobin Collection is something so exceptional and

At left is a scenic design for Act 1 in *Le Coq d'or (The Golden Cockerel)* in Tobin Collection of Theatre Arts at the McNay Art Museum. USITT is offering a special two-day tour of the collections before the start of the 2008 Annual Conference & Stage Expo.

Illustrations/Courtesy The McNay Art Museum

by **Janet Harreld**  
*Houston Promotions*  
Coordinator

Below, Robert Indiana's costume design for Lillian Russell in *The Mother of Us All*.



extraordinary it must be included (at least at some point) in every designer's or technician's or student's schedule. It is so wondrous that I would urge anyone who had any interest in theatrical design of any sort to make the special trip to San Antonio to view the Collection.

The Tobin Collection exhibit space in the McNay is serene and spare but also quite inviting, rather like its curator, Ms. Blake.

The heart and soul of the Collection is in the not so glamorous storage facilities in the bowels of the museum. Kept under carefully controlled light and humidity are the gems amassed by Mr. Tobin over about a 40 year period. I marveled at the ornately beautiful original costume sketches for the Ballet Russes by Leon Bakst.

I was awed by the amazing graphically oriented work by Robert Indiana for *The Mother of Us All*. I was incredulous over the complete renderings by Robert Edmond Jones for *Skyscrapers*. I oohed and aahed (or perhaps more appropriately drooled) over the initial model for *A Funny Thing Happened* . . . I was generally just slack jawed.

Graciously, Ms. Blake asked if there was someone's work I would especially like to see. I was so dumbfounded that I almost couldn't answer. Even as a very young designer, I was enthralled with Jo Meilziner's work and that happened to be the one name I could stammer out. I saw some Meilziners so exquisite they reminded me of a Turner painting with the hundreds of delicate layers of color. Photographs can't begin to be faithful to the originals.

Participants in the Tobin Collection tour in March will benefit not only from Ms. Blake's incredible knowledge about an essential collection that has been entrusted to her, but also from being witness to so many memorable and inspiring pieces by renown designers and artists in American Theatre.

The tour, which includes an overnight stay in San Antonio, will be taking place at an opportune moment for the museum, as a new exhibit on The Ballets Russes at 100 is being installed in February and March while the museum is partially closed for construction.

Participants will be able to access the contents of the exhibit along with whatever Ms. Blake shares from the vaults. This is a rare opportunity indeed.

Wow, wow and wow!

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Houston will be the site of a special golf tournament to be held before the 2008 Annual Conference & Stage Expo. Contact a member of the committee organizing the event for more information.

## Golf Tourney Added to 2008 Conference Schedule

Travis DeCastro  
*USITT Golf Tournament*

Calling all golfers! USITT will hold its first golf tournament in Houston, Texas.

Plans are underway to hold the first USITT golf tournament just prior to the 2008 Annual Conference & Stage Expo in Houston, Texas, to be held at the beautiful Wildcat Golf Club designed by Scottish Architect Roy Case. The club has two courses; the Lakes Course and the Highland Course. Both courses feature challenges for experienced and novice golfers. The Lakes Course has *lakes* so water hazards abound while the Highland course is more of a links style golf experience with lots of challenging high grass and numerous bunkers. The course itself is just a few miles from downtown Houston.

Details are being finalized but plans are for a four-person, mixed scramble along with a buffet dinner. Proceeds will benefit USITT, and various funding opportunities are being discussed. This will add to the cadre of networking opportunities at the conference.

Members of the planning committee and their e-mails are:

- Buddy Combs: [buddy@tripleccompanies.com](mailto:buddy@tripleccompanies.com)
- Carolyn Satter: [carolyn.satter@sandiegotheatres.org](mailto:carolyn.satter@sandiegotheatres.org)
- Nate Otto: [nate.r.otto@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:nate.r.otto@vanderbilt.edu)
- Travis DeCastro: [wtd2@psu.edu](mailto:wtd2@psu.edu)

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# Conference & Stage Expo

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## 2008 Stage Expo Will Fill Houston Convention Center

**Helen Willard**  
*Stage Expo Sales Manager*

The George R. Brown Convention Center is a busy place, with a wide variety of shows planned for March. Some of the events scheduled include a fishing show, a pool and spa show, a bridal show, the Dance Educators of America conference, the Cross Court Classic volleyball competition, and Cheer America. Oh, yes, and the 48th Annual USITT Conference & Stage Expo, which will take place March 19 to 22.

Stage Expo 2008 will be held in Exhibit Hall E, which is located directly across the street from the Hilton Americas Hotel. Sky bridges link the hotel to the GRBCC on both the second and third levels. Conference registration, meeting rooms, the ballroom, and General Assembly Theater can all be found on the third floor of the GRBCC. With everything located so conveniently, it will be easy to travel from hotel to exhibit hall to meeting rooms and back.

In addition to being the home of Stage Expo 2008, conference meeting rooms, and registration, the GRBCC will be the site for Wednesday morning's Keynote, Kick-off Event, and Annual General Meeting in the General Assembly Theater, and Friday night's Tech Olympics in the ballroom. Light Lab sessions will take place in the General Assembly Theater.

Several events will be held in the Hilton Americas Hotel, including Wednesday night's Opening Night; the All Conference Reception, Fellows Address, and Awards for Young Designers & Technicians, followed by the New Products Showcase, all on Thursday evening; and the Conference wraps up on Saturday night with Happy Hour followed by the Awards Banquet.

Exhibit Hall E of the GRBCC is large, at 130,000 square feet, and Stage Expo 2008 will fill it completely. With over four months until the show, just a handful of booth spaces remain to be sold. Space along the perimeter of the exhibit hall will be dedicated to special exhibits like Design Expo 2008 and the Prague Quadrennial 2007 United States national, student and architecture exhibits, so there is no room to add additional booth space in Houston. If you would like to exhibit at Stage Expo 2008 but have not yet reserved a space, please contact Helen Willard at [hpwillard@aol.com](mailto:hpwillard@aol.com).

The George R. Brown Convention Center will look very different from this recent International Quilt Festival when USITT's Stage Expo fills Exhibit Hall E. Space is almost completely booked for the March 20 to 22, 2008 Stage Expo.

Photo/Courtesy Greater Houston Convention & Visitors Bureau

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## Executive Committee

- Sylvia Hillyard Pannell, *President*
- Patricia Dennis, *Secretary*
- Travis DeCastro, *Interim Treasurer*
- Kim Williamson, *Vice-President for Commissions*
- Bobbi Owen, *Vice-President for Communications*
- Joe Aldridge, *Vice-President for Conferences*
- Alexandra Bonds, *Vice-President for International Activities*
- Carl Lefko, *Vice-President for Programming; President-Elect*
- Vacant, *Vice-President for Promotions & Development*
- Holly Monsos, *Vice-President for Members, Sections & Chapters*
- Daniel Denhart, *Vice-President for Special Operations*
- John Uthoff, *Immediate Past President*

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## Directors at Large

2005-2008

- Ann Archbold
- Bill Browning
- Dan Culhane
- David Krajec
- Martha Marking
- Brian Reed

2006-2009

- Leon Brauner
- Richard Dunham
- Debra Krajec
- Mike Murphy
- Donna Ruzika
- Bill Teague

2007-2010

- Lea Asbell-Swanger
- Nadine Charlsen
- Michael Mehler
- Mark Shanda
- Sherry Wagner-Henry
- Craig Wolf

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## Honorary Lifetime Members

- Richard L. Arnold
- Willard F. Bellman
- Joy Spanabel Emery
- Ted W. Jones
- Christine L. Kaiser
- Joel E. Rubin
- Tom Watson

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## Contributing Members

- ALLROUND-StagesForneberg
- American Harlequin Corporation
- Apollo Design Technology, Inc.
- Automatic Devices Company
- Barbizon Lighting Company
- Cirque du Soleil
- City Theatrical, Inc.
- J.R. Clancy, Inc.
- Clear-Com Communication Systems
- Creative Handbook
- Creative Stage Lighting Co., Inc.
- d&b audiotechnik
- Disney Entertainment Productions
- Electronic Theatre Controls (ETC)
- Entertainment Services & Technology Association (ESTA)
- Entertainment Technology
- Future Light
- GAMPRODUCTS, INC.
- H & H Specialties Inc.
- heatshrink.com
- InterAmerica Stage, Inc.
- KM Fabrics, Inc.
- Kryolan Corporation
- *Live Design* Magazine/LDI Show
- Martin Professional, Inc.
- Mattel-World Wide Trade Show Services
- MDG Fog Generators
- Meyer Sound Laboratories, Inc.
- Morris Architects
- Norcostco, Inc
- PRG
- Production Advantage, Inc.
- Rosco Laboratories, Inc.
- Rose Brand Theatrical Fabrics, Fabrications & Supplies
- SeaChanger by Ocean Optics
- SECOA
- Stage Research, Inc.
- StageRight Corporation
- Steeldeck Inc.
- Strand Lighting
- Syracuse Scenery & Stage Lighting Co., Inc.

- Texas Scenic Company
- Vari\*Lite
- Vincent Lighting Systems
- Vortek, a division of Daktronics
- Walt Disney Entertainment
- Wenger Corporation
- ZFX, Inc.

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### **Sustaining Members**

- A.C. Lighting Inc.
- AC Power Distribution, Inc.
- A.C.T Lighting, Inc.
- AKT3 Company
- ALPS/Advanced Lighting & Production Services, Inc.
- Altman Lighting, Inc.
- Auerbach-Pollock-Friedlander
- A V Pro, Inc.
- Bandit Lites, Inc.
- Ben Nye Makeup
- Big Apple Lights
- Brawner & Associates LLC
- California Institute of the Arts
- Center Theatre Group
- Checkers Industrial Products Inc.
- Chicago Spotlight, Inc.
- Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center
- Cobalt Studios
- Columbus McKinnon Corp.
- Comfor Tek Seating Inc.
- Cosler Theatre Design
- The Crosby Group, Inc.
- Dazian Fabrics, LLC
- Designlab Chicago
- Electronics Diversified, LLC
- Entertainment Lighting Services
- Fisher Theatrical, LLC
- Foy Invenerprises, Inc.
- GALA Systems, Inc.
- Gerriets International Inc.
- Grand Stage Company, Inc.
- Grosh Scenic Rentals
- The Hilliard Corporation
- Hollywood Lighting Services, Inc.
- I. Weiss
- International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees
- Irwin Seating Company
- Johnson Systems Inc.
- Kenmark, Inc.
- Kirkegaard Associates
- KUPO Industrial Corp
- LCS Series (Meyer Sound Laboratories, Inc.)
- Le Maitre Special Effects Inc.
- LEE Filters
- Lehigh Electric Products Co.
- Leprecon
- Leviton/NSI/Colortran
- Lex Products Corp.
- Lighting & Electronics, Inc.
- Limelight Productions, Inc.
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- LVH Entertainment Systems
- Lycian Stage Lighting
- The MAGNUM Companies, Ltd.
- Mainstage Theatrical Supply, Inc.
- Make-Up Designory
- Mehron, Inc.
- Musson Theatrical, Inc.
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- Niscon Inc.
- North Carolina School of the Arts

- Northwest High School
- Ontario Staging Limited
- OSRAM SYLVANIA
- Penn State University
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- Production Intercom, Inc.
- Prolyte Products Group
- Protech Theatrical Services, Inc
- RC4 Wireless/Soundsculpture Inc.
- Robert Juliat America
- Sapsis Rigging Entertainment Services, Inc.
- Schuler Shook
- Sculptural Arts Coating, Inc.
- Selecon
- Serapid, Inc.
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- Smooth-On, Inc.
- South Dakota State University
- Spotlight S.R.L.
- Stage Decoration & Supplies, Inc.
- Stage Equipment and Lighting, Inc.
- Stage Technologies
- Stage Technology
- Stagecraft Industries, Inc.
- Stagecraft Institute of Las Vegas
- StageLight, Inc.
- Staging Concepts, Inc.
- Strong Entertainment Lighting
- University of Texas Performing Arts Center Scene Shop
- Theatre Arts Video Library
- Theatre Consultants Collaborative, LLC
- Theatre Projects Consultants, Inc.
- Theatre Victoria
- Thematics
- Thern Inc.
- James Thomas Engineering
- Tiffin Scenic Studios, Inc.
- TMB
- Tobins Lake Sales
- TOMCAT USA, Inc.
- Topac Inc.
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- Union Connector Co, Inc.
- VectorWorks Spotlight by NNA
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# The Last Word

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## A Long Distance Summer 2007 Reminiscence

*Ben Philipp and Emily Gill are lucky people. They were two of six Study Tour Award winners for the 2007 PQ Tour. Four months later, they sat down (at separate computers in separate states) to discuss the experience of the Tour and the PQ. Transcribed by Emily Gill, who really should be grading papers.*

Emily Gill: What better way to procrastinate than putting this together! What are you avoiding today?

Ben Philipp: We're getting ready to go into technical rehearsals for *Urinetown*, my thesis project at University of Georgia.

EG: But now I have to guide someone else through their great, big final project. A BFA senior project at University of Montevallo. I'm not sure which is more stressful.

BP: Good question. Let's talk about happy things.

EG: How about the USITT Study Tour. When did you first hear it and why did you decide to apply?

BP: The idea to apply came from my professor, Sylvia Pannell. During an advising session we got to chatting ... EG: As always happened during those sessions...

BP: Yes. Took the sting out of singing up for 8AM drafting classes... anyway she told me about the Study Tour, and I was immediately interested, but it seemed far off so I really didn't think anything of it until I met up with Sarah Sophia Turner, a UGA alum and participant in the 2003 Study Tour, that I really decided to apply.

EG: Why's that?

BP: It was very dramatic... Sarah intently looked into my eyes and said, "Do it, it will change your life."

EG: And how can you refuse that? It's funny, Sarah was the first person I heard talking about it... when I went to visit UGA as a prospective student and she was talking about all the various opportunities and cool stuff she had done... It kind of sat in the back of my mind for a few years and then when time came around again, for the PQ, I knew it was something I wanted to do. And I had a similar conversation with Ms. Pannell, and Dr. Hill, too. And Tina Hantula at UGA was a big advocate of going.

BP: What did you write in your application essay?

EG: It was kind of nuts, it was titled "Please Pick Me" and was pretty informal but earnest. I was designing a Beckett play for an Atlanta group with a German guest director. His style of

The churches were exotic, and the theatre was exciting for participants in the 2007 Prague Quadrennial Study Tour. Read the article for a student's point of view of the adventure.

Photo/Emily Gill

by Ben Philipp and  
Emily Gill  
USITT PQ Tour Travel Award Winners

working was so different from anything I had seen -- it really made me feel like a bumpkin. But I wanted to go to Prague and see what was outside my little American bubble. And get a tan in Croatia.

*BP: And you collected un-exchangeable Serbian currency.*

*EG: Ha! Yes, I made a bow out of it for my dad's birthday! It was only about \$8 worth. Hey kids, keep your exchange bureau receipts! Advice from Auntie Em!*

*EG: Now, Ben, you've traveled through Europe before more or less on your own. What was different about being part of an organized tour?*

*BP: Back in 2003, I backpacked through England, France, and Italy with a close friend. We were pretty much on our own figuring out where to go, where to eat and sleep. In comparison, the Study Tour left no cathedral unexplored.*

*EG: Or national theatre...*

*BP: Yes, or national theatre scenic or costume shop. Richard Durst and MIR really put together a good program.*

*EG: And Martin!*

*BP: Oh Martin! Yes, don't forget tour guide Martin Klimenta! Our shepherd! We were in a pretty large group, but there was "no child left behind."*

*EG: Except when I was absorbed by the Germans at the Prague Cathedral.*

*BP: Okay, no capable child left behind.*

*EG: I was taking pictures and just followed some hiking-sandaled feet, then the feet turned around and started pointing at things and speaking German. A very "you're not my mommy!" experience. It was worth it though. I got some really pretty pictures. Abruptly changing the subject, which place would you most like to revisit?*

*BP: It really is a tie between the island of Hvar or Croatia...*

*EG: Oh! How I pine! Where we went to that great restaurant on a roof!*

*BP: And the really pretty beaches and landscape... and Montenegro.*

*EG: To give it a second chance?*

*BP: Yes! Remember the crazy storm that roared across the beach resort at Budva, and the power outage and pandemonium?*

*EG: But I loved Budva, and the history was really interesting. Such an interesting mix between east and west. Croatia was very Italianate, where Montenegro and Serbia were something more exotic, not as immediately familiar, or comfortable, to be really honest. I think it was because everyone in Croatia spoke nearly perfect American English.*

*BP: Because of the TV and movie imports?*

*EG: Yeah. So I think there was some kind of assimilation into what we're used to, whereas I felt more alien in Montenegro and Serbia -- definitely rural Serbia. But it was STUNNING.*

*BP: What was your favorite activity/location/whatever?*

*EG: I looooooved Split and surrounding areas in Croatia, mostly because of Diocletian's Palace and the Roman ruins. I'm pretty geeky about that stuff. But while while we were in Belgrade, we got an opportunity to see, for free, a play in Serbian. We couldn't really understand it, but we could.*

*BP: That was great. The audience was loving it.*

*EG: And it was such a young audience -- going to theatre! At a big venue! It was like the audience for a Will Farrell movie in the States, but going to the theatre.*

*BP: And it wasn't... I mean it was kind of a heavy topic, from what we could understand.*

*EG: Yeah, but it was good, and funny in places, and cleverly designed.*

*BP: Speaking of mind-blowing theatre, how 'bout that Prague Quadrennial?*

*EG: Whoo-ee, boy, I tell you what! (You have to excuse us- we're Southern.) I wanna move to Brazil now, if I didn't before.*

*BP: I'm bound for Mexico.*

*EG: Oh yeah...all the things with steel pins.*

*BP: Yeah. How do you think the American exhibit compared with the other installations?*

*EG: The main difference between all the exhibits was the importance of showing process in the exhibit. I think the USA exhibit had a lot of great examples of beautiful products and realized designs.*

*BP: Like a giant national portfolio?*

*EG: Yes, and most of the exhibits were like that, because it was so impressive to see the diversity of art that can come from one place, and then it was compounded because there were so many different places. But a few countries had a different approach in that there was a single statement or theme to the work(s) presented.*

*BP: Like Brazil featured multiple productions of a single playwright's work. That was great.*

*EG: Yes! It made a single strong statement about what the country's artists could do with one common source of text. Some exhibits were unified installations -- like Hungary and the "Baghdad Airport" idea.*

*BP: And it was cool to see the various interpretations of "design based performance" within the USA exhibit and in others.. ...*

*EG: Like the chatter-box people in tutus at the back?*

*BP: Yes, that sounded remarkably like our music for JellyFish.*

*EG: That was funny! Speaking of JellyFish, what's it like to swing hula hoops drenched in sweat?*

BP: Fabulous.

EG: *It was fun to come up out of those things and look at the range of faces and the range of...*

BP: Confusion?

EG: *Yes. People working very hard cerebrally to make some kind of serious political statement out of it.*

BP: Speaking of hot and sticky, you took a Scenofest workshop, didn't you?

EG: *I did. I took "Fashion at the Edge of Form" led by Libena Rochova, and it was very, very, very, very warm in the industrial palace. But it was well worth the heat exhaustion and nasty, nasty cut I got from delirious use of a box-cutter.*

BP: And the nice Norwegian man got you a Band-Aid!

EG: *Yes! And he made an amazing skirt out of some kind of pressed fiber stuff that we were given. My project was kind of off, but it was a great experience. How about you? Have you used anything seen and heard at PQ this semester?*

BP: Different things that I got to see have most definitely inspired my class work and current designs.

EG: *You bought Soviet goggles for Urinetown, I know.*

BP: Yeah, but even in a less direct sense, especially when it comes to scenic design. There were some great examples of use of space and working outside the "box set" that have been helpful in solving special problems. And I'm totally stealing elements of scenic designs from Serbian and Mexican designers. Directly.

EG: *But don't we all? Would you go on a future Study Tour?*

BP: I would love to go on a future Study Tour! And I think this is a *huge* opportunity that many other student designers should look into!

EG: *This is the point where you look intently into everyone's eyes and say, "Do it!"*

BP: Yes! And I might shake 'em a little.

EG: *Just to make a point. And while you're doing that, tell them to apply for the award, because dreams do come true, kids. It certainly doesn't hurt when someone else picks up over half the tab, does it?*

BP: No it doesn't! And we would like to take this opportunity to extend our thanks and gratitude to everyone who has made our travel possible through their generous gifts to USITT!

EG: *Well done. Here's your fried Balkan cheese.*

BP: And for you, some black risotto!

EG: *I never thought I could be nostalgic about squid ink and pasta...*

To support activities which make possible such dynamic interactions as this between two student award recipients, support the USITT Samuel H. Scripps International Activities Fund. For more information, click [here](#).



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