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Sightlines

July 2010

Lead Story

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Performing arts were literally steps from the door of The Westin in Charlotte, North Carolina when members of USITT's Conference Committee visited to view the facilities and learn more about the area. The Charlotte Shakespeare Festival was presenting *A Comedy of Errors* in The Green Uptown, a park space directly opposite the Charlotte Convention Center. To learn more about the city which will host the 2011 Annual Conference & Stage Expo on March 9-12, 2011, [click here](#).

Photo/Monica L. Merritt

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Joe Aldridge, who became USITT's President on July 1, talks to a hawk during a visit to Scotland. Mr. Aldridge discovered an affinity with Scotland after taking a production to the Edinburgh Fringe Fest.

Officer Profile: Joe Aldridge, USITT President

Barbara E.R. Lucas
Sightlines Editor

USITT's new president has toured Japan with Siegfried and Roy, helped stage *Oedipus at Colonus* in Greece, taken plays to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, and been artistic director for Shakespeare Under the Stars in Wimberley, Texas. Those experiences are just part of what Joe Aldridge brings to the job of leading USITT into its second half century.

For more than four decades Mr. Aldridge has been a member of IATSE Local 720, the local that serves the Las Vegas entertainment industry. While he now rarely works calls, he is a Trustee and Chair of the Nevada Resort Assn./IATSE Local 720 Training Trust, working to advance the skills of those creating magic every day in Vegas.

He has also been with the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, not continuously, since the 1970s, serving as technical director and, most recently, helping create and nurture the Entertainment Engineering and Design Program, a joint effort of the colleges of Fine Arts and Engineering. That included the task of shepherding that program through the approval process required of the State Board of Regents, and recruiting students who will benefit from the melding of the disciplines.

Mr. Aldridge has long been an early adaptor to new methods. He's been teaching students to weld and use alternate technologies since 1974, and his second-generation iPhone is crammed with apps.



Joe Aldridge, right, at the Annual Conference in Wichita.

His commitment to both training and skillful use of

technology has been combined in several different initiatives. He has served as one of USITT's representatives to the Entertainment Technician Certification Program council since it was formed, and received a USITT Special Citation in 2006 for that work. He was recently appointed by IATSE's National President Matthew Loeb to serve on the union's Craft Advancement Program committee.

Mr. Aldridge has been a key member of the USITT Conference Committee since 1995, (see his recollections of joining the committee [here](#)). He served as Vice-President for Special Operations for a year and then Vice-President for Conference for six years before becoming President-Elect in 2009. He assumed the reins as President on July 1, 2010 and will serve a two-year term.

In talking to Mr. Aldridge, one theme repeats. He has been asked to take on many of the unique assignments which he has enjoyed. He worked with Siegfried and Roy when they were a "13 minute" act at Bally's in Las Vegas, was asked to work with them again at the Stardust, and the Frontier, and then for the tour in Japan. He was asked to assist USITT's Conference, and the ETCP committee.

One place where Mr. Aldridge did the asking is in his partnership with his wife, Sherry. They have been married 41 years, and knew each other even before Mr. Aldridge received his undergraduate degree from Texas Tech. Sherry is a nursing educator and teaches psychiatric nursing at a private college in Las Vegas. Their daughter, Summer, attended UNLV (where Mr. Aldridge received his Master's degree) and is now married and working in the hospitality industry in Las Vegas.

Summer helped provide one of those relaxing touches at past USITT Conferences, leading the crew that provided chair massages throughout the long days of Stage Expo.

For Mr. Aldridge, there is always a new way of combining the serious work of the event with the lighter touches that make it more enjoyable.

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Announce Preliminary 2011 Candidates

Sylvia Hillyard Pannell

Nominations Committee Chair

The Nominations Committee has prepared a slate of candidates for the 2011 election cycle. Petitions for additional nominees may be submitted until November 1.

The preliminary slate for the 2011 election is:

- **President Elect:** Lea Asbell-Swanger and Raymond Kent
- **Secretary:** Erik Viker and Sherry Wagner-Henry
- **VP International Activities:** Markéta Fantová and Mike Monsos
- **VP Commissions:** David Krajec and Carolyn Satter
- **VP Conferences:** David Will (incumbent)

Officers will serve three-year terms starting July 1, 2011.

Directors (six to be elected); Don Childs, Dan Culhane, Jack Feviou, Tony Hardin, Michael Hooker, Jenny Knott, Andi Lyons, Mike Murphy, Kevin Rigdon, Eric Rouse, Loren Schreiber, and Joe Tilford

Directors will serve three-year terms beginning July 1, 2011.

Candidates may be added to the slate by petition supported by no fewer than 50 signatures verified as those of members in good standing. Additional nominations shall be accompanied by written approval of the nominee, a brief biographical description, and a position statement. Petitions for additional nominations for each elective office may be conducted electronically for candidates who wish to be included on the ballot.

To file an e-mail petition, confirm the willingness of the individual to stand for election; collect the names of at least 50 current USITT members who have agreed to support the nomination; and send an e-mail by November 1 to Patricia Dennis, incoming Nominations Committee Chair, at Patricia_Dennis@usitt.org. The e-mail must contain the name, brief biography, and position statement of the nominee as well as name, membership number and e-mail address of each member who signed the petition.

Petitions may still be filed on paper and mailed to Mrs. Dennis at USITT, 315 South Crouse Avenue, Suite 200, Syracuse, NY 13210. These must be received in the USITT office no later than November 1.

Voting this year will again use an online system, with its secure electronic process for e-balloting. This allows all members to participate in the election process easily and conveniently. By voting, members invest in the future of the Institute.

Special thanks go to the current Nominations Committee for the conscientious work and many hours devoted to developing the 2011 USITT election slate.

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USITT Board Enters New Era

USITT's Board of Directors successfully entered a new era by conducting its first web-based Board of Directors meeting on June 18, 2010. More than two dozen board members and National Office staff participated in the meeting where new policies for USITT's Standing Committees were approved. (The policies may be viewed [here](#)). The Board of Directors has increased the number of required meetings from two to a minimum of four meetings per year. The web-based format and increased number of meetings allows the Board to conduct Institute business in a more timely manner.

The next Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for Friday afternoon August 13, and will again be a web-based event. All meetings are open to the membership and anyone who would like to call in and listen may do so by contacting Shannan in the National office at Shannan@office.usitt.org. More specific information will be available in the August *Sightlines*.

[To Top](#) ↑**To Rendez-vous in August**

The CITT/ICTS Rendez-vous 2010 will be held August 12 to 14, in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

The conference offers full days of seminars, workshops, and social events, with more intense certification programs and master class workshops held two days prior to the conference. An industry trade show is featured where CITT/ICTS corporate members present new products and technologies.

The Atlantic Region section is proud to host CITT/ICTS's 20th Annual Conference -- *20 Years of Connecting the Canadian Live Performing Community*.

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This month:
USITT's Board Meets

CITT Rendez-vous
Behind the Scenes Cards

Orders are being taken for the 2010 Behind the Scenes Holiday Cards, created by some of the industry's most talented designers – David Gallo, Christine Jones, Jeremy Railton, and Andrew Hefter.

Three ordering options are available, including personalized cards with a company logo and custom message (minimum 250 cards), card packs of 10 with a standard greeting, and electronic versions to be sent via email as a jpg, gif or pdf.

Orders will be taken until September 1 to arrive in early November. All proceeds benefit The ESTA Foundation's Behind the Scenes program. View and order cards at www.estafoundation.org/bts/holidaycards2010.htm. For more information, contact Ryan Swearingen at 212-244-1421 or holidaycard@estafoundation.org.

For more information about Behind the Scenes, to donate, or to apply for a grant, visit www.estafoundation.org/bts.htm.

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PQ Selections Demonstrate 'The Edge'

Susan Tsu

USITT/USA Exhibit Curator

The USITT/USA curators for the 2011 Prague Quadrennial of Design and Space reviewed 360 entries that spanned stunning Broadway productions to inventive, devised work done by one passionate designer alone in her studio. Thirty-five productions will represent the United States of America in Prague in June 2011 with the theme "On the Edge."

Two productions speaking to that are *Apollo* and *The American Play*. Director/designer Nancy Keystone takes the pulse of U.S. social and political consciousness told through history.

Apollo probes the questions: what was sacrificed to become today's America? And was it worth it?

As opinions form about the Obama presidency, *Appomattox*, an opera staged by Robert Woodruff, takes the audience back to the



The production of *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett with Paul Chan as Artistic Director, which was staged New Orleans, will be included in the USITT/USA exhibit as part of the Prague Quadrennial of Design and Space.

Photo/Lee Celano

Let us not waste our time in idle discourse! (Pause. Vehemently.) Let us do something, while we have the chance! It is not every day that we are needed. Not indeed that we personally are needed. Others would meet the case equally well, if not better. To all mankind they were addressed, those cries for help still ringing in our ears! But at this place, at this moment of time, all mankind is us, whether we like it or not. Let us make the most of it, before it is too late! Let us represent worthily for once the foul brood to which a cruel fate

end of the Civil War, while *Bloody, Bloody Andrew Jackson*, by Le Freres Corbusier, presents the opinion that America was and is a troublemaking teenager in the world. In *Fondly do we Hope... Fervently do we Pray*, Bill T. Jones envisions "the America that might have been had Lincoln completed the Reconstruction." Always conscience-prodding, Ping Chong reminds, through voices from marginalized communities, that there are *Undesirable Elements* in the melting pot, and the Broadway production of *American Idiot* unrelentingly pushes America's "wasted youth" into our faces questioning who the American idiot really is.

Three plays showing Americans grappling with the Bush years are: *Waiting for Godot*, boldly placed in the streets of New Orleans, in the devastated Lower Ninth Ward and the front yard of an abandoned house in Gentilly (by Paul Chan after the production concept of Troy Hourie for Classical Theatre of Harlem); *Love Unpunished* by Pig Iron Theatre -- a resolutely apolitical attempt to reclaim the humanity of the dead and to raise the possibility of community in 9/11-era America; and *Surrender* by the International Wow Company which "simulated the training, deployment to Iraq, and return of a platoon of soldiers enacted by the audience. Upon arrival, the audience was issued boots, a uniform and a replica M-4 rifle."

Desire Under the Elms and *Aida* re-envision classics in ways that are utterly surprising. *Desire Under the Elms*, directed by Robert Falls, "took place in a rocky New England setting with the house that protagonists fight for suspended high in the air out of everybody's reach." Led by stage director Christopher Alden, the *Aida* team created "a site specific production as Berlin itself was the protagonist, physically represented.... by fine, slick modern architecture that self consciously evokes the historical and traditional Berlin."

The U.S. exhibition structure will become a space where projection and interactive media will take over at times, and pieces such as Builder's Association's *Continuous City*, *Fatebook* from New Paradise Labs, *Fire Island* by 3 Legged Dog, and *Screen Test* by Rob Roth will change the space from an exhibit to an event as American directors and designers grapple with a love/hate relationship with technology and truth.

Some stunning works by theatre artists will push questions of existence such as those by Elizabeth Streb of *Streb Extreme Action*, where performers seem to defy gravity and death with every move, and David Kaplan in *The Day on Which a Man Dies*. The latter play was written by Tennessee Williams as a new form beyond naturalism and was kept in reserve until 2008, as the playwright intended. It is about Jackson Pollack and the artist's consciousness split between creation and destruction.

On a lighter note, cross-dressing performance artist Joey Arias and brilliant puppet master Basil Twist have teamed to create *Arias with a Twist*, a "docu-fantasy" about each of their careers. "These two national treasures unleash their epic imaginations to conjure

which a cruel fate
consigned us! What do
you say?



— *Waiting for Godot*
by Samuel Beckett

both a modern and intimate fantasy.”

Live performance that touches on all the exhibit’s themes, including the destruction of the planet, will be provided by punning costume activist, Pat Oleszko and puppeteering political satirist, Paul Zaloom.



Warosaurus, one of Oleszko’s inflatable series from *Airtopia*, will hang above the U.S. Exhibition site to greet viewers as they enter the space, as a reminder that great work in the United States often comes from modest places.

The curators are profoundly grateful for the remarkable interest shown for this major international celebration of design for performance. Start planning now to travel to Prague and see the United States and more than 55 other country's exhibitions in person. PQ11 runs from June 16 to 26, 2011 .

The National, Student, and Architecture exhibits for PQ11 will be housed in the Veletržní Palace, Prague, Czech Republic. For a complete listing of the productions invited to be shown in the USITT-USA Exhibit, go to 2011exhibit.usitt.org/home.php/Submissions.

Tasked with a socio-political theme that is at once self-reflective and self-critical, the job of choosing fewer than 40 productions was difficult. Many reviews were needed to make the final decisions. As though called to action by Samuel Beckett with consciences bared, the curators for the U.S. National Exhibit debated themes central to the exhibition and wrestled with the many fine production submissions, before completing the selection process in May.

The Edge refers to the brave and dangerous edge of creation, but also refers to the United States as a country on edge.

Note: Descriptions of the plays are excerpted from the submissions, websites, and reviews of the accepted groups.

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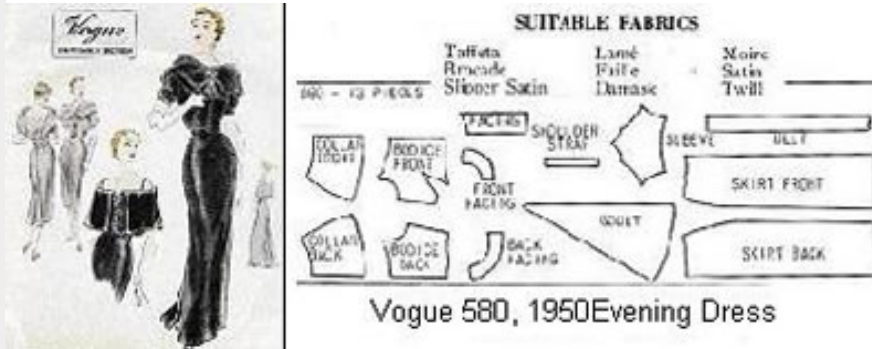
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An evening dress pattern is just one of the thousands of items which are searchable online as part of the ever-expanding Commercial Pattern Archive.

Archive Grows, Leads to Exhibits

Joy Spanabel Emery
Curator

Begun almost 15 years ago as an effort to preserve an ephemeral part of costuming, the Commercial Pattern Archive (CoPA) now includes more than 48,000 records and 81,000 images as well as books, journals, periodicals, and display items.

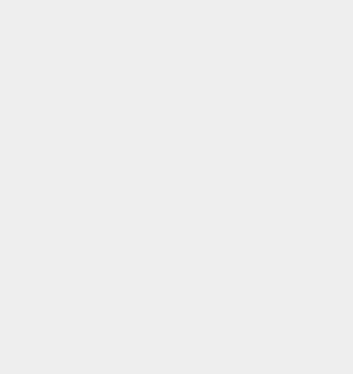
A recent donation of mini-manikins, small-scale display dolls to display styles being sold by the pattern companies, with some sample garments and patterns for making other styles are included in an exhibit at the University of Rhode Island Special Collections unit. Images of the exhibit will be posted at www.uri.edu/library/special_collections. These items, as well as some patterns and publications, are part of the Elizabeth Brown Collection in the Archive.

The CoPA was initially supported by a project grant in 1995 from USITT and has continued to receive the Institute's support through the Edward F. Kook Endowment Fund and the Commissioner's Fund.

The sewing pattern collection, with patterns dating from the 1860s to 2000, is digitized and is available online or in an abridged four-volume CD-ROM set. Both can be searched in a number of ways including garment types, year, pattern company, and keywords.

The online database continues to grow with new additions such as the 2,000 patterns and 6,000 images added to the database this year. Student assistants, a volunteer, and the curator work to keep the database current.

Subscriptions to the online database and CD sales help support the



project. More information on this unique resource of everyday wear may be found at www.uri.edu/library/special_collections/COPA. To get a subscription or order the CDs see “Order Now” under the CoPA header. Donations of patterns, periodicals and other related materials support the continued growth of the archive.

In December, an exhibit of toys made from patterns dating from 1909 to 1970 with related patterns and publications was presented.

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Books and More

Jim Lucas*Member Services & Ad Sales Associate*

USITT members are eligible for 30 percent off all titles and free shipping from Focal Press. Books such as *Character Costume Figure Drawing, Second Edition* by Tan Huaixiang and *A Practical Guide to Stage Lighting, Second Edition* by Steven Louis Shelley are among the books on theatre offered. To order call 800-545-2522 (U.S. and Canada only) and mention offer code "95116" or order online at www.focalpress.com and enter "95116" in the offer code box.

Music Books Plus offers members 10 percent off any purchase from web. To order visit [www.](http://www.musicbooksplus.com)



musicbooksplus.com and enter your USITT member number in the comments field. Or call 800-265-8481 and quote your member number when ordering.

Stage Research, Inc. offers special pricing on educational DVDs. Learn more about Stage Research's popular line of audio and lighting software, as well as new features for its RFGuru product, unveiled at the 2010 USITT Annual Conference & Stage Expo held in Kansas City. Visit www.stageresearch.com to learn more. Contact Stage Research at 888-267-0859 or sales@stageresearch.com with member number to order and receive the discount.

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.

Those with questions or suggestions for a new benefit can contact Member Services & Ad Sales Associate Jim Lucas at 800-938-7488 ext. 102 or jim@office.usitt.org.

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ESTA, PLASA Merger Approved

ESTA, the principal trade association for the entertainment services and technology industries in North America, and PLASA, the lead body for those working in the live events, entertainment and communication industries worldwide, have voted to merge their two organizations.

The announcement comes after lengthy consultations with both sets of memberships which concluded recently in a formal vote of members - ESTA via a month-long electronic ballot in May and PLASA via its Annual General Meeting June 2. Well over 93 percent of members from each association supported the move which will see ESTA and PLASA integrated to create a single international trade association operating under the PLASA name.

The merger will effectively create the first truly international industry-wide membership body of over 1,200 manufacturers, installers, dealers, rental companies, service providers, and consultants working across the entertainment and installation industries. This will include members of PERA, the former Production Equipment Rental Association, which recently merged with ESTA.

For more information on the organizations and the merger, visit www.esta.org or www.plasa.org.

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Your Association with Expertise

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Production Manager Named

Congratulations to Tayneshia Jefferson, Vice-Commissioner for the Management Commission, on her new position as the production manager with the Indiana University Department of Theatre in Bloomington, Indiana. She succeeds David Grindle, who has joined USITT as Executive Director.

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Member Oversees Welcome Home Event

David Stewart spent part of the spring overseeing preparations of the May 23 *LZ Lambeau: Welcoming Home Wisconsin's Vietnam Veterans* held at Lambeau Field. The event was part of a weekend-long celebration in Green Bay held to honor and thank Wisconsin's Vietnam Veterans, while offering a warm welcome home that many never received.

The event served as a tribute to Wisconsin's "brave men and women who sacrificed greatly in service to our country," according to Governor Jim Doyle and honored "those who were killed in action and those still missing and listed as unaccounted for from the Vietnam War."

The LZ in the celebration's name referred to the Landing Zones that Vietnam Veterans were often deployed to.

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Ming Cho Lee Honored

Renowned scenic designer Ming Cho Lee was honored with the 2010 TDF/Irene Scharaff Robert L.B. Tobin Award for Sustained Excellence in Technical Design. The awards presentation also included Albert Wolsky, legendary costume designer, receiving the TDF/Irene Sharaff Lifetime Achievement Award and John David Ridge receiving the TDF/Irene Sharaff Artisan Award. Ceremonies were held April 23 at the Hudson Theatre in New York City.

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Fun in Charlotte

This month:
Tayneshia Jefferson

David Stewart

Ming Cho Lee

In Charlotte

IATSE Training Facility

While a great deal of serious business was accomplished during the planning meeting for the 2011 Annual Conference during a recent visit to Charlotte, the group did have a few moments to enjoy the native version of barbecue. Just a short ride on the light rail, and a quick walk through the humid evening, the variety of beverages and barbecue at Mac's Speed Shop provided a great adventure.



Photo/Barbara E.R. Lucas

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Break Ground for Training Facility

SaylorGregg Architects' new IATSE 8 Training and Education Center is under construction in South Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The new building features a quarter acre of extensive vegetated green roof and a programmable fiber-optic illuminated ceiling system which extends from the main entrance lobby out to the exterior entrance marquee. While the new facility's primary use will be to support the training and educational activities of Local 8's membership, areas of the building have been designed with the dual purpose to accommodate catering and will be available for rental. The Main Training Room, a 5,700 square-foot space, has been designed to be divided to simultaneously accommodate two smaller events from a single kitchen if needed.

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Takes Part in Sponsorship, Names VP Sales

In the interest of bringing valuable information about performing arts center design to a worldwide audience of architects, consultants, dealers, and theatre professionals, **J. R. Clancy, Inc.** supported the International Theatre Engineering and Architecture Conference (ITEAC) as a Silver Sponsor. The firm also named a new vice president of sales.

J. R. Clancy has been involved in all of the ITEAC conferences since the first one in 2002 and is the only U.S. manufacturer to participate in all of the ITEAC events. As part of the sponsorship, representatives from the company joined panel discussions at ITEAC on rigging issues.

Jim Crooks was recently named vice president of sales based in Syracuse, New York. He brings more than three decades of industry experience to J. R. Clancy. In 1993, he joined Portland-based Entertainment Technology (ET) as its western regional manager and vice president, marketing. ET was acquired by Stamford based ROSCO Laboratories and later sold to a conglomerate called Genlyte. In 2007, Genlyte was acquired by Philips. Within the Philips Lighting group, Jim has held several positions with Lightolier, Entertainment Technology, Vari-lite and other Philips-owned brands. His industry experience includes two stints at Minneapolis-based SECOA, first as sales and marketing manager and later as vice president, sales. Early in his career, Mr. Crooks worked for California-based Strand Century/Strand Lighting and New York-based Kliegl Brothers Lighting.

More information about J. R. Clancy is available at www.jrclancy.com, or by calling 800- 836-1885.

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ETC

Rose Brand Theatrical
Fabrics, Fabrications &
Supplies

PRG

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Time for Inspection?

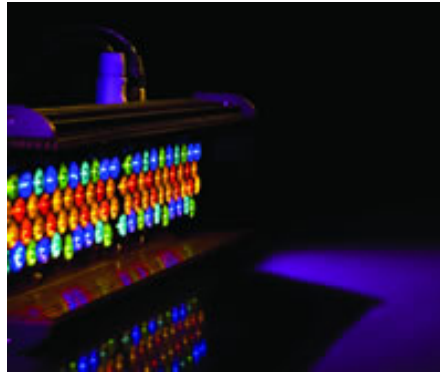
It may seem like a nuisance, and it's tough to remember to call the inspector, but annual inspections are critical to a rigging system's safe operation. Stage rigging is unusual, because it's one of the few forms of rigging that lifts weight over people standing below it. Now there's an easy way to remember to get that inspection done. All **J. R. Clancy** automated rigging systems come with yellow indicator lights that flash when it's time for an inspection.

When the service light comes on, call J. R. Clancy at 800-836-1885, and they will recommend an ETCP-certified inspector in your area.

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Fixtures Win Lighting Award

ETC's Selador Series LED fixtures have received another international award, this time for Best Intelligent Lighting Fixture, at the PALME Middle East Awards 2010. These prestigious regional awards honor innovation and technical excellence in lighting design.



The Selador fixtures were nominated for the award by Dubai-based distributor Oasis Enterprises.

For more information on Selador LEDs and other ETC products, visit www.etcconnect.com.



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Website Revamped, Blog Added

Rose Brand Theatrical Fabrics, Fabrications & Supplies

has redeveloped the custom sewing section of its website to provide a wealth of new information to customers interested in custom-sewn stage curtains, event



drapes, maskings, backdrops, digitally printed fabric, projection screens, stretch shapes and other items. The intent of the new section is to both educate and inspire customers.

The new section at bit.ly/CustomSewing features a video portfolio of Rose Brand's recent work, animated demonstrations of different curtain types, and information about curtain fullness, finishes, and fabrics.

Rose Brand's newest blog post is written by guest author, Sarah Oliphant of Oliphant Studios. She describes a recent dilemma she faced and the big solutions she found at Rose Brand's Secaucus warehouse. Visit blog.rosebrand.com to see the entire story.

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PRG's Technology in *Iron Man 2*

During principal photography, Director of Photography Matthew Libatique, ASC and Gaffer Mike Bauman turned to **PRG** for help with two of *Iron Man 2*'s largest setups.

Making their feature film debut, 20 PRG Bad Boy luminaires were a key part of the massive setup at Sepulveda Dam, the location used for the exterior of the Stark Expo. For the impressive interior sequences of the Stark Expo and the Hammer Expo, PRG provided a large LED video wall with content controlled by the PRG Mbox Extreme v3 media server.

For more information on PRG, visit www.prg.com.



Photo/Courtesy Industrial Light & Magic / Marvel

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Firms Combine for Vertical Success

The Dee and Charles Wyly Theatre in the AT&T Performing Arts Center, in Dallas, Texas, is a “vertical theatre” that has the back-of-house and front-of-house areas situated above and below several stories of performance space.

Serapid, Inc.’s Rigid Chain telescope actuators are part of a system that services the stage levels enabling scenery and seating to be lifted or lowered from storage facilities. Serapid asked **Stage Technologies** in Las Vegas, Nevada, to create a bespoke system for controlling the modular seating lifts that transport the seating up and down the “superfly” tower. Stage Technologies also provided development and modification of cutting-edge, wireless automation equipment - technology that allows a single operator to move the Serapid Lift Systems at pre-set speeds from anywhere in the building where the Stage Technologies wireless signal is available.

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System Highlights Diversity of Instruments

Music is the oldest language on Earth, one everyone instinctively recognizes regardless of nationality or age. The Musical Instrument Museum in Phoenix, Arizona describes itself as “the world’s first global musical instrument museum” with an impressive array of instruments from nearly 250 countries and territories.



Stage Technologies Las Vegas installed an automation system in the museum’s 299-seat music theatre. This is part of the museum’s mission to heighten awareness of the diversity of musical instruments throughout history and the world.

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Spots Still Available for Teacher Training

This month:
Serapid, Inc.

Stage Technologies

Cobalt Studios

Spots are still available for this year's Teacher Training Class July 5 to 9 at **Cobalt Studios**.

This session is designed to aid teachers in creating a basic scenic painting class as well as give them techniques to increase the depth of their department's painting ability. It is aimed at the teacher who has little support or training in the scenic arts and seeks greater knowledge of procedure and technique.

Course instruction is a minimum of seven hours daily in class, Monday through Friday. For more information visit www.cobaltstudios.net.

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Joe Aldridge spoke about the path that lead him to the presidency of USITT in remarks at the USITT Annual Conference in Kansas City, Missouri.

Photo/Tom Thatcher

Carrying on a Legacy

Joe Aldridge
USITT President

Remarks delivered at the 2010 Annual Conference

What an honor it is for me to have been elected to serve as the 25th President of this great organization. Please accept my sincere gratitude for your confidence in entrusting this responsibility to me.

Wow! Fifty down, and at least 50 to go! Was it really 10 years ago, in Denver, that we celebrated 40 years of existence? Now we're 50, and looking to the future to see what is in store for USITT. I thought that we should get a jump on planning for the next big milestone for USITT, so, if you are interested, we are beginning to plan for our 100th anniversary. The Centennial Planning Committee sign-up sheets are available in the lobby. I encourage you to be the first in your Commission or Section to volunteer!

I have to admit that I was wondering how I came to be in this position in USITT, and I realized that it probably began in March of 1991, on a stairway in the Seattle Convention Center. It was then that I realized that my anonymity had been blown. (Yeah, right! How do you hide an 800 pound gorilla under the sofa?)

It recently dawned on me that the events of that day had a very profound affect on my professional life, and it was affected in a very positive way. Up until then, except for a brief stint as a presenter at the Annual Conference in Boston in 1991, I was happily minding my own business, partaking of the programming and socializing that the Conference had to offer but without any real responsibilities whatsoever, so to speak. Then it happened.

Leon Brauner approached me as I was headed to a session at that Conference in Seattle and asked to “have a word” with me. Well, I was impressed. I knew who Leon was, I knew that he was involved with Conference planning or programming, I knew that he was important, but how did he know who I was? What could be so important that he needed to have a word with me? As it turns out, he had been in a Conference Planning Committee meeting, and Las Vegas had been discussed as an option for an upcoming event. It seems that one of my colleagues from Las Vegas (in 1991 there couldn’t have been more than a couple of dozen of us) had lobbied for Las Vegas as a good Conference location. I wasn’t sure what that meant for me, but I was willing to listen.

Leon asked whether or not I would consider serving as local committee chair for the Annual Conference if it were to be held in Las Vegas. Well, I was flattered and said I’d consider it. Consider it! How in the world could I refuse? What an honor! My shot at my 15 minutes! (My lack of military training should be apparent. I didn’t know any better than not to volunteer).

For better or worse, that was my introduction to leadership in USITT. Through that encounter, I have had many wonderful experiences and made many, many friends. I want to thank all of those who have supported my participation and encouraged me to continue to grow in USITT and professionally.

I would especially like to thank my wife, Sherry, who has had to endure my absence while volunteering for this organization. I think that this year is the first in over 19 years that I have actually been home to help celebrate her birthday. I have to tell you, I was at a total loss for a suitable gift since I didn’t yet have the 2010 Syracuse Scenery and Stage Lighting pot holders, apron, or bag to give her. I have always relied on the Conference to furnish me with gift-giving ideas and options for this occasion. Anyway, I have been able to make that up to her this week. In fact, she got to choose her own colors for the pot holders! Her collection is intact!

Although he isn’t here, I want to thank my friend and mentor, the Dean of the College of Fine Arts at UNLV. Jeff Koep has provided strong support and encouragement over the years. He recognized the value of my involvement in USITT and has helped to sustain my activities as a volunteer. In fact, he proudly touts USITT membership to other administrators on the UNLV campus as the type of professional organization that faculty should be involved with.

I would also like to thank my many USITT friends. I have had the

great honor and privilege of working with you over the past 19 years. Too numerous to name individually, my sincere appreciation goes out to all of you.

This is a truly humbling experience. To remind me just how humbling, I have asked that the names of those who have served as President before me be displayed on the screen, so that I am ever mindful of the standards that have been established for this office. It is one heck of a burden to have to bear and an absolute honor to have the opportunity to attempt to uphold those standards!

USITT has had the good fortune to be stewarded by dedicated and caring volunteers, allowing us to reach this milestone, our 50th anniversary. With careful planning and deliberation we should be able to grow and be strong for the next 50 years and beyond.

As I hope you are aware, we have recently undergone an extensive assessment and review process. This is allowing us to make constructive decisions about needed organizational tweaking and changes that will keep us relevant for our members and the industry.

Change can be good, if done in a judicious manner. Organizations such as USITT need to be proactively engaged in organizational reviews and revisions on a regular basis. I believe that USITT will emerge from these assessment and re-organization efforts as a more efficient membership organization. One of the most important and encouraging things that I have witnessed through this process is the rekindling of passion for the Institute from many of our esteemed past leaders. It is my intent to utilize this passion for the further good of the Institute. I, for one, appreciate their willingness to continue to serve the organization. They represent a vast body of knowledge that is an invaluable resource, and their offers of assistance are gratifying. I intend to take advantage of their kind offers and, with their counsel, I will be able to make considered and informed decisions as we go forward.

I encourage you, as members, to seek out those of us elected to represent and lead you. Ask questions if you need information about anything that has been transpiring. Find ways to become involved in the growth and revitalization of USITT as we embark on our next 50 years. Encourage your colleagues and students to join and become involved with the good work being done by USITT. This is a volunteer organization. Volunteers have made the past 50 years possible and our future promising.

I would be remiss if I didn't express my gratitude to the hard-working volunteers who have made this conference a success. As you may know, my roots are with the Conference Committee. I know first hand of the sacrifices that they make to ensure that our Conferences are as seamless and enjoyable as possible. This celebration is clear evidence of that dedication.

I also know that the Commissions and the Commission leadership have had a strong hand in ensuring that we have quality

programming at each Conference. We also owe a debt of gratitude to our Sustaining and Contributing members, whose support enables us to survive throughout the year. And a great big thank you to the ladies in the National Office. They make volunteering easy! They collectively have our backs! And finally, thanks are in order to each and every one of you for your support and participation. You, the members, are USITT.

I relish this opportunity to serve you as President for the next two years. Exciting times lie ahead!

Thank you!

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Ohio Valley hosts Design Master Class

On May 22, 25 people from all over the Ohio Valley section converged on the Denison University Mulberry Computer Lab for a two-day master class on media design for live performances presented by Associate Professor Jacob Pinholster from Arizona State University.

Mr. Pinholster generously shared his wealth of training and experience as a media designer for a wide range of productions from experimental new work to Broadway shows. His work will be seen again on Broadway in *The Pee Wee Herman Show* opening this October.

Participants learned about creating masks in Photoshop, use of AfterEffects for editing including chroma keying and luma keying of video and how to map images to surfaces as well as sampling a variety of playback systems -- from the moderately priced QLab to Isadora, and even the high-end, Watchout.



Participants remarked that the presenter and workshop exceeded their expectations. Some were beginning to generate cues for upcoming shows by the end of the weekend.

The section expressed sincere thanks to Chris Faur and Denison University for hosting the event as well as Mr. Pinholster for a dynamic and exciting weekend "making the world safe for projection design." There has already been discussion about continuing this topic with another master class in the future.



Save the date for the Fall Conference for the Ohio Valley Section. It will be held Saturday, September 25 at Capital

This month:
Ohio Valley
New England
Heart of America

University in Columbus, Ohio It is shaping up to be an exciting day of fun and informative sessions!

Photos/Tammyi Honesty

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Barbecue Planned

Members in the New England area should plan now to attend the New England Regional Section Barbecue which will be held from 1 to 4 p.m., Saturday, August 21, 2010. Section Chair Joe Donovan will host the event as his home at 28 Monroe Highway in Brooks, Maine.

The barbecue will be in the afternoon. For anyone interested, the group we will then drive to the University of Maine (about 45 minutes) for a tour of the facilities and an opportunity to see *The Mousetrap*, part of the university's new summer season.

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New Officers in HOA

Several news officers have been added by Heart of America. Elected as a new Vice President for Membership is Heather Hillhouse of Stephens College. Ben Stark of Kansas State University joins Christopher Waller as Vice President for programming.

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Every member of USITT has a unique place within the organization, and each intersects in varied and wonderful ways. Shown here are the winners of the H&H Specialties Student Conference support, who each received a rebate of their conference fees through the generosity of H & H Specialties and Reid Neslange, a USITT Fellow, and strong supporter of the organization.

Photo/Tom Thatcher

The Focus Is on 'U'

David Grindle
Executive Director

It begins with the letter **U**, USITT. Yet the Institute has always been an organization about you, the member. Founded as an organization to exchange ideas and build upon each other's knowledge and expertise; the individual member has always been, and will continue to be, the true focus of USITT.

The work of those people across the country who organize events, research and write, and work in the art of theatre technology, that is the true work of USITT, and that is what we should be most proud of, our human resources. "U are the Institute" is the unofficial working motto of the office. Without members to support and promote, we really have no purpose and we value our purpose.

"I am the Institute" is the motto I would encourage all members to adopt.

I, it's the center of our name. The individual member is who we are here to celebrate. That said, you will soon see that celebration as we begin to profile our members on the website, in *Sightlines*, and across the Institute. Our greatest resource should be the one we show off and take pride in, and the first people we should share with is ourselves.

That includes everyone taking pride in membership. I ask each

one of you to make sure “Proud Member of the United States Institute for Theatre Technology” appears in your biographics online and in programs.

Take the time to talk about yourself or your friends. We want to celebrate the achievements of you, the center of the organization. Did you get a promotion? Win an award? Receive tenure? Have something published outside of Institute publications? We want to know about those things so we can share them with the rest of the membership. We’ve even set up an e-mail address just for such information. Use it. info@office.usitt.org.

Members. We exist because of you, for you, and through you. As we go in to the next 50 years and beyond, help us celebrate U, the beginning, and that will lead to a never-ending future.

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Participants in the 2010 Short Reach Short Riders Tricycle Ride gathered between races for a group picture. This is the fourth year that Indiana's Mount Vernon High School Student Chapter of USITT has held its Short Reach Short Riders Trike Race.

Photo/Dana Taylor

Teenagers! Trikes! Again!

A blustery spring day in Indiana was the background for USITT's Mount Vernon High School Chapter's 4th Annual Short Reach Short Riders Trike Race for Behind the Scenes.

Fifteen student riders competed in relays, sprints, and the dreaded "Enduro" (6/10 of a mile around the school). Rather than ride full-size bicycles or even adult-style tricycles, the students participate on vehicles designed to challenge their ability to save their knees. The name of the event is a tribute to the Long Reach Long Riders motorcycle ride.

Winners of this year's events were: **Relay** - Team Vincent (sponsored by Vincent Lighting Systems); **Sprint** - Andrew Abad (sponsored by Barbara E.R. Lucas); and **Enduro** - Diane Lintzenich (sponsored by Kim Craigie).

Sponsors for this year's ride were: MVHS Chapter of FFA, MVHS Chapter of USITT, Ms. Craigie, Adam Hayward, Ms. Lucas, John McGraw, Lori Rubinstein, Bill Sapsis, and Vincent Lighting Systems. Funds raised this year were just over \$2,000. Donations can still be made directly to Behind the Scenes **online**; by calling The ESTA Foundation at 212-244-1421, or by sending a check to Behind the Scenes, 875 Sixth Avenue, Suite 1005, New York, NY 10001.

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The light rail system runs right through the center of the Charlotte Convention Center, with convenient stops and easy access to much of the Queen City.

Photo/Ashely Hawkins

Spotlight on Charlotte: Theatre Education

Ashley Hawkins

Charlotte Promotions Student Representative

Teaching and theatre are a labor of love. Both require exceptional talent, creative thinking and sometimes, saintly patience.

Combining the two can be exhilarating for teachers, students, and audience members alike. In Charlotte, North Carolina, theatre education is taken very seriously as USITT members will find out during the 2011 Annual Conference & Stage Expo March 9 to 12.

Theatre education in the area is about as ubiquitous as dogwood blossoms in spring. Home to one of the largest public school systems in the country, educating over 130,000 students, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system supports 650 fine arts programs scattered throughout the county's 140 schools. It is in this setting that the first love of the arts often blooms.

Most notable among these is Northwest School of the Arts (NWSA), the district's Visual and Performing Arts Magnet School. Magnet Schools of America named NWSA a Magnet School of Distinction in 2009. It teaches concentrated theatre arts at the middle and high school level. While most of the curriculum is geared towards performance, technical theatre students are given the opportunity each year to take their spring musical to the Blumenthal Performing Arts Center in downtown Charlotte. They load in, tech, and run the show in the Booth Playhouse with the

assistance of stagehands from the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Local 322. The students spend the whole week working with these professionals, honing their technical skills, and being taught by example.

As Charlotte's population and name recognition keep growing, students increasingly flock there from all over the country to pursue higher education. The region offers excellent educational opportunities at schools including the highly ranked Central Piedmont Community College, the arts-focused University of North Carolina School of the Arts, the small private institution of Davidson College, and the massive research-oriented University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

UNC-C, in particular, is a fantastic example of what Charlotte has to offer. In the midst of Charlotte's rapidly expanding urban environment, the university hosts 19,000 undergraduate students a year, with a handful of declared theatre and theatre education majors and minors. The result is a cohesive department with an excellent faculty, including two United Scenic Artists 829 designers, a phenomenal student/teacher ratio, first-rate facilities, and state of the art lighting and sound equipment in the Anne R. Belk Theatre and the Black Box Theatre of Robinson Hall. Theatre education at UNC-C is balanced with an equal focus on theory and production turning out hard-working and well-rounded students year after year.

Many Charlotte residents consider ImaginOn: The Joe and Joan Martin Center, to be a shining gem in the Queen City's theatre crown. ImaginOn opened in 2005 and houses both the Children's Theatre of Charlotte and a branch of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Library, whose services are focused on the enrichment of children and teens. The Children's Theatre of Charlotte was awarded the Medallion Award from The Children's Theatre Foundation of America in 2008 and offers year-round theatre education for ages three to 18.

Training occurs at varying skill levels and commitments, ranging from eight-week class sessions to the year-long School of Theatre Training (SOTT), a program that gives third through 12th graders the opportunity to study a specific area of the dramatic arts, such as musical theatre or scene work. SOTT culminates in a project called OnStage, in which over 100 students divided into four casts and backed by Children's Theatre's award winning team of designers and technicians, mount four fully produced plays for one fantastic weekend of theatre.

Great theatre notwithstanding, in this arena it is the student's experience that counts. With so many supportive avenues to explore, a young person can begin learning about theatre at any age or skill level. Wherever they choose to pursue a theatre education in Charlotte, they also will learn critical thinking, self-confidence, and the expression of their unique artistic voice. Students will reap life-long benefits from their involvement in the arts. In the mean time, however, the audiences and the community

will continue to profit from their enrichment.

For more information on any of these organizations, visit their websites at: www.cms.k12.nc.us/northwest, arts.cpcc.edu/performing-arts/theatre, www.davidson.edu/theatre, www.coaa.uncc.edu/Academics/Department-of-theatre, or www.uncsa.edu.

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A brand new food court, with selections including a wide variety of fast food options and great coffee, was just opening the day that members of the USITT Conference Committee visited the Charlotte Convention Center.

Photo/Barbara E.R. Lucas

Charlotte Shines for Conference Committee Visit

Helen P. Willard

Stage Expo Sales Manager

The conference programming meeting moved to June this year since the typical May meeting dates coincided with a NASCAR race and the opening of the NASCAR Hall of Fame in Charlotte. The first weekend in June found us visiting Charlotte amidst HeroesCon, an annual convention for the comic book world.

The weekend began with a look at the meeting space, exhibit halls, and the ballroom in the Charlotte Convention Center. Committee members found a lot to like at the Convention Center, which is a handsome, modern building with plenty of space and natural light. Its most interesting feature may be that the light rail runs through the building separating the east and west wing meeting rooms, although there's just a faint whoosh as the trains go through.

Members of the Conference Committee were joined by the Commissioners Steering Committee to schedule program sessions for next year's conference. During the day-long meeting each proposed conference session is reviewed and scheduled for a particular day and time in a specific room. This year's meeting was held at the Westin Charlotte, USITT's headquarters hotel

during the 2011 Conference.

Within Center City, it's an easy walk to the conference hotels as well as to many restaurants, shops, and clubs. Just a few blocks north of the Convention Center is the EpiCentre, an uptown hub for entertainment and nightlife, a smaller version of Fourth Street Live in Louisville or the Power & Light District in Kansas City. There's something for everyone's taste at the EpiCentre with Blackfinn American Saloon, Bruegger's Bagels, Enso Asian Bistro & Sushi Bar, Five Guys Burgers & Fries, Fleming's Steakhouse, Jason's Deli, Libretto's Pizzeria, Mez, Mortimer's Café & Pub, and Wild Wing Café. Entertainment includes the Pavilion, the EpiCentre Theaters, and StrikeCity bowling lanes plus clubs like Howl at the Moon, Suite, and Whiskey River.

Other uptown dining destinations include Aria, Blue, Capital Grille, Luce, Mert's Heart & Soul, Mimosa Grill, Monticello, Morton's, Ruth's Chris Steakhouse, Savannah Red, and Zink. Having the light rail so close makes it easy to jump on and find more dining options. Head south to check out Mac's Speed Shop for bikes and BBQ, the Liberty Pub, Price's Chicken Coop, or Tyber Creek Grill. A bit further afield, Southpark offers a myriad of dining destinations including Del Frisco's, the Palm, Rooster's Kitchen, Toscana, Upstream, and Zebra.

Committee members will go back to Charlotte in early December to finalize conference plans and check out some more restaurants. Plan now to be in Charlotte March 9 to 12 for the 51st Annual USITT Conference & Stage Expo to sample the Queen City for yourself. For information about exhibiting at Stage Expo 2011, contact Helen Willard at hpwillard@aol.com.

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- Patricia Dennis, *Secretary*
- Travis DeCastro, *Treasurer*
- Kim Williamson, *Vice-President for Commissions*
- Mark Shanda, *Vice-President for Communications*
- David W. Will, *Vice-President for Conferences*
- Alexandra Bonds, *Vice-President for International Activities*
- Michael Mehler, *Vice-President for Programming*
- Martha Marking, *Vice-President for Members, Sections & Chapters*
- Daniel Denhart, *Vice-President for Special Operations*
- Carl Lefko, *Immediate Past President*

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Directors at Large

2008-2011

- Dan Culhane
- Mary Heilman
- David Krajec
- Carolyn Satter
- John S. Uthoff
- Monica Weinzapfel

2009-2012

- William Browning
- Jonathan Darling
- Linda Essig
- Mitch Hefter
- Brian Reed
- Kim Scott

2010-2013

- Emily Gill
- R. Michael Gros
- Panela Leung
- Debra Garcia Lockwood
- Jill Maurer

- Stephanie Young

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Sightlines Editorial Staff & USITT Office Staff

- **Barbara E.R. Lucas**, *Sightlines* Editor, Public Relations & Marketing Manager
- **David Grindle**, Executive Director
- **Carol B. Carrigan**, Administrative & Finance Manager
- **Tracy Davis**, Bookkeeper
- **Shannan Hoerger**, Administrative Assistant
- **Jim Lucas**, Membership & Ad Sales Associate
- **Monica L. Merritt**, Conference Registration & Database Manager

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- 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)
- Future Light
- GAMPRODUCTS, INC.
- H & H Specialties Inc.
- InterAmerica Stage, Inc.
- KM Fabrics, Inc.
- Kryolan Corporation
- Live Design Magazine/LDI Show
- MDG Fog Generators
- Meyer Sound Laboratories, Inc.
- Morris Architects
- Musson Theatrical, Inc.
- Norcostco, Inc.
- Philips Group
- PRG
- Production Advantage, Inc.
- Protech Theatrical Services, Inc.
- Robert Juliat America
- Rosco Laboratories, Inc.
- Rose Brand Theatrical Fabrics, Fabrications & Supplies
- SeaChanger
- SECOA
- Stage Research, Inc.
- Stage Technologies
- StageRight Corporation
- Steeldeck Inc.
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- Texas Scenic Company
- Vincent Lighting Systems

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- Kirkegaard Associates
- LCS Series (Meyer Sound Laboratories, Inc.)
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- Lehigh Electric Products Co.
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- Limelight Productions, Inc.
- LVH Entertainment Systems
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- On Location Lighting Systems, Inc.
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- Pathway Connectivity
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- Prolyte Products Group
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- Reed Rigging Inc.
- The Rigging Partnership
- Sapsis Rigging Entertainment Services, Inc.
- Schuler Shook-Chicago
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A Different View



We thank Wen Hai Ma for sharing his insights into the design process, captured in the cartoon at left.

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