

U.S. INSTITUTE FOR THEATRE TECHNOLOGY, INC.

# USITT Newsletter

Editor:  
Tina Margolis

SUMMER 1984

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**UNITED  
STATES  
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TECHNOLOGY**

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Danvers, MA 01923

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**Lighting Dimensions**  
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**Lighting Methods, Inc.**  
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Rochester, NY 14605

**Lights Up, Inc.**  
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Knoxville, TN 37901

**Lite-Trol Service Co., Inc.**  
72 Glenwood Road  
Glenhead, NY 11545

**Little Stage Lighting Company**  
10507 Harry Hines Boulevard  
Dallas, TX 75220

**Lycian Stage Lighting**  
P.O. Box 68  
Sugar Loaf, NY 10981

**Mission Trace Invest. Ltd.**  
7478 West Nichols Place  
Littleton, CO 80123

**Musson Theatrical, Inc.**  
582 Stockton Street  
San Jose, CA 95126

**Mutual Hardware**  
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Long Island City, NY 11101

**Newth Lighting Company**  
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Scotia, NY 12302

**R. E. Nicholson, Inc.**  
75 West Main Street  
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1234 West 6th Avenue  
Vancouver, BC V6H 1A5  
Canada

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New York, NY 10001

**Jan Rosenthal Associates**  
765 Vose Avenue  
Orange, NJ 07050

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**Sapsis Rigging, Inc.**  
Theatrical Services  
305 Carson Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19128

**Secoa**  
P.O. Box 27429  
2731 Nevada Avenue North  
Minneapolis, MN 55427

**Stage Equipment & Lighting**  
12231 N.E. 13th Court  
P.O. Box F  
Miami, FL 33161

**Stagecraft Industries**  
P.O. Box 4442  
Portland, OR 97208

**Strong Electric Corporation**  
1712 Jackson  
Omaha, NE 68102

**Syracuse Scenery & Stage  
Lighting Company, Inc.**  
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Syracuse, NY 13208

**Systems Design Associates**  
85 Willow Street  
New Haven, CT 06511

**Teatronics, Inc.**  
101-D Suburban Road  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

**Texas Scenic Company, Inc.**  
5432 Jackwood Drive  
P.O. Box 28297  
San Antonio, TX 78238

**Theatre Projects Consultants, Inc.**  
27 West 67th Street  
New York, NY 10023

**Theatre Techniques Inc.**  
60 Connolly Parkway  
Hamden, CT 06514

**Theatrical Equipment International Ltd.**  
567 Third Avenue  
Third Floor  
New York, NY 10016

**Theatrical Service & Supply Company**  
170 Oval Drive  
Central Islip, NY 11722

**Tiffin Scenic Studios, Inc.**  
P.O. Box 39  
Tiffin, OH 44883

**Union Connector Company, Inc.**  
149 Babylon Turnpike  
Roosevelt, NY 11575

**Universe Stage Lighting**  
326 West 47th Street  
New York, NY 10036

**Jim Weber Lighting Service, Inc.**  
3141 Meramec Street  
St. Louis, MO 63118

**Weststar Corporation**  
2665 Shell Beach Road  
Shell Beach, CA 93449

# Costume Commission: Orlando Conf. Report

by Joy Spanabel Emery,  
Costume Commissioner

(This report was prepared from notes by Deb Bell, Univ. of North Carolina, Leslie Robinson, Florida State, and Betty Blyholder, Univ. of Arkansas.)

Costume Commission programs at the Orlando Conference attracted individuals from thirty-one states, including Alaska, and from Canada. The task of coordinating these programs fell on the very capable shoulders of M. L. Baker of Florida State. Baker did a stellar job and is to be congratulated.

The first costume session was headed by Dan Wilhelm, Illinois State, Normal, and was a high-tech presentation on the "Use of the Microcomputer in Costume Patterning." Mildred Litner, of Bowling Green State, Joy Erickson of North Dakota State, and George Spalding of Arts Research Technology Systems in Bloomington, MN were on the panel and shared their experiences and experiments. Millie Litner has been using a variety of different machines to store a series of research sketches and a basic body silhouette. She can now use the computer to print the body and many different combinations of her sketches to quickly view various ideas for design. In addition, Joy Spanabel Emery and her husband George Emery have set up a program to computer-generate basic slopers for any performer after a series of measurements have been entered. George Emery is developing a series of software packages for theatre use and is interested in the type of programs needed for the costume shop. Moreover, a new Commission project on computers and costume uses has been established. The project is chaired by Dan Wilhelm.

Douglas Russell of Stanford Univ. chaired two hands-on sessions on renderings which were conducted by Herb Camburn of California State, Long Beach. Herb had participants create mixed-media color renderings for a costume from "Hamlet" within 30 minutes. He used a combination of ground pastel, marker, and wet pastel to illustrate rapid color visualization of designs. To overcome the typical psychological problem of feeling intimidated by the media and to set up the discipline to get started, Herb suggested setting a deadline of ten minutes to form a completed color visualization. He illustrated how to use the neutral pastels to get the basic outline of the body onto the paper and to build as much light and shadow as possible into the sketch. He

cautioned us to remember that erasures should be used positively to create highlights rather than to change lines. The participants and onlookers were stimulated by Herb's approach and many proudly exhibited their results.

Deb Bell of the Univ. of North Carolina, Greensboro and Abby Lillethum of the Univ. of South Florida shared their expertise on how to apply for grants to study and work in Europe. Each stressed the importance of not being intimidated by the application process and encouraged individuals to seek out funding sources. Persistence, it was also noted, is critical.

The Costume Heritage session featuring Millia Davenport was chaired by Leon Brauner, Indiana Univ., Bloomington and moderated by Don Stowell, Jr., Florida State. Miss Davenport's first contact with theatre was in 1918, which led her to the Provincetown Playhouse in the 1920s. Her first design assignment was for "Helen of Troy" in New York in 1923. This marked the beginning of her impressive career and ultimately resulted in *The Book of Costume*, that invaluable resource we all rely upon. It is difficult to accurately describe the lively and often irreverent comments of Millia Davenport about her career in the theatre. Perhaps one of her comments best sums it up. She stated, "I was expected to be a lady but saw no future in that!"

Ann Donnell of Middle Tennessee Univ. demonstrated the Ethafam Rod armature construction that she has been working with. With this material she creates some very exciting three-dimensional effects on and for costumes and accessories.

The theme of extended and non-human forms was explored by Pam Carver, costumer at Walt Disney World and Irene Corey, free-lance designer, Dallas. The session, "Animals, Appendages and Apparations: Soft Sculpture on Parade," was chaired by Sylvia Hillyard, Univ. of Georgia. Pam described the various techniques used to produce the Walt Disney costumes, which include soft foam, fiberglass, aluminum back braces, and even hydraulic lifts that go up to 35 feet for the float costumes. The V.I.P. costumes, i.e., Mickey, Donald, and Goofy, receive special attention to meet project standards. They often incorporate ice packs to help the actor survive the intense Florida heat. Even then, the costumes can only be worn for thirty to forty-five minutes.

Irene Corey showed examples of her current work, which varies from a delicate silk, handpainted butterfly, to an organdy American Beauty Rose headdress, to an "Alice in Wonderland" complete with an expandable neck. Irene is a master at using found objects such as PVC pipe, backpack frames, and football shoulder pads to create fantasy creatures. Even paper sculpture develops a personality under Irene's

attention.

The concept of the distortion of the human form was carried through in "Exhibiting Costumes." The session was chaired by Margaret Spicer of Dartmouth College and featured Judith Jerde, Conservator of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Costume Institute. Judith addressed the problem of achieving period silhouettes on contemporary mannequins. She demonstrated on ones from the '60s, which featured predominant hip thrusts. She described (but refrained from demonstrating) methods of adjusting the mannequins with a chain saw and adding extensions at the waist to remold the body structure. Then with the use of corsets adapted by Paul Reinhart, Univ. of Texas, Austin, Judith discussed shaping the torso into the appropriate silhouette for a period gown. Gaye Bowen from the Univ. of Texas described the construction techniques used in making the corsets. The combined efforts produce a form that displays a period gown as it was designed to be worn.

Methods and processes in theme parks was the all-conference event on Saturday afternoon. It featured a film that discussed the "Disney Look." The film is used as a training tool for all incoming employees of Disney World. Specifics of production techniques were addressed by Pam Carver who discussed the enormous logistics of mounting and maintaining the many elaborate costumes for each show.

The International Costume Symposium on "Communicating Through Stage Costume" was admirably coordinated by Don Stowell, Jr., of Florida State. This post-conference event was in conjunction with the Costume Society of America. A precis of the papers will be noted in the next Newsletter.

A highlight of the Symposium was the Heritage Section of the Third Biennial Scenography Exposition. This was handsomely coordinated by the very busy Don Stowell. Photographs of the entire exhibition are documented in the Exposition Catalog. The catalog may be ordered from the National Office (330 W. 42 St., NYC 10036) for \$6.50 (prepaid) including postage.

In case you got the impression that the Conference, including two very productive Commission meetings, was all work, it was not. The Commission marked its Tenth Anniversary with a reception/party. There were a few speeches in recognition of the superlative past Commissioners, Don Stowell, Bambi Stoll, and Leon Brauner. There was a cake cutting ceremony, and to commemorate the anniversary, a limited edition of Costume Commission T-shirts was produced. These proved very popular souvenirs. A few are still available for \$7.50 including postage. To purchase one, contact Joy Emery, Univ. of Rhode Island, Kingston, 02881.

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Do not forget that the next major Commission event is the Annual Symposium "Costume for Opera, Dance, Theatre" in San Francisco Aug. 16-18. Housing is available at San Francisco State Univ. Contact: Betty Poindexter, Dept. of Theatre, San Jose State Univ., San Jose, CA 95192, (408) 277-2772.

The Costume Commission wishes to thank the following for their support of the Commission and particularly the Tenth Anniversary Party: Kliegl Brothers Lighting, Baer Fabrics, Costume Crafters, Color Craft Inc., Bob Kelly Cosmetics, Rosco Laboratories Inc., Theatre Crafts, and Tracy Costumes.

## Cosmak's Corner

by Bernice Graham

### Meet Me At The Dive Shop:

No, Cosmak is not suffering from the "bends." Just meet me at your local dive shop. If you get there before I do, ask for the regulation measurement instruction form.

Even if you are not planning to dive to the depths of the Caribbean, you should make note of the complete measurements that must be taken for the "skinlike," "sculptured" fit of the various diving outfits that are available.

The form before me is from Sub Aquatic Systems, 530 Sixth St., Hermosa Beach, CA 90254. Its illustrations with directional measuring lines and appropriate spaces for written measurements are simple to understand. Even a novice could take correct measurements with little or no assistance. An added illustrated measurement guide for a woman's bustline area is also included. All this in a space approximately 8" x 8".

When working with Lycra in thicknesses of 1/8", 3/16", and 1/4", every accurate measurement is crucial. The thickness of the suit dictates its flexibility and the amount of warmth and dryness it will afford the wearer. These varying thicknesses could make exciting effects of stage wear.

For your information, aquatic garb comes in several forms: Full coverage, pants and suit, one-piece suit, shortie suit, vest with hood, gloves, boots, hoods, cold water hoods, a comfort suit with knee pads, plus Farmer John pants and air suits. These features available are: Elbow and knee pads; knife, small, large, bellows, and key pockets; spine and back buoyancy pads; convenience, leg, and arm zippers; attached hood and/or booties; and Q-light and stiletto pockets.

## "New York's Daring" at Museum of City of New York

The daring of New York — those who use the urban environment as a setting to perform spectacular feats and performances — will be celebrated through an exhibition of prints and photographs at the Museum of the City of New York from Sept. 18 to Jan. 6. The exhibition will document those who climb skyscrapers, sit on flagpoles, cross cables of bridges under construction, or swim off Coney Island in winter. For example, the exploits of Philippe Petit, who "walked" a steel cable between the World Trade Center towers 1,350 feet above the street on Aug. 3, 1974, and the performance of George Willig, the "human fly" who scaled the South Tower of the World Trade Center on May 26, 1977, will be featured.

A few reminders for measuring are: Measure a relaxed body. Wear a swimsuit or leotard. The tape should be snug, not tight. Do not measure yourself!

The "real world's" activities have made available to us another avenue of costume materials and construction procedures and problems. Let's examine the possibilities of using this info. in our lives of stage fantasies of the past, the present, and the future.

## New Theatre Planning Checklist

The new theatre checklist, an attempt to update the work of the American Theatre Planning Board, Inc., will be edited by Pete Happe, Facilities and Production Liaison. This major effort must involve all segments of the Institute if it is to be comprehensive and reflect the thinking of the professional theatre community. While the form of the final product is very fluid at the moment, one possibility is to include a guideline to the selection of consultants within this volume rather than to publish a list of consultants separately.

In order to begin gathering data for a first draft, it is important that the Commissions collect and synthesize information in each of their particular fields. Establish a convenient method of collecting this material. For instance, Architecture is employing a round-robin letter, Technical Production is using an empty waste basket in Jay Glerum's office.

The process of gathering the information is not important. THE ACTUAL COLLECTION OF THE INFORMATION, OPINIONS, AND PREJUDICES IS CRITICAL.

Anyone interested in participating should contact the Commissioner of their choice or: Pete Happe c/o David L. Adams Assoc., 1701 Boulder St., Denver, CO 80211.

## National Festival of Women's Theatre

The second National Festival of Women's Theatre, featuring performances, workshops, and panels, will be held in Santa Cruz, CA, from Oct. 4-14. Productions and events will present the concerns of women from a wide range of races, cultural backgrounds, occupations, and age groups.

Booking applications are available for pieces written and directed by women and in which at least half of the performers are women. For more information, an application to perform, lecture, lead a workshop, or subscribe to the festival newsletter, contact: Donna Zavada, Program Dir., National Festival of Women's Theatre, P.O. Box 1222, Santa Cruz, CA 95061.

## Arts Administration Commission

The Arts Administration Commission (in association with ACUCA) has begun a study to analyze various approaches or solutions regarding the staff and budget structures of large performing arts centers.

The published report will describe the various approaches, the results of such approaches, and would, to some extent, serve as an organizational manual.

The study is intended to be fairly broad, but will focus on organizations or institutions that:

- 1) refer to themselves as performing or fine arts centers
- 2) have more than one performance space
- 3) may also operate an art gallery, media, film or television center.
- 4) may or may not be involved in "in house" production

The study will examine:

- 1) Administration/Management
  - relationship to business office
  - relationship to other departments
  - structure/size/reporting line
- 2) Programming/Booking
  - in-house
  - road show
  - community
- 3) Operations
  - maintenance
  - production support
- 4) Other
  - box office/ticket sales
  - advertising and promotion
  - public and community relations
- 5) Budget
  - sources
  - procedures, distribution
  - policies

If you are interested in participating or assisting in this study, please contact: James E. MacRostie, Dir. of Operations, Fine Arts Center, Univ. of Mass., Amherst, MA, USA 01003, (413) 545-0480/545-2834.

## Regional News

The **NORTHERN CALIFORNIA SECTION** held its spring workshop on June 16 at the Cubberly Theatre and addressed the topic of "Computers in the Theatre."

The **OHIO SECTION** will hold its fall conference on Oct. 6 in Columbus. An all-day conference with programs in arts administration, design and costume technology are planned.

## Kathakali Troupe at Asia Society

The fourth American tour of the acclaimed Kerala Kalamandalm Kathakali Troupe was sponsored by The Asia Society, NYC, on June 1-3. The troupe performed "The Dice Game" and "The Killing of Dussassana." A half-hour prior to the performances, audiences were invited to watch one of the actor's complex makup and costume preparations on closed circuit T.V. outside the auditorium.

## Notes From The National Office

by *Jean Webster,*  
*Administrative Liaison*

I have just spent seven weeks working in the National Office, and since it is impossible for all of you to visit the office, although each member of the staff would enjoy meeting you, I would like to introduce you to the staff and give you a brief description of their areas of service to the membership.

**Kristen Bott:** Office Manager. Kristen is the newest member of the office staff. She joined us on June 18, 1984. Kristen has a B.A. degree in Arts Administration from Indiana University, Bloomington. She worked as a management intern with Marvin A. Krauss Associates and as a production assistant on "The Rink." Her office/management skills are varied and will be utilized to meet the demanding duties of Office Manager. In addition to her work here Kristen plays soccer, the flute, and plans to attend as many theatre productions as possible.

**Keith King:** Administrative Secretary. Until June 30, 1984, Keith had been devoting the majority of his time to work on the Costume Society of America. However, he is now handling USITT membership questions and problems, maintaining membership records, handling the billing of dues and the mailing of membership cards and information. In addition, he oversees the listing of Contributing and Sustaining members in USITT publications and the ordering of plaques for them. Keith also works as a free-lance Opera Stage Director.

**Tina Margolis:** Advertising Manager and Newsletter Editor. Tina's duties include selling, exchanging, and buying advertising space, billing advertisers, maintaining advertising lists, coordinating promotional mailings for advertising, composing advertisements for publications, soliciting and editing copy for the quarterly Newsletter. In addition to her work for USITT Tina is a Ph.D. candidate in theatre history at NYU and a free-lance writer.

Now that you know who is who in the office I would like to make some observations, general comments, and suggestions about how we in the National Office can serve you better.

**Office Hours:** Mon. - Fri. 10:00 a.m. - 6 p.m. EST. Keith King is available from 2 p.m. - 6 p.m. Tina Margolis is available primarily from 12 - 6 three days a week, usually Mon. - Wed. Messages may of course be left on our answering machine.

In order to process orders, memberships and information requests please be sure to enclose a copy of any invoice you receive from us with your payment. It saves us time and makes it easier for us to be sure that we get names, addresses, and any other information correct.

We would also like you to be aware that, for cost effectiveness, we like to return calls after 5 p.m. when dealing with the Western states.

However, we do ask that you return our calls to you as soon as possible. When we call it is to get an immediate answer to a question which is pertinent to getting other information disseminated.

Many of you are engaged in Commission, Section, and general activities of interest to other members of the USITT. Often we get calls about these events and are not able to provide timely or proper information or even the name of a contact person. Please keep us apprised with letters, flyers, etc. about these projects.

There are those rare occasions when it is not possible for someone to be in the office for a few minutes (I have had a rapid insight into how "Murphy" controls the elevators and bank lines of New York). That is why we hope you will leave your name, phone number, and message on our machine or try to call again. On the whole we are working to cover the office at all times during the office hours.

And now I want to say a word about the people I have been privileged to work with these last few weeks. Richard, Keith, and Tina have been most open and helpful about explaining, listening, and giving thoughts and suggestions about ways of making the office even more responsive to the needs of everyone.

We have worked together clearing out storage areas and putting things away so that current information is more accessible. They have taken time to explain what their jobs are so that I could understand and make

suggestions based on the reality of the office work load, which is tremendous. They have given me insight into possible methods of streamlining some office procedures so that there may be more time to serve the needs of the members. They have also offered insights into which procedures and methods they feel work well so that I might quickly know what is going on.

Please meet Tina's deadlines. The problem of late submissions is always present.

If any of you have questions about the National Office, I encourage you to drop in, to contact me, and to make your feelings about the office known to Kristen Bott and to Randy Earle, the President of USITT.

The office will continue to place a National Office news column in the Newsletter and will keep you informed of events and changes.

Currently we are grateful for the new shelving of Jan Musson of Musson Theatrical. Cabinets are being cleared, and we are arranging a workspace that will accommodate the two part-time personnel, the full-time personnel plus the two computers and printers that now live here and are becoming more and more a part of the daily life of the office.

I have enjoyed and appreciated the opportunity of being in the office and will watch with great joy as it continues to grow and meet the ever increasing needs of the membership.

## Kurt Weill Exhibition at Yale

An exhibition of selected holograph manuscripts of Kurt Weill, as well as his correspondence with colleagues such as Ira Gershwin, Bertold Brecht, Georg Kaiser, Maxwell Anderson and Ogden Nash, will be on display at Yale's Beinecke Library. The show, which will also include documents from the career of Lotte Lenya, will be on view through the end of August.

## JOB OPENING

**Scenic Designer and Technical Director** positions available, Sept. 1. Design work, organization, and supervision of large shop for ambitious program. Contact: SUFFOLK COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE, Islip Arts Theatre, Selden, NY 11784, (516) 451-4163.



**American Theatre Association  
48th Annual Convention  
San Francisco, California  
August 12-15, 1984**



**American Theatre Association**  
1010 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20007



*San Francisco '84*



## Theatre Renovation Project: Theatre of the Arts in Sarasota

In a reversal of the usual scenario where an old theatre gets torn down to create a parking lot, a 1926 theatre in Sarasota, Florida has been brought back to life and is about to annex the parking lot next door.

The Theater of the Arts in Sarasota has just completed its first winter season as the home of the Sarasota Opera Association (formerly the Asolo Opera Guild) which itself is celebrating its silver anniversary. The program included "Eugene Onegin," "La Traviata," "La Perichole," and "Magic Flute".

Originally the old Edwards Theater, the Theater of the Arts has undergone the first of several stages of renovation and rehabilitation that will include a rebuilt

stagehouse and full stage right extension and a three-story space in what is now the adjacent parking lot. This space will include workshops, dressing rooms, green room, offices, design studios, as well as a large rehearsal/recital theatre that will provide valuable additional revenue as a small performance and meeting space. The entire front-of-house and lobby is also being renovated by architects Skidmore, Owings & Merrill.

Theatre and acoustical consultants, Peter George Associates, Inc. have upgraded the old house in a variety of ways. The stagehouse, with its wooden grid, has to be structurally rebuilt to carry the loads of today's operatic and dramatic productions.

Seating was redistributed from the old movie house layout to a more comfortable 1,000 seat capacity including 21 boxes.

The less-than-ideal acoustics of the house are to be improved by the new ceiling and wall design, contoured for ideal room acoustics as well as to accommodate new front-of-house theatrical lighting slots. New light and sound control rooms are being created and the projection room is to be rebuilt. An orchestra pit for 40-45 musicians has been created.

An entirely new computerized lighting system from Strand Century has been purchased. The stage rigging and draperies were installed by TRS/SECOA.

## Complete Lighting Equipment For Sale

Grande Prairie Regional College is offering for tender one lighting control system. The highest or any tender may not be accepted. Please offer in Canadian funds. Closing date is Aug. 15, 1984, in room D 215 the main campus. All tenderers are invited to attend.

All tenders should be in a sealed envelope clearly marked "Tender 03584 Lighting Equipment." Please send tenders to: Grande Prairie Regional College, 10726 106th Ave., Grande Prairie, Alberta, Canada T8V 4C4, Attn: Materials Coordinator.

Equipment is: sixty 7.2 kw, sixty A 120 v SCR theatrical lighting dimmers type 6672J. Two racks for above with terminations. One microset 96 dimmer control board with 60 control channels and 99 cue memory. One 200 circuit by 60 dimmer Quick Connect patch panel. All equipment manufactured by Electro Controls Lighting, Calgary, Alberta.

Method of payment by cash or certified check. Items to be picked up 15 days within notification of successful tender. All equipment is sold as and where is. For further information, contact: Ray Hallock, (403) 539-2912, or Jim Smagata, (403) 539-2019.

## Peter Sellars to Head American National Theatre Co.

The American National Theater and Academy (ANTA) and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts announced the formation of a new corporation which will take the first steps towards the foundation and development of an American National Theater Company. Peter Sellars, artistic director of the Boston Shakespeare Co. has

been chosen as the theater company's director effective September 1, 1984. Sellars will function as both the company's artistic director and chief operating officer.

The company expects to be developing, producing and presenting a wide range of theatrical work in the Kennedy Center's Eisenhower Theater, Terrace Theater, and Theater Lab by spring 1985. In addition to major productions of classic plays, long-range plans include a playwrights' wing for the support of new American playwrights; an expanded media studio for collaborative projects involving art, music, dance, and technology; and an exchange program that will present significant work from theaters across America and abroad.

## Safety In Rigging: Health And Safety Commission Launches North American Project

by Randall W. A. Davidson, Health and Safety Commissioner

The Health and Safety Commission continues its pursuit of SAFETY IN RIGGING. Our goal is to bring to North America the Standards and the Recommended Practices which grace other specialties in the entertainment industry and in major industry.

Of course, Harold Burriss-Meyer gave the impetus in his writings, and we owe a debt to him and those he trained to continue the pursuit with all of our energies.

In 1983, the Health and Safety Commission formulated a five-year plan. One of those years has already passed with marked success. These successes are due to the absolute dedication of a number of

individuals and sections, and a few commercial enterprises. There were 22 workshops last year, and 4 of them were national. Material has been gathered and disseminated and some basic information has been imparted. We expect the next four years will be exciting.

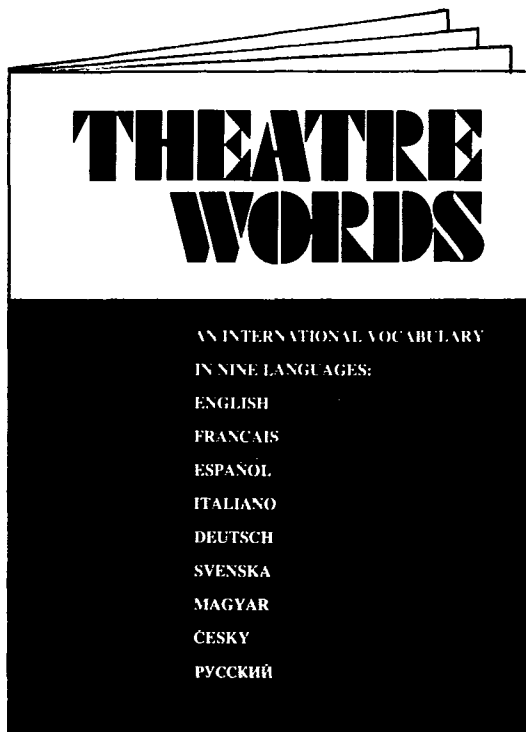
Among the topics which will be addressed in these four years are: installation, specifications, testing, design, use, maintenance, inspections, quality control, research and development, new materials, accidents, liability, training, setting standards, interface modules for architects and engineers, facility users, etc.

Also our plans call for a National Congress on Safety in Rigging and Rigging Standards, at the end of the five-year plan. That sounds like about the year we are due in Calgary. The geographic city for the Congress has not been set, nor has the funding been sought, but it is being studied at this time.

The cross-fertilization of other Commissions in this Safety in Rigging is already noticeable. It certainly will be intensified. Cooperation is important and the only means by which we can accomplish our goal by the end of five years. USITT is a voluntary, nonprofit, PROFESSIONAL SOCIETY, and we expect the commitment to come from people within this organization.

We intend to put in motion the means to have Safety in Rigging seminars and conferences at all entertainment functions in North America. Your help is requested and necessary. Each Section, each Chapter, and each unit must lend a hand. The Commission is putting together guidelines. Write to me for material: Dr. Randall W. A. Davidson, Health and Safety Commissioner, P.O. Box 907, Claremont, CA 91711, (213) 385-5211 Ext. 387, (714) 624-7286.





# Theatre Words A Dictionary Of International Theatre Terms

THEATRE WORDS is a pocket-size, yet comprehensive lexicon of theatre terms in nine languages — English, French, Spanish, Italian, German, Swedish, Hungarian, Czech, and Russian. (An Appendix in Japanese is also available.) With over 1,000 entries and 33 pages of illustrations of stage architecture and equipment, this dictionary is an indispensable aid for:

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- groups collaborating with professionals from overseas
- students and professors studying in other countries or researching topics in foreign languages
- firms involved in marketing products worldwide
- managers and agents with foreign clients and bookings.

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# Stage Photography

by Jon R. Vermilye,  
Tech Coordinator, SUNY Oswego

If you are interested in learning to take production photos or wish to improve the quality of your production photography, here are a few hints that will facilitate the process.

Become completely familiar with your camera. The two major criteria are that you are comfortable working with the equipment and that the camera is not automatic, because you will need complete exposure control. You will take better photos with a camera you are used to than with a "better" one borrowed for a production. At first, practice on a few productions where you are not the only photographer shooting.

Work with a tripod. You will often take photos at shutter speeds of 1/2 to 1/125th of a second. No matter how steady you think you are, these speeds require the use of a heavy-duty tripod. The tripod should be stiff enough so that it will steady itself quickly after you have finished adjusting the camera, and it should be strong enough to hold the largest cameras you plan to use. Another advantage of a heavy-duty tripod is that two cameras can be mounted on it. This will allow for both color and black-and-white photos to be taken at the same time or allows for an extra camera to test a new film.

An early decision is to determine the purpose of the photos you will take. If they are for publicity, black-and-whites are the most useful. For black-and-white film, try to use the largest format available. Most shots end up as 8" x 10" prints, and a large format will limit the amount of enlarging necessary. This will enhance the quality. In addition, work with a fine grain film. An ASA of 125 is fast enough for almost any production, and the fine grain will produce high-quality enlargements.

If the photos are for portfolios for cast and crew, color slides or prints may be more appropriate. However, to create more options, I suggest shooting the production with both color slide and black-and-white film. For color slides, try a tungsten balanced 35mm film such as Ektachrome 160. The ASA of this film can be doubled to 320 by using ESP, or special processing, and it generally produces the most realistic color balance. Color film is generally available in tungsten or daylight color balance. Stage lighting is rarely close to either, but the tungsten balanced film is a good starting point. If a warmer quality is desired, try a daylight film such as Ektachrome 200, or better yet, shoot the same production with each and then decide which is best. However, while it is important to experiment, it is more important to become completely familiar with the film you use for a production. The effect of low levels,

colored lights, and high contrasts are different for each product, and it is vital that you master the idiosyncrasies of the brands you use. Avoid using a new film or technique if your photos will be the only visual record of a production.

Avoid using flashes or strobes. Studio strobes are useful for resume and pre-production publicity, but are extremely difficult to use on a stage set. They are costly, cast shadows, "flatten" scenery, and do not document lighting design. Also, with rare exceptions, better quality photos can be taken under stage lighting conditions than with flashes.

One basic problem in stage photography, especially with color slides, is obtaining correct exposure levels. Many light meters that are built into cameras cover the entire viewing area. The composition of some photos will include bright lighting in the center and dark lighting on the edges outside the acting areas. This will often "fool" the light meter into averaging the two together. As such, the acting area in the photo will be overexposed. A center weighted meter (a meter that places more emphasis on the center area of the viewfinder) will help this problem. However, even these can be "fooled" by very high contrasts. One solution is to meter close to the stage so that only the acting area is in the viewfinder. Then move back to get the composition you desire.

Another solution to the problem of obtaining correct exposure levels is to use a spot meter, a device that measures the light over a very narrow angle. Because of the narrow coverage, you can use the meter from almost anywhere in the theatre and still measure only the acting areas. Obtaining proper exposure with a spot meter takes practice; the meter covers such a small area that it can often give misleading information. To use it properly, meter the brightest and the darkest parts of the picture and interpret the results (usually an average of the two).

Another problem with metering is that most light meters and film, even black-and-white, are calibrated to be used with white light. When measuring colored light, particularly saturated hues, the film or the meter will often produce incorrect results. Bracket (shoot at the indicated exposure, one stop above and one stop below) any unusual lighting conditions until you have enough experience with your meter and film to be able to predict the results.

Brightness ratios onstage produce exposure problems in almost all productions. Color slide film will provide good results with contrast ratios of 1:3. While black-and-white film is a little better, neither is close to that of the human eye. If you expose for shadows, the highlights will burn out. Often, you lose both. There is no simple solution to this problem. A complete re-design of the lighting is impossible, but a

few quick changes may bring the range within limits. Try to set up some modified presets prior to the photo call. This problem often shows up with followspots and specials. By dimming the followspot or brightening the rest of the lighting, it is often possible to balance the levels. Careful composition may help. After doing as much as possible to balance the levels, expose so that the highlights do not burn out, and hope that the details in the shadows will be adequate. In any case, expect to lose any detail that is more than 4 or 5 f: stops below the properly exposed highlights.\*

The photo call is the key to good photographs and organization is the key to a good photo call. The director should pick the photos he or she wants and then the production staff should see the list and request photos they may need, i.e., costume, props, or special effects shots. After seeing a performance, the photographer should review the list of shots with the director. The photographer should add any more photos he feels will enhance the record of the production or be useful for future publicity.

Another key is to take notes! Without notes, you will make the same mistakes over and over again. During the photo call, have an assistant with you (or a cassette recorder) and record everything that might be useful in analyzing the results.

After a photo call, have the film processed immediately. Unprocessed images deteriorate rapidly. When the proof sheets are available, go over them carefully using the notes you made during the call. Make additional notes during this review to help correct problems for future calls. Carefully select the photos you wish to have enlarged. Technical flaws make a photo unusable. Be sure that you evaluate the photo, not what you recall about a scene, character, or mood. The photo will be judged entirely on its own merits; you must judge it the same way.

Establish a system of filing proof sheets and slides. We keep slides in plastic loose leaf pages that hold twenty each. The pages are filed in file folders labeled by production and year. Proof sheets are kept much the same way. Two works on archival storage and care of photographs and slides are: *Preservation of Photographs*. Rochester, NY: Eastman Kodak Co., 1979 (publication F-30), and Weinstein, Robert and Larry Booth. *Collection, Use and Care of Historical Photographs*. Nashville, TN: Am. Assoc. for State and Local History, 1977.

A final note on the number of photos to take at a call. Do not place a limit on the number of shots you plan to take. Film is the least expensive part of the process. It is not unusual to take 100 to 150 photos of a production, and stage photography is often a once-in-a-lifetime situation. So take extra pictures, bracket exposures on difficult

lighting situations, and only try new techniques with a spare camera.

To conclude, stage photography is a field in which few people have a great deal of experience. There are few, if any, texts available. Try to build on what you learn from each photo session. If possible attend a photo call with other theatrical photographers and discuss problems and solutions. Perhaps a panel at a future USITT Conference. . .

*\*Note: Tungsten balanced "640 T" 35mm film, supplied by 3-M or Focal Brands for color slides with a 640 ASA may help with problems of dim exposure and color balance. — Dick Devin, V.P. for Commissions and Projects*

## Scenographic Elements of Richard Foreman's "Dr. Selavy"

by Amy C. Ward

The Music Theatre Group/Lenox Arts Center and the Ontological-Hysteric Theatre recently revived "Dr. Selavy's Magic Theatre (C'est La Vie)," the Stanley Silverman/Richard Foreman collaboration first produced in 1972. Once again, the piece bore the mark of Richard Foreman's distinctive scenography.

Foreman did not write the script for "Selavy," but created and designed the production around twenty of Silverman's songs that form a sort of anthology of popular music styles. The songs are performed one after the other — there are no spoken lines — so it is the recurring thematic concerns of the lyrics (such as money and finances), the main character, and the visual elements that lend cohesion to the production.

The performance is divided into six sections including a prologue and five phases of the "cure." Each phase is called a "day." The central figure, known only as the "patient," is unrelentingly acted upon each day by a bizarre band of doctors. The patient seems unaware of exactly why he is in his situation and can only react to those who "treat" him during the performance.

Although there is no narrative structure to "Selavy" the sense of a progression through time is generated; the binding factor in this movement is basically Foreman's scenography.

Certain design elements in "Selavy" are typical of Foreman's other creations. These devices serve to remind the audience that they are in a theatre and to alter the way in which they perceive performance.

One of the more well-known devices is the use of bright lights that shine directly into

the spectators' eyes. There were eight of these in the piece, four hanging at the edge of the performance area, and four above and behind those. This prevents the spectator from seeing much of the stage area toward the back.

Foreman's continual use of stripes was also evident in "Selavy." The musicians were placed in a cage-like rectangle to the right that consisted of wooden bars spaced some six inches apart. This "prison" effect reinforced the main character's dilemma of being caught within forces outside of himself. Several of the bars had red stripes painted across them, creating the double image of vertical and horizontal lines. The bars were repeated across the left side of the stage, broken only by a door placed approximately in the middle. The floor of the playing space was painted brown with black stripes extending from front to back. The now-famous Foreman strings were used as well — four in all, running horizontally across the front one-third of the space — two of which were striped, giving the appearance of dotted lines.

Foreman's preoccupation with objects — in relation to people, in relation to other objects — was apparent in "Selavy." There was a profusion of many of the objects he has used in previous productions, such as severed heads, apples, arrows, and gold and silver foil. Along the top of the walls at right and left were shelves covered in lace doilies and tablecloths. On these mantles Foreman placed six replicas of human heads, three on each side, spaced equally apart between the front and back of the stage. Before the show began the heads were covered with lace cloths. Above the heads were four windmills, two on either side, each with four blades of silver foil. Two more identical windmills were placed in the center of the back wall. The windmills were functional, and revolved during particularly quick-tempo songs.

The arrows in past productions have been simple cutouts, held by performers, and pointed at people or objects to enhance stage picturization. In "Selavy" the arrows functioned in the same way, but were not cutouts; they were strung on bows or took the form of the giant lances used in tilting. These items are one of the best examples of Foreman's attempt to "literalize," through objects, the ideas in a script. A description provided in the program of the fifth day's treatment states that the patient is "ready to re-enter the world with the courage to fight windmills." The idea of tilting at windmills was literalized through the presence of the windmills and the lance Foreman included in his design.

Foreman has often used cupboards in his productions, and "Selavy" was no exception. The fourth day's treatment involved exposing the patient to a confrontation with death. The final song in

the section is a requiem, epitomized by Foreman with a shrine made from a cupboard. Candles burn on top, and the closed cupboard doors seem to hold a mystery that will never be solved. The relation between people and objects is especially vivid here. A young boy, seen intermittently during the production, now approaches the shrine. He casually eats an apple and disposes of its core on the top of the cupboard. Death does not seem to touch or bother him much, and if the program notes for this section are to be trusted, he probably represents rebirth.

The important thing about the boy, however, is not what he may or may not symbolize. In the visual context of Foreman's work he is significant because he provides a contrast between the alien group of doctors and the bewildered patient. The boy's presence often makes the adults in the show look like foreign objects themselves.

Though Foreman readily admits that the commercial nature of productions like "Selavy" tends to dictate a different scenographic approach than his work for his Ontological-Hysteric Theatre, Foreman has still managed to achieve a similar result: The text is literalized through his complex stage picturizations.

## Yale School Of Drama's 1984-1985 Season

The Yale School of Drama's 59th season, beginning this fall, will include a wide variety of works by a group of internationally renowned authors. The season begins with "Fear and Hope of the Great Republic" an American premiere of a play by Franz Kroetz, the contemporary German playwright whose works express a haunting vision of working class life in modern society. The play runs Oct. 23-26.

The season continues with the Stephen Sondheim musical "Pacific Overtures," Dec. 8-9, 12-15.

February brings two productions to the School of Drama: the First-Year Acting Project which runs Feb. 6-9, 11-13, and "Lorenzaccio," Feb. 15-16, 20-23. "Lorenzaccio" is the serio-comic portrayal of corruption and redemption set in Renaissance Venice, by French dramatist Alfred de Musset.

The fifth segment of the series is Vladimir Mayakovsky's "The Bathhouse," a satire that criticizes the Soviet bureaucracy of 1929. The work will play April 3-6.

YSD completes its season with the Second-Year Acting Project, a play in verse, selected from the works of authors such as Shakespeare and Moliere. This project will run May 8-11.

To order subscriptions, or for more information, please call the Box Office at (203) 436-1600.

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