

Sightlines

USITT november 1989

The American Association of Design and Production Professionals in the Performing Arts

CORRECTION

The 1990 USITT Election Slate published in the September 1989 issue of *Sightlines* should have included the following nomination:

Treasurer: Christine Kaiser

The Secretary wishes to apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

The complete slate should read:

VP for Relations: Normand Bouchard

VP for Conferences: Richard Durst

Treasurer: Christine Kaiser

Director-at-Large: Elbin Cleveland, Delbert Hall, Kenneth Hewitt, Larry Hill, Elynmarie Kazle, John Lottes, Jack Schmidt, Samuel Scripps, Raynette Halvorsen Smith, Anne Thaxter Watson

—Jean Montgomery, Secretary



NEW ENGLAND SECTION

The new chair of the New England Section is: Arthur Dirks, 110 Dean Street, #91, Taunton, MA 02324; O: 508-697-1200, ext 2135; H: 508-880-5290.

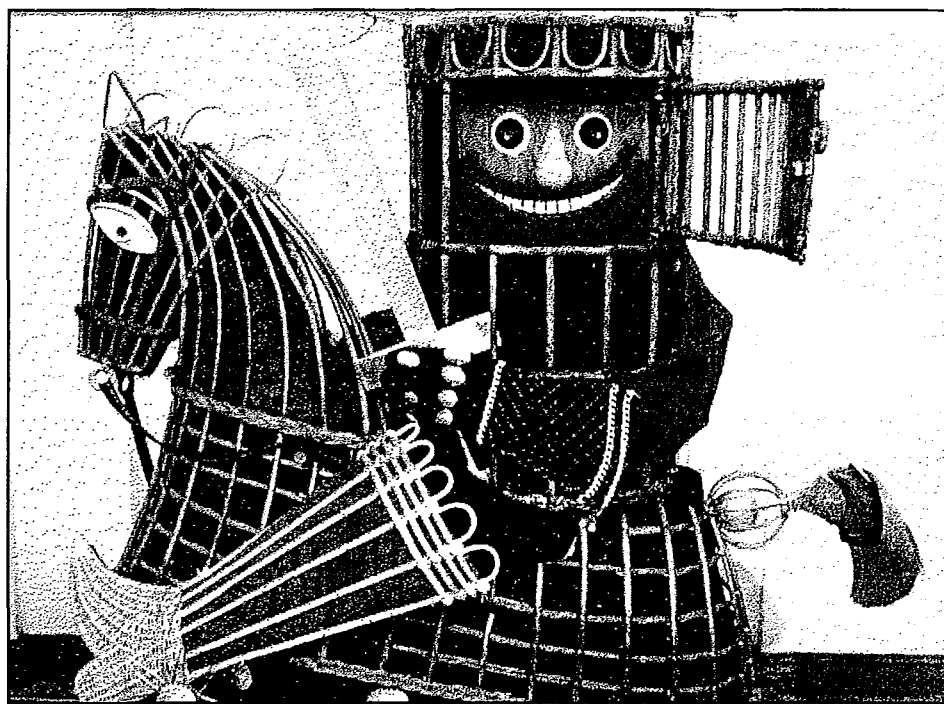


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Poland Hosts 8th OISTAT Congress

International Conference held in Warsaw



Puppets by Polish designer Adam Killian were part of the theatre arts and crafts exhibit.

A nine-member delegation represented USITT at the Eighth Congress of OISTAT—the International Organization of Scenographers, Technicians, and Architects of Theatre—in Warsaw, Poland from 27 September to 1 October 1989.

USITT delegation members included: Ned Bowman [Rosco Labs], Eric Fielding [USITT Publications], Rodney Gordon [freelance milliner and maskmaker], Dona Hrabluk [head of props at Shaw Festival], Eric Mongerson [Concordia University], Patricia MacKay [Theatre Crafts Magazine], Ralph Pine [Drama Book Publishers], Leslie Rollins [Association of Theatrical Artists & Craftspeople], and Joel E. Rubin [Chair of the US Centre of OISTAT].

The theme of the Congress was "The Preservation of the Theatrical Arts and Crafts."

Delegates from 21 nations participated in the Congress presenting papers, demonstrations and exhibitions of the work of the wide variety of artisans and craftspeople necessary to realize the work of theatrical designers and directors. A strong focus was placed on the challenges being faced by theatres throughout the world in attracting and training these people for careers in the theatre.

The Polish hosts arranged for four intensive days of activities to complement the formal OISTAT meetings, including theatre performances, visits to historic theatres, and social functions.

Additional coverage of the OSITAT Congress will be included in the the forthcoming Winter 1989 issue of *Theatre Design & Technology*. □

EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

After two months of rebuilding following a disastrous building fire, the Arts Employment Referral Service has resumed normal operations, and is now announcing a "Business Card" option, an electronic bulletin board service which will supply basic information about job seekers directly to employers with job openings. The "Business Card" option will be offered in addition to the more complete "Resume Bank" service provided by the company.

For more information, contact Don Stowell, Arts Employment Referral Service, Box 12484, Atlanta, GA 30355-2484; 404-876-1823.

**TAX PROPOSAL**

Those USITT members who provide professional goods and services should take note:

Senate Bill 442, introduced by Sen. Ernest Hollings (D-SC) on 23 February 1989, is a national sales tax bill that would require a 5% tax to be paid on goods and services (food, health care, and housing would be exempt). It is being promoted as the "Deficit and Debt Reduction Act of 1989." Vendors would be liable for the collection of this tax. Secondary costs, such as accounting, paperwork, and postage, would also be part of the tax consideration.

The Senate Committee on Finance is currently holding hearings on the bill. If you are interested in reading the bill, contact your Senator to obtain a copy.

**SIGHTLINES**

VOLUME XXIX NUMBER 11

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Editor • Eric Fielding
Editor • Cecelia Fielding

**News From The National**

David Diamond, USITT General Manager

Buy a membership in USITT for a friend! Perhaps the best gift you can give to a fellow professional this Christmas is a link to the national support network provided by USITT. [See special offer below.]

The New England Theatre Conference will be held November 3-5 at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel and Towers. Sessions of interest to USITT members include "Careers in Design and Technical Theatre," "The Director and Designer: The Collaborative Process," "Light and Lighting: A Fine Art Form," "Stage Management," "Technical Theatre Bookshelf," and a USITT New England Section meeting. For applications and information, contact: NETC Central, 50 Exchange Street, Waltham, MA 02154.

Special thanks to all of you who donated theatre memorabilia to the Broadway Cares flea market, which was held October 7 in New York. Thousands of dollars were raised that day to help people across the country afflicted with AIDS. We are proud to be doing our part to help. Gary Miller of this office deserves special mention for his tireless

efforts for this cause.

Plans are underway for the 1990 Conference in Milwaukee celebrating USITT's 30th anniversary. With visits from Soviet designers, a new Design Expo Juried Section, an exhibition of Chicago Lyric Opera drops, the award-winning Prague Quadrennial exhibit, and our new conference management by Events Production Group, to name just a few of the attractions, the 1990 Conference will surely be memorable.

Every effort is being made to provide programming that all levels of professional and student designers and technicians will find stimulating. Make your plans now to be with us 11-14 April 1990 in the beautiful city on the lake.

This year, the official USITT Conference travel agency will be Morgantown Travel Service, 1-800-637-0782. The agents there will provide information on the lowest fares available. Feel free to use them for all your travel needs year-round. Tell them you are a member of USITT and you will be assured of the best deals and excellent service. □

Why Shop Around For The Holidays?

Special Holiday USITT Membership Gift Offer

Share the riches of USITT membership with a friend this holiday season.

You're a member. You know about all of the benefits of belonging to the American Association of Design and Production Professionals in the Performing Arts. You read *Theatre Design & Technology* and *Sightlines*. You attend the national conferences and have access to networking with the finest professionals in the field.

open their issues of *Sightlines* and learn what's happening in the design and technical fields, who's doing what, and what opportunities are open to them, they will think of you...and applaud your generosity. Each quarter, they'll read the stimulating, in-depth articles in *TD&T* and remember your thoughtful gift.

For that special friend or associate, give a Professional Membership. This level shows their

You encourage your friends to participate in commission projects and regional events. And you follow-up on employment listings in our publications and use our discounts for *THEatre JOBLIST*. You also take advantage of our discounts on *Theatre Crafts*, car rentals, hotels, and pharmaceuticals, not to mention all our useful publications. But you know all that.

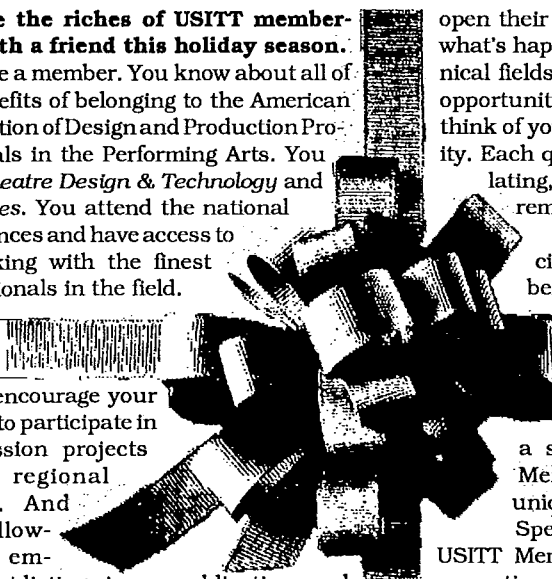
Now, share the wealth. Buy a student, regular, or professional membership for a friend or colleague. Here is a gift they will enjoy year-round. Each month when they

colleagues their commitment to the field. And they'll receive a special listing in the Annual Membership Directory plus a unique USITT logo pin.

Special Offer! Give the gift of a USITT Membership during this holiday promotion and we'll send you a small gift as a token of appreciation for introducing another design/production professional to the benefits of USITT membership.

All holiday gift memberships will be acknowledged with a personal greeting card. Phone the National Office at 212-563-5551 to place a credit card order today.

Look no further for that perfect holiday gift! □



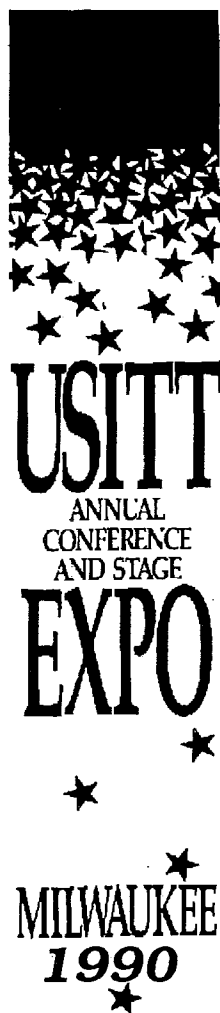
Milwaukee: The City That's Thriving

LeRoy Stoner, 1990 USITT Conference Chair

Some people joke that, in Milwaukee, the city bird is the crane—the construction crane, that is. These long-necked creatures have nested continuously in the downtown area for the last 10 years, reflecting a surge of development activity unprecedented in modern Milwaukee history. Nearly \$1 billion has been invested in downtown construction in the last decade.

Downtown Milwaukee's renaissance includes new cultural facilities. In October of last year, the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre took the stage in its new home, a converted powerplant, as part of the \$100 million Milwaukee Center theatre district development. The Milwaukee Center is part of a mixed-use project consisting of three converted theatre spaces, an office tower, and a hotel, plus shopping and parking. These spaces are linked to each other and the historic Pabst Theatre by a fully-enclosed pedestrian concourse.

The magnificent and distinguished Pabst Theatre, built in 1895 by Milwaukee beer baron Captain Frederick Pabst, was once threatened with demolition. Today, the carefully restored theatre is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Theatre productions and musicals



from Shakespeare to Broadway are presented at the Pabst Theatre.

Within two blocks of the Milwaukee Center lie four additional performance spaces housed in Milwaukee's Performing Arts Center (PAC) and the recently renovated Riverside Theatre. The PAC, designed by Harry Weese and Associates and completed in 1969, includes three performance spaces. Two short blocks away, the Riverside Theatre, Wisconsin's largest landmark theatre, operates as a commercial showplace for touring Broadway road shows as well as pop and country artists.

On Thursday, April 12, during the 1990 Annual Conference, all of these theatres will participate in the **Theatre District Open House** scheduled from 11 am until 4:15 pm. During that time, the theatres will be open to conference attendees. Staff will be available to answer questions regarding facilities, and equipment.

Milwaukee may not be the first place that comes to mind when discussing the arts, but after the 1990 USITT Conference, it certainly will be warmly remembered as a city that holds the quality of its performing arts in high regard. □

Stage Expo '90 Update

Events Production Group, Inc.

USITT is projecting a 30% increase over last year in both attendance and exhibit space for the upcoming Milwaukee Conference and Stage Expo '90, to be held at the Milwaukee Exposition and Convention Center and Arena Wednesday through Saturday, 11-14 April 1990.

"The hall we're using at the Milwaukee Convention Center is 66,000 square feet, compared to 40,000 square feet at Calgary," said Phil Tocantins of Events Production Group, organizers of the event. "We're expecting a substantial increase in attendees and exhibitors because of the larger hall and the resulting ability for exhibitors to design larger booths with larger exhibits."

More than 120 lighting, stage equipment, rigging, costume, and sound companies are expected to occupy 225 booths in Milwaukee, an increase from the 92 companies in 200 booths at Calgary. USITT will once again offer discounted booth spaces for sustaining and contributing members of USITT as well as reasonably priced exhibit tables for not-for-profit organizations.

As with previous conferences, there will be two days of pre-conference workshops [April 9-10]; three days devoted to sessions on architecture, costume, lighting, scenery, and sound design and technology [April 11-13]; and a final day [April 14] for post-conference workshops.

For information on exhibiting at Stage Expo '90, contact: Phil Tocantins, Events Production Group, 135 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010; 212-677-5997, FAX 212-677-3857. For information on other conference activities, contact the National Office. □

CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS

Amecon, Inc.
 Associated Theatrical Contractors
 Avolites, Inc.
 General Telephonics Corporation
 Gerriets International, Inc.
 Great American Market
 Interstate Consolidation Service
 KM Fabrics, Inc.
 Lee Colortran, Inc.
 Lights Sync, Inc.
 Malabar, Ltd.
 Osram Corporation
 Precision Controls, Inc.
 Rosco Laboratories, Inc.
 Sacramento Theatrical Lighting, Ltd.
 Samuel H. Scripps
 Sapsis Rigging, Inc.
 StageRight Corporation, Inc.
 Strand Electro Controls
 Strand Lighting
 Syracuse Scenery & Stage Lighting Co., Inc.
 Teatronics, Inc.
 Theatrical Dealers Association
 Wenger Corporation

C&S NEWS

Sightlines welcomes new Sustaining Member **Events Production Group, Inc.**, the firm now providing management for the USITT Annual Conference and Stage Expo.

Please note the following two current Sustaining Member changes: Stage Lighting Distributors will now be known as **SLD Lighting** and Fender Musical Instruments will be known as **Sunn Stage Lighting**.

Our Contributing & Sustaining Member Profiles series continues on page 7. □

SUSTAINING MEMBERS

Adirondack Scenic
Adirondack Scenic, Inc./JCH
Alberta Stage Lighting, Ltd.
Peter Albrecht Corporation
American Sealing
Artec Consultants, Inc.
Artifex Corporation
Artsoft, Inc.
Automatic Devices Company
AVAB America, Inc.
B.N. Productions
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Bash Theatrical Lighting
Brannigan-Lorelli Associates, Inc.
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Canvas Specialty Company
Celco, Inc.
Centre Theatre Group
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City Lights, Inc.
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Columbine Fabricators
Desco Theatrical Equipment, Inc.
Desisti Lighting Equipment
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Dove Systems
East Coast Theatre Supply
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Entertainment Technology, Inc.
Feller Precision, Inc.
FM Productions
Foy Inventerprises, Inc.
Gagnon Laforest, Inc.
GE Lighting
Grand Stage Lighting
GTE/Sylvania, Inc.
A. Haussmann International USA, Inc.
H & H Specialties
Hoffend and Sons, Inc.

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Changes in Fire and Building Codes

Bill Connor, Jerit/Boys, Inc.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is now in the process of preparing the 1991 edition of the Life Safety Code (LSC). I represent the American Society of Theatre Consultants (ASTC) on the NFPA Safety to Life sub-committee on Assembly and Educational Occupancies. In discussions with Mitch Hefter, USITT Commissioner for Engineering, we agreed that it might benefit the Institute membership to know the changes to the code that are under consideration.

The following are those changes which will appear in the technical committee reports for public comment and which I feel may be significant to the Institute members. If amended, the Code would:

1. Require more stringent testing and standards for fire curtains and the synthetic fabrics and details of fabrication for these fabrics which replace asbestos.
2. Through several changes, require less fire protection on small, minimally equipped stages. One change permits a small amount of rigging on a "regular stage" where previously this rigging would have required the stage to be fully protected as a "legitimate stage." Other changes permit stages or platforms up to 1000 sq. ft. (the current limit is 500 sq. ft.) to exist without fire-rated separation, sprinklers, or standpipes.
3. Require that "foamed plastic used in sets have a maximum heat release rate of 1000 Kw when tested in accordance with UL 1975." This is a fairly stringent test which many foamed plastic materials—such as rigid foam insulation products and "foam-core"—will not currently pass.
4. Require "one crowd manager/supervisor per 250 occupants in assembly occupancies of greater than 1000." This change includes an appendix note which lists the important aspects of crowd management. Effectively, this will require usher training.

5. Require that "all proscenium curtains shall be in the closed position except during performance, rehearsal, or similar activity."

The Life Safety Code is a national model fire code published by the NFPA. Like the three major national model building codes (BOCA *National Building Code*, ICBO *Uniform Building Code*, and SBCCI *Standard Building Code*), changes to the LSC are by public consensus.

The LSC is revised every three years. During the first year of the cycle, proposals for changes are solicited from the public. During the second year, the appropriate sub-committee reviews and votes to either accept or reject the proposed changes.

The proposal as submitted and the sub-committee's actions on it are published in the Technical Committee Reports (TCRs) for public comment. All public comments are then read in committee and acted on, either sustaining, modifying, or overturning the previous committee action.

This is then published as the Technical Committee Documentation (TCDs) and submitted to the main Committee on Safety to Life, where any part of it is subject again to public review, and finally to the NFPA membership for a final discussion and vote. There is yet one more appeals process if someone still feels that the code is not in the public's best interest. All meetings are open to the public and anyone may apply for committee membership.

If this sort of information on the building and fire codes is beneficial to members of the Institute, I will plan to continue to report the activity. If you have questions or comments, or if you desire more information, contact:

Bill Connor, ASTC
Jerit/Boys, Inc.
1116 Lake Street
Oak Park, IL 60301
312-524-2288, FAX: 312-524-2499 □

Engineering Commission

Mitch Hefter, Commissioner

The 1990 edition of the NFPA's National Electrical Code (NEC) is now available. The NEC is beginning its next three-year revision cycle, and the Engineering and Health & Safety Commissions will again be coordinating USITT's involvement in this process.

Past participants in USITT's NEC work and others who have expressed interest will be receiving information before the end of November regarding our work for the 1993 NEC.

If you wish to be involved, contact:

Mitch Hefter, Engineering Commissioner
1607 Elvas Way
Austin, TX 78758
FAX: 512-385-2203, or,
Ken Vannice, 1993 NEC Committee Chair
1707 Micheltorena St. #418
Los Angeles, CA 90026
FAX: 818-954-8520, or,
Dick Thompson, 1993 NEC Cm. Secretary
5632 Lemona Ave.
Van Nuys, CA 91411
FAX: 818-782-6727 □

Sound Design Commission

John L. Bracewell, Commissioner

How much sound is too much? I'm not referring to the old arguments about how loud reinforcement sound should be, but to sound as an enhancement for theatrical production.

I've always been the sound designer who would gladly flesh out the acoustical world of a production with anything that I could imagine—granted, of course, that the particular treatment was useful, credible, and did not violate the playwright's or the director's intent. No good reason ever exists to load gratuitous sounds onto a dramatic vehicle.

Lately, however, I find myself doing play after play where the approach to sound could be described in one word—minimalist!

The problem, for me, is that providing only the spot cues that a playwright calls for in a script seems so—well, trifling! No, trifling isn't the word. The effects themselves do serve a dramatic purpose. Nonetheless, something about it offends my sense of what I feel I should be doing as a sound designer. I think it's the way the cues just suddenly appear, then go away with no additional hint of an auditory world outside of the narrow bounds of the setting. But that's certainly been the tradition in theatre, hasn't it? A sound is established, makes its point, and then fades out.

I have to admit that I can recall a fair number of experiences where, after creating a large sound environment for a production, I found that if I asserted the full auditory extension of the dramatic world, the sound would overwhelm the storyline. Too much sound! In each of these cases I've always tried to figure out why what I could hear so clearly in my imagination didn't work in the practical reality of staging.

How much sound is too much—and why? Why can we, as audience members, tolerate an almost constant blanket of sound in film while even small additions to the auditory environment in theatre can prove excessively distracting? The answer, I think, lies not so much in the differences between theatre and film (and there certainly are significant differences!), but in the way the human brain processes information within a given environment.

First, ask yourself a question: in which circumstance are you more likely to lose awareness of your fellow audience mem-

bers: theatre or film? I am quite sure that my vote goes to film. At least, I know I usually get completely absorbed whenever I go to the cinema, whereas in a theatre I'm usually marginally conscious of the audience around me at almost all times. Why? Is film more capable of absorbing one's entire awareness than theatre?

I can carry the matter a step further by qualifying the question somewhat: given a small screen in a relatively large space, does film absorb your consciousness any more than theatre? I think I'd have to vote no to that one. Watching a small screen in a large space, I can be just as aware of my fellow

audience members as I am in a typical theatre. Of course, I'm assuming that we're talking about a proscenium theatre.

Now let's ask what the balance would be between a very good arena production and film. Does that make any dif-

ference? It usually does for me. I lose peripheral awareness much more easily in an arena than in a proscenium theatre.

So what's the point? The point is the visual scale that accompanies the production. We can't ever forget that sound and vision are complementary senses for humans, but vision is the predominant one for the majority of people. When we have no trouble sorting out the details of the visual environment, then we can afford the luxury of an extended auditory world.

But, the moment we have to put forth an effort to decipher primary visual detail, the brain must focus all of its processing capacity on that particular task. Auditory elements that pull at our consciousness become annoying distractions.

The directors with whom I've done my most extensive sound designs were uniformly interested in exploring what sound could do; and they were willing to adjust the scale of the visual elements of their productions to make a heavier use of sound possible. When a director provides me with a suitable visual environment, I can make all of the adjustments necessary in order to keep the auditory environment in balance. In such a situation, almost continuous sound is possible without the least distraction from the storyline, action, or dialogue.

The directors with whom I work now are almost all interested in exploring small

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SUSTAINING MEMBERS

Hollywood Lights, Inc.
Holzmüller Productions
Hudson Scenic Studios, Inc.
Irwin Sealing Company
JCN
Jachem & Meeh, Inc.
Joel Theatrical Rigging, Ltd.
Joeun Technics (Korea), Inc.
Kimberly Theatrics
Kryolan Corporation
L.S.C. Electronics Pty., Ltd.
Lehigh Electric Products Co.
Leprecon/CAE, Inc.
Light Beams, NV
Lighting & Electronics, Inc.
Lighting Associates Templates
Lighting Dimensions Magazine
Lighting Methods, Inc.
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Little Stage Lighting
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NSI Corporation
Ben Nye Cosmetics
Olesen Company
Pantechinon
Phoebus Manufacturing
Pook Diemont & Ohi, Inc.
Product Sales Associates
Production Arts Lighting
Quality Stage Drapery
Richmond Sound Design, Ltd.
Rigging Innovators
Risk International, Inc.
Rose Brand Textile Fabrics
San Diego Stage & Lighting Supply

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SUSTAINING MEMBERS

Sanders Lighting Templates
SBH Micronix Corp.
Secoa
Select Ticketing
Shopworks Incorporated
SICO, Inc.
Stage Equipment & Lighting
SLD Lighting
Stagecraft Industries, Inc.
Stageworks Production Supply, Inc.
Strong International Electric Corp.
Sunn Stage Lighting
Systems Design Associates
TEI Electronics
Tech Direct
Technolight
Texas Scenic Company, Inc.
Theatre Crafts Magazine
Theatre House, Inc.
Theatre Projects Consultants, Inc.
Theatre Techniques, Inc.
Theatre Vision, Inc.
Theatrical Services & Supply, Inc.
James Thomas Engineering
Tiffin Scenic Studios, Inc.
Tomcat USA, Inc.
Touch Technologies, Inc.
Union Connector Co., Inc.
United Stage Equipment, Inc.
Unnatural Resources, Inc.
Veam
Vincent Lighting Systems
Jim Weber Lighting Service, Inc.
I. Weiss & Sons, Inc.
S. Wolf's Sons

□

APPRECIATION

Our gratitude and sincere thanks to all the Contributing and Sustaining Members of USITT who do so much to support the continuing growth of the Institute!

□

Centerline: Remote Control Flash Effect

Steve Balk, Theatre Projects

In a recent production, we used an infrared transmitter and receiver to control the operation of a four-to-six-foot flash effect that emanated from a ceramic bowl (Figure 1). The requirements of the stage action prohibited the use of contacts hidden in the stage. Radio and ultrasonic controls were ruled out because of the risk of stray radio signals or sounds that could set off the flash prematurely.

The main design requirements of the effect were:

- The mechanism had to be concealed inside a one-foot-tall ceramic bowl with a 15-inch opening and a base six inches in diameter.

Remote Control Devices—A frequency-paired transmitter (Banner Corporation No. SMA91E) and receiver (Banner Corporation No. SMW95W), positioned as described above, acted as the remote control device. The transmitter was powered by a 120V AC source controlled by an operator in clear view of the effect and actor. The receiver was powered by a 12V DC battery source placed inside the bowl. When the operator applied power to the transmitter, a beam of light emanating in a 15-degree cone at a matched frequency was directed to the receiver. The instant the receiver saw the light, a normally open relay closed to complete the circuit

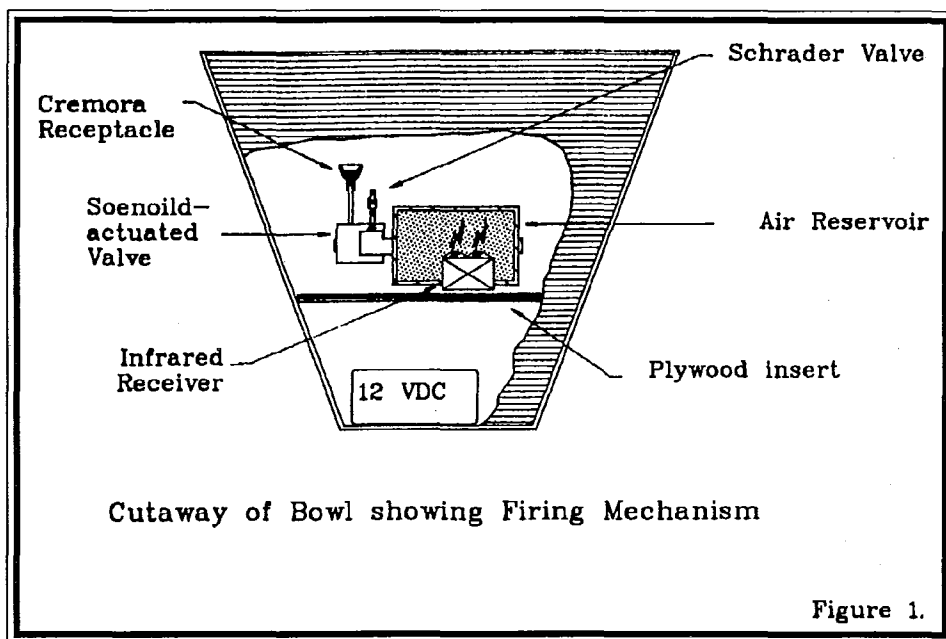


Figure 1.

ter.

- An actor had to carry the bowl onstage during the action of the play.
- The flash had to be four-to-six-foot tall.

SYSTEM

An infrared transmitter, positioned on a pipe 30 feet directly above the spiked placement of the bowl, emitted a beam of light "visible" only to the receiver. When the transmitter was activated, the receiver responded by closing a circuit that operated a valve releasing pressurized air through a container of Cremora™ (the common coffee lighter). The Cremora™ was blown into suspension in the air above the bowl, and as it made contact with a pilot light of Sterno™, it ignited quickly, simulating a dust explosion. There were two fundamental components of the system: the remote control devices and the firing mechanism.

between the batteries and the solenoid-actuated valve.

Firing Mechanism—The firing mechanism picture in Figure 2 consisted of an air reservoir, a Schraeder tank filler valve, a Cremora™ receptacle, and a Sterno™ dish. The air reservoir was a commercially available 26-cubic-inch reservoir rated at 200 PSI (Bimba Corporation No. D18078-A-1). The reservoir was connected to a Schraeder tank valve and a solenoid-actuated valve. The tank received the compressed air through the Schraeder valve where it was now stored. A two-way, normally closed, spring-return, solenoid-actuated valve, powered by the same batteries which energized the receiver, controlled the flow of the air out of the tank. The output side of this valve was fitted with an NPT reducer (one-eighth inch to one-half

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Centerline: Remote Control Flash Effect

—continued from page 6

inch) drilled out to form a smooth, funnel-like receptacle in which the Cremora™ sat. A Sterno™ dish, fabricated out of sheet metal, was attached to this funnel by means of a small hose clamp.

THE FLASH

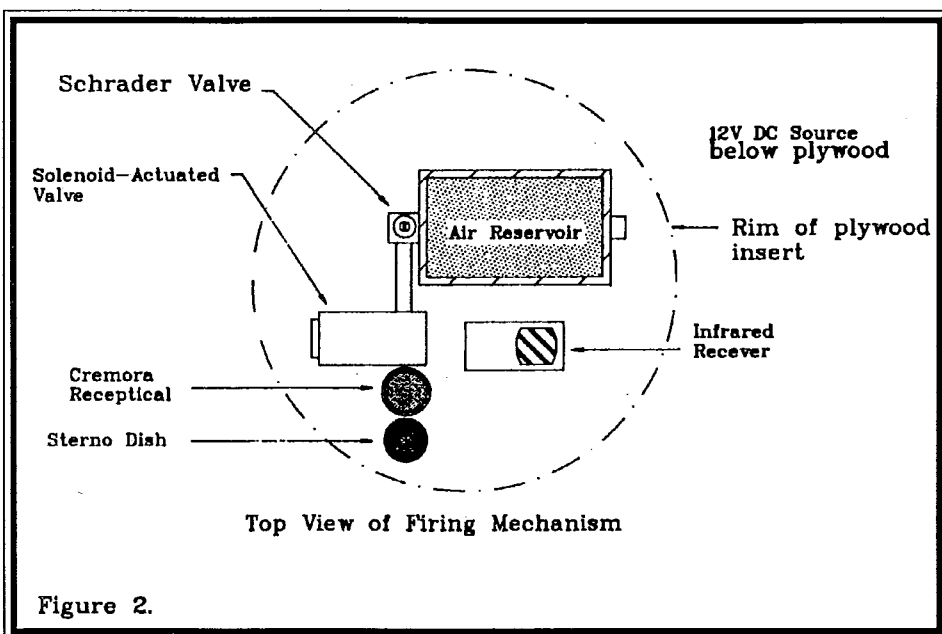
Just before the bowl was brought on stage, the Cremora™ receptacle was filled and the Sterno™ lit. After the bowl had been placed on spike, the device was ready to be triggered. The light from the transmitter activated the receiver's relay, energizing the solenoid-controlled valve and throwing the Cremora™ into the air like a cloud of dust.

As the cloud floated down, its bottom edges made contact with the lit Sterno™, and the entire Cremora™ cloud ignited in a brief but spectacular billowing flame.

Infrared equipment for this effect is available from:

Banner Engineering Corporation
9714 10th Ave. North
Minneapolis, MN 55441
612-544-3213

The air reservoir is available from:
Bimba Manufacturing
Rt. 50
Monee, IL 60449
312-534-8544



Sound Design Commission

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nuances of visual and verbal realism. That's a perfectly legitimate way to approach a piece of drama, of course. I have no argument with that. I may wish for a little more creative expression, but that's my problem.

Sorting the matter out, however, leads me to a conclusion: how much sound is too much? More than the audience member's perceptual process can handle at any given time, and that depends mainly on the visual scale of the production. Visual scale is entirely dependent on how the director treats the production.

So, perhaps one of the things we all need to do as sound designers is to spend some

time early on psyching out how the director really intends to treat the scale of the production. I suspect that on those occasions when we suddenly find ourselves with too much sound, we've failed to gauge the visual scale correctly. We didn't place ourselves, either imaginatively or literally, in one of the rear seats, trying to make sure that we could follow exactly what's happening on the stage. We didn't take into account how relatively easy or difficult that task would be.

The answer seems to be, of course, that when the dialogue and action is intimate and subtle, you'd best stick with no more than the spot cues the playwright asks for. Anything else is likely to be too much! □

C&S PROFILES



A. Haussmann International USA, Inc.
132 Ninth Street
San Francisco, CA 94103-2603
Phone: 415-431-1336
FAX: 415-863-9059
Contact: Claudia Kowalk
In business for 40 years
USITT C&S Member for 5 years
Haussmann sells artist brushes, dry pigments, textile dyes, slide paints, bronzing powders, weave fillers, foils, paints, etc.

Holzmueller

Holzmueller Productions
1275 Minnesota Street
San Francisco, CA 94107
Phone: 415-826-8383
FAX: 415-826-2608
Contact: Paul Salinger, Oper. Mgr.
In business for 87 years
USITT C&S Member for 4 years
Holzmueller is a full-service rental and sales facility, providing theatrical lighting, rigging, special effects, expendables, and design services.

LE LIGHTING & ELECTRONICS

Lighting & Electronics, Inc.
Market Street Industrial Park
Wappingers Falls, NY 12590
Phone: 914-297-1244
FAX: 914-297-9270
Contact: John V Fedigan, Pres.
In business for 26 years
USITT C&S Member for 6 years
Lighting & Electronics manufactures a complete line of stage lighting fixtures and products designed to meet the demands of the touring professional.

Pantechinon

Pantechinon, Inc.
941 Berryessa Rd.
San Jose, CA 95133
Phone: 408-453-8000
FAX: 408-452-8022
Contact: Steve Kaplowitz, President
In business for 5 years
USITT C&S Member for 1 year
Pantechinon provides custom scenery, props, rigging, track systems, drapery, and staging, and builds and installs cycloramas and grid systems.

C&S PROFILES



San Diego Stage & Lighting Supply, Inc.
2030 El Cajon Blvd.

San Diego, CA 92104

Phone: 619-299-2300

FAX: 619-299-7049

Contact: Lori Rubinstein, General Mgr.

In business for 14 years

USITT C&S Member for 1 year

San Diego Stage & Lighting is a full-service organization providing theatrical rental and sales, tradeshow, production, and installation services.



Secoa/TRS, Inc.

2731 Nevada Avenue North

Minneapolis, MN 55427

Phone: 612-546-6313

Tollfree: 800-328-5519

FAX: 612-546-8361

Contact: Paul L. Scharfenberger, V.P.

In business for 12 years

USITT C&S Member for 10 years

Secoa is a stage rigging and lighting contractor, manufacturing and installing all theatre stage equipment.



Strong International

4350 McKinley Street

Omaha, NE 68112

Phone: 402-453-4444

Tollfree: 800-424-1215

FAX: 402-453-7238

Contact: Jack Schmidt, Product Mgr.

In business for 63 years

USITT C&S Member for 6 years

Strong has manufactured the finest in spotlights and motion picture projection equipment since the mid 1920s.



Tech Direct

70 Stratford Rd.

Rochester, NH 03867

Phone: 603-335-2443

Tollfree: 800-635-6020

Contact: Kate Kirkwood, Gen. Partner

In business for 4 years

USITT C&S Member for 2 years

Tech Direct is a theatrical supply company, selling and renting lighting, sound, and effects equipment and providing design/production services.

Costume Design & Technology

Kevin L. Seligman, Commissioner

Some recent changes to make on the Commission Projects Contact Sheet—Joy Emery's work phone is 401-792-2715; Ron Gloekler has a new address: 3405 W. 16th Street, #49, Greeley, CO 80631; Alexandra Bonds's new address is: 1030 Lorane Hwy., Eugene, OR 97405; and Anne Thaxter Watson also has a new address: 201-22nd Ave. E., Seattle, WA 98112, (H) 206-325-3643.

I announced in the October *Sightlines* that Martha Christian was taking over as chair of the Professional Costume Shop Managers Project. In further discussion with her and Holly Poe Durbin, the two have decided to co-chair the project.

Holly Cole is now finalizing plans for the August Symposium in New York. The proposed dates are Thursday through Saturday, 2-4 August 1989. This is the weekend preceding the ATHE Conference in Chicago 8-11 Aug. If you would like to assist Holly with the symposium, please let her know.

Tentative plans have the first day centering on design for various media, training of designer, and the opportunity for a three-day master class. The second day with focus on technology and crafts, including training the technician. The final day will focus on a selected Broadway show with attendance at the matinee performance. Discussions will cover working as a designer in New York and design assistants.

As many of you may have already heard, the 1991 national conference has been changed from Hartford, CT to Boston. The dates for the conference will be earlier than normal: 18-23 Feb. 1991, so it's time to start thinking of program ideas, topics, workshops, etc. Contact Ron Gloekler now, as we will need to finalize programming shortly after the Milwaukee Conference.

Future conference sites are Seattle in 1992, Wichita in 1993, Washington, DC/Baltimore in 1994, and San Diego/Los Angeles in 1995. If you have some interest in serving as vice-commissioner for programming for any of these conferences, please let me know.

Milwaukee Conference programming will provide three full days of choices in addition to a choice of two pre-conference workshops. A number of joint sessions have been planned in collaboration with other commissions. The dates are 11-14 April 1990. Plan now to arrange your schedule to attend.

William Flynn will be conducting a pre-conference workshop on "Managing and

Motivating Costume Shop Staff," and Herb Camburn and Richard Levering will be offering a pre-conference workshop on "Things Mother Never Told You About Drawing the Draped Figure," which will be a hands-on session on common figure-drawing problems.

With the Health and Safety Commission, we will have a session on "Dyeing in the Costume Shop," which will be held at the costume shop of the Milwaukee Rep. With the Lighting and Scenic Design Commissions, we will have sessions on "Communication with the Non-visual Director," "Diet for the Theatre Technician," "Selecting Color: Pigment and Light," "Collaboration in Design," "Preparing for the USAA Exam," and "Stage Props: Whose Job is It?"

We will end the conference appropriately on April 14 with a joint session with the Theatre and Production Management Commission on "Tax and Financial Planning."

Additional sessions will focus on "Achieving Fit: How, When, and Where," "Prostituting Your Art," "Freddie Wittop: A Heritage Session," "History and Construction of Ruffs and Their Use on Stage," "Mask and Accessories from

Makeup Techniques," and "Life in a Theme Park Costume Shop."

On Thursday will be the Costume Design Portfolio Review, which has been put together by Anne Thaxter Watson, and on Friday there will be student portfolio reviews. In addition, the *Cutter's Research Journal* will hold a business meeting during the conference, and there will be the usual commission meetings and orientation for new members.

The Prague '87 exhibit will be in Milwaukee as well as the Exhibit Hall, and we are trying to attract more costume-related exhibitors. Of course, there will be an opportunity to visit the theatres in the Milwaukee area, and the annual banquet will be held Friday night. Judith Tucker-Snyder has done a wonderful job in planning the programming for Milwaukee; she will have a more detailed schedule in a future issue of *Sightlines*.

Looking for a gift to give a colleague, student, or friend for the holidays? Think about a gift subscription to the *Cutter's Research Journal*.

Have a happy turkey day!

□

Profile: William J. Byrnes

Cecelia Fielding, Editor

If Bill Byrnes has his own way, he'll leave his own personal stamp on USITT in a very unique and productive way: significantly increased membership.

"There are several thousand people out there who should belong to USITT, but they don't even know why they should belong," said Byrnes, who was appointed USITT Vice-President for Development in 1985 when the position was first created by the Board of Directors.

The challenge, says Byrnes, comes in trying to reach those potential members using the Institute's sometimes limited resources. But a three-pronged approach stressing the support, recognition, and information available from the Institute is increasing general awareness of its value.

USITT has been a significant part of Byrnes's career almost from the beginning. An undergraduate English major at the University of New Mexico, Byrnes was working in "a lowly work-study job" in theatre when he "got the bug." He subsequently received an MFA in theatre design and technology from UCLA in 1972, working in a variety of theatres, including three summers spent at the Santa Fe Opera in the lighting area.

At Oberlin College in Ohio, he began his career as technical director/lighting designer, eventually working up to production manager, associate professor of theatre, and associate department chairman. Along the way, he experienced another career shift, moving from lighting design to theatre management. But he still manages to work in one or two lighting design assignments a year, including work at the Cleveland and Dayton Opera Companies; his resume lists design work for some 200 productions.

He first joined USITT in 1974, and in 1978 was part of the founding of the Ohio Section, serving for a time as its chair and as chair of the Cleveland Conference in 1981. He credits the local section for his developing interest in

the Institute. "Here was this network I was really able to connect with," he says.

Through his work with the Cleveland Conference and the Ohio Section, Byrnes gradually moved into the national level, and was eventually tapped for the development post. His first efforts in that post included the Silver Anniversary fund-raising campaign with Richard Arnold, a national mail campaign, and several activities at the Oakland Conference in 1986.

All of this activity segued very neatly into

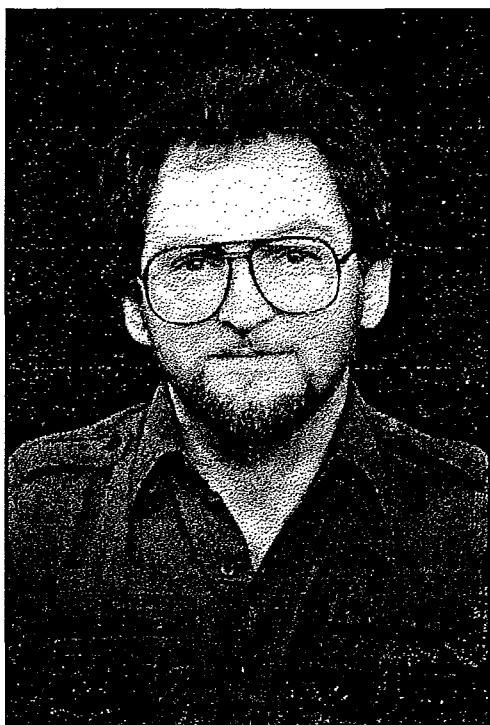
Byrnes's current perspective on Institute growth: focusing on membership development, which is a significant part of the recommendations of the Long- and Short-Range Planning Committee, of which Byrnes was a part. In fact, Chair Jody Good gives Byrnes credit for creating the new Institute subtitle—The American Association of Design and Production Professionals in the Performing Arts—which better communicates to potential members the intent of the Institute.

A departmental reorganization at Oberlin College

forced Byrnes to resign from the development post for a time, and he was replaced by Don Shulman. But when Shulman moved on to become President-Elect, Byrnes came back, and is now concentrating on a new strategy, which will feature a fall membership campaign working with USITT General Manager David Diamond, several NEA grant proposals, and a 30th Anniversary fund-raising campaign.

"We're also working with the national office, the publications, and Events Production Group to develop more involvement by contributing and sustaining members and non-profit groups," he added.

Members are encouraged to remember the USITT Endowment Fund in their gift giving this year, Byrnes mentioned in closing. □



C&S MEMBER NEWS

News Items from USITT Contributing and Sustaining Members:

- The San Francisco Convention and Visitors Center has selected **Holzmueller Productions** to develop the Bureau's new 20-by-50-foot convention trade show exhibit booth. The design's four modular islands depict San Francisco visitor icons, such as the Golden Gate Bridge and Coit Tower, and a comfortable living room setting provides an environment for meeting clients and discussing the city as a convention destination.

- Preliminary plans for the Philadelphia Orchestra's new concert hall were unveiled recently, and included significant contributions from **Artec Consultants, Inc.** Artec Chairman Russell Johnson, the project's acoustician, studied the sound of the orchestra in its current home as well as in concerts around the world and has designed the acoustics of the concert hall to specifically suit the organization. A 60-ton dome over the orchestra's seating area, for example, can be raised and lowered hydraulically to tune the new hall to the forces performing at any given time. In other news, Artec has also recently appointed David M. Conte as executive director.

- **Lights Sync, Inc.** has developed the first noiseless digital light dimmer. Dubbed "Humphrey," the new dimmer eliminates all audible noise, including radio frequency interference, and as a result, causes neither lamp filament vibration or interference with audio/video equipment. System control features an Apple Macintosh or any PC connected over a standard serial port, and the unit is available in 1200W and 2400W modules with Analog 0-10v, AMX, or DMX compatibility.

- Eric Druker is now the East Coast representative for **Cinemills Corporation** through his new firm, Druker Film and Video Equipment. He can be reached at PO Box 4696, Highland Park, NJ 08904; O: 201-828-2532 FAX: 201-246-4312.

- **Strand Lighting** introduced several new products at the recent Calgary Convention and at NAB '89 in Las Vegas, including: Light Palette 90; Parscan II; Action 48; PALS; and Quasar.

□

WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY**TECHNICAL THEATRE SPECIALIST**

The Wichita State University seeks a theatre technician to assist in the maintenance of three university performance facilities—a 425-seat organ recital hall, a 550-seat modified thrust theatre/concert hall, and an 840-seat proscenium theatre.

Qualifications: Experience in all areas of technical theatre management, including rigging, lighting, and sound, plus stage management is required. BFA or MA in technical theatre/scenic design required; MFA in technical theatre or scenic design is preferred. Twelve-month appointment. AA/EOE.

Salary: Competitive.

Application deadline: 20 October 1989 or the 20th of each month thereafter until the position is filled.

Starting date: 18 December 1989.

Submit: Resume and three letters of reference to:

College of Fine Arts
Specialist Search
Box 151, The Wichita State University
Wichita, KS 67208

**WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY****FACILITIES TECHNICAL MANAGER**

The Wichita State University seeks an experienced theatre technician to supervise and maintain three University performance facilities—a 425-seat organ recital hall, a 550-seat modified thrust theatre/concert hall, and an 840-seat proscenium theatre.

Qualifications: Experience in all areas of technical theatre, including rigging, lighting, and sound, plus stage management is required. Previous experience as a professional employee in facilities, management preferred. Masters degree in technical theatre or scenic design is required, MFA preferred. Twelve-month appointment. AA/EOE.

Salary: Competitive.

Application deadline: 20 October 1989 or the 20th of each month thereafter until the position is filled.

Starting date: 18 June 1990.

Submit: Resume and three letters of reference to:

College of Fine Arts
Tech Manager Search
Box 151, The Wichita State University
Wichita, KS 67208

Opinion: Theatre and the Environment

Kent L. Goetz, Illinois State University

I would like to share a concern I have about the relationship between theatre production and the health of our environment. I feel confident that everyone is already aware of the peril the human race has created for this planet through the exploitation and mismanagement of its resources. I'm sure that everyone who believes that the peril is real also believes the time has come to take decisive action in stopping the destruction of our precious environment. Given these assumptions, I would like to pose a question: how can we as an organization and as individuals take responsibility for the future good health of our environment?

As a designer for the theatre, it has always been my concern to create a space on stage that will support the action and express the ideas demanded by the script. To accomplish this, I utilize whatever materials and processes I think appropriate. After the play opens, my job is done and I move on to the next project. I accept the fact that, when the play closes, the set is struck and most likely hauled to the dump.

I haven't been concerned that all the lumber, steel, styrofoam, paint, and other materials served only a temporary purpose on stage and ultimately occupy a more permanent space in a landfill. The fact that the lumber used was once a part of a forest providing habitat for other animals, oxygen to our atmosphere (and scenic beauty) didn't worry me. Nor was I concerned that the styrofoam used was made with CFCs which destroy the ozone layer of our atmosphere. I wasn't concerned that the paint and solvents poured down the slop sink eventually ended up somewhere as toxic residue.

With increased awareness, I have come to realize that the creation of scenery is not just

an artistic endeavor—it also contributes to the slow but steady degradation of the environment. Therefore, my own contribution to the plight of this planet has become a fast-growing concern of mine to the degree that I have committed myself to finding ways to constructively address the concern.

One way is to initiate dialogues about the dilemma we face. Another way is to engage in recycling programs already in place within our community. Yet another way is to diminish the amount of waste generated during routine activities. Related to all of these is simply to become aware that the cost of using our natural resources goes beyond the dollar amount. The least expensive, most efficient way of producing an effect may not always be environmentally prudent.

It will be only a matter of time before economic pressure of supply and demand as well as legislation will force us all to change the way we produce theatre. We could continue to wait passively for external forces to dictate how we do our business and live our lives. Or we can take the lead now and assume the responsibility by adapting our methods of theatre production so that they contribute to, rather than detract from, the health of our planet.

What if USITT pioneered the idea that we, as artists and technicians, have a moral responsibility to more than just "the show." What if a serious dialogue was begun at the 1990 Conference to discuss the role that USITT could play in this matter?

Even if no collective action is taken by the organization, an awareness of the issues should be heightened, and as individuals we may begin to see more clearly the complex interrelationships that exist between ourselves and the global environment. □

Hypertext Solutions Wanted

M. Barrett Cleveland & Mark Shanda

Nearly 200 participants at last year's Calgary Conference attended the "Software Applications for IBM and Macintosh" session sponsored by the Technical Production Commission. Two of the applications demonstrated were created with *Hypercard*, Apple Computer's information storage environment for the Macintosh. These new hypertext environments—*Supercard*, *Hyperpad* for IBM compatible systems, etc.) offer new and exciting possibilities for the organization, storage, and sharing of information.

At the upcoming Milwaukee Conference, a follow-up session, "Hyperactive Problem Solving—Solutions with *Hypercard*," will present examples of how hypertext-based

programs are being generated and used in the areas of theatre production and teaching. If you are using a commercial hypertext application or a stack that you created to solve a particular problem, we want to hear from you so that you can share your knowledge with the USITT membership.

If you are interested in participating in this session, please contact:

M. Barrett Cleveland or Mark Shanda
The Ohio State University
1089 Drake Union
1849 Cannon Drive
Columbus, OH 43210

To allow sufficient time for planning, we need to hear from you by 1 January 1990. □

Response: Art That Offends

John J. Gallagher & Jeanie Willard, ACES

In the September issue of *Sightlines*, USITT takes a strong stand regarding NEA funding, which is best summed up in Joy Emery's proposed Mailgram: "...support FULL funding and restoration of the \$45,000 cut to the National Endowment for the Arts. The issue is freedom of expression vs. censorship." Miss Willard and I strongly **disagree** with this point of view.

In 1972 I joined USITT as a young technical director. I have served on two national conference committees, as Arts Administration Commissioner, the first chairman of the Chesapeake Section, two terms as national Treasurer, and recently as co-chairman of Chesapeake's 1994 national conference committee. Membership in USITT has been both professionally and personally rewarding for me, and I have valued the opportunities which it provided to give a little something back to our industry.

However, we cannot sit idly by when our organization seeks to take a political stand which we find not only wrong, but dangerous to the long-term vitality of arts in the United States.

First, the issue is most certainly not one of "freedom of expression vs. censorship."

Larry Flint and *Hustler* Magazine, along with many others, long ago established the extent of our First Amendment rights to combine excrement and female bodies as "artistic expression," so Mr. Serrano was well within his rights to photograph a crucifix in his urine.

The issue is whether or not our tax dollars should help fund the Larry Flints, Andres Serranos, and other offensive con artists and charlatans of the artistic world. If USITT's position is taken to its logical conclusion, then we must have NEA subsidizing the "artistic expression" which makes New York's 42nd Street and San Francisco's Tenderloin so "attractive" (sic).

Secondly, Messrs. Devin and Diamond and Ms. Emery completely miss the clear implication of **any** government funding of the arts. As a child, I learned the proverb, "He who pays the piper calls the tune." While this idea may be simplistic, my adult life has reinforced the simple truth of that saying. Producers fund or cancel productions, museum administrators hold or cancel displays, sponsors extend or withdraw funding...just as our customers purchase our equipment or our competitor's. Free-

dom of expression is protected in a free society **only** because there is a wide variety of people "paying the piper and calling the tunes."

While the great value of **limited** government sponsorship of the arts is easily demonstrated by local recreation departments (from New York's Delacord Theatre to Richmond's Dogwood Dell), the results of too much government control are best demonstrated by the "freedoms" of Soviet artists.

The United States produced many great artists long before NEA was even a glint in a politician's eye. While NEA has certainly done many good things, and kept many good and bad artists employed, Mr. Devin is unfortunately right when he says that "...Every arts organization in the US is affected by (NEA) decisions..."

Furthermore, in the real world of government bureaucracy and Washington politics,

everyone associated with NEA has already heard Sen. Helms's real message: offend enough people, and you will cease to exist. As in any bureaucracy, that means subtle and not-so-subtle decisions will be made to protect this small agency from too much publicity. That

means mild-mannered "mainstream" arts funding, and to the extent that NEA is the major funding source for American arts, it will create a chilling effect on creativity.

We cannot have freedom of expression when Congress holds the **only** purse strings! The sheer size of potential federal arts funding **always** presents a danger of alternate funding sources becoming insignificant and eventually non-existent.

The current controversy over NEA funding should have been recognized as a warning sign that the Federal government is already **too** involved in arts funding. Instead, like addicts who cannot refuse government dollars (and the government control which that implies), USITT and her sister arts organizations cry, "Censorship!" and "More Money!"

Let us not continue down the road toward Congress dictating what art is. Let us keep our perspective, severely limit the role which the feds play in American arts, and retain our free, diverse, and **creative** heritage. If that means the NEA loses \$45,000 or its very existence, then so be it. It is a small price to pay to prevent "Big Brother" from dictating taste and culture. □

SAN JOSE STATE

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

Tenure-track faculty position to teach three-to-four technical theatre courses per semester and TD six-to-eight theatre/dance productions per year.

Qualifications: MFA or MA with professional experience and some scenic design experience required.

Salary: \$29-40,000 commensurate with experience.

Application deadline: 15 November 1989

Submit: Letter of application and vita/resume:

Drama Search Committee
Theatre Arts Department
San Jose State University
San Jose, CA 95192-0098
EO/AA/Title IX Employer

□

C&S MEMBER NEWS

• Tom Sullivan, new president of **Strand Lighting**, has implemented a number of organizational changes, products, and customer service options, including a quality assurance program, a new paint line, and a CAD research program.

• The success of New York's China Club, known for its impromptu sessions by legendary jazz performers, prompted the development of a new multi-million dollar China Club facility in Hollywood. Technical features for the club include a NCM 7232 memory lighting controller and NRD 8000 dimmers from **NSI Corporation**, giving the China Club the most flexible control products available, according to Terry White, vice-president of marketing at NSI.

• **Vincent Lighting Systems** has some new numbers: 20810 Miles Parkway, Cleveland, OH 44128, 216-475-7600, FAX 216-475-6376; also at 2552 American Court, Covington, KY 41017, 606-344-1900, FAX 606-344-1933; their tollfree number is 800-922-5356.

• The much-heralded Rolling Stones North America Tour, with its 300' by 215' stage and multiple special lighting and sound effects, features **Celco** Gold lighting control consoles, provided by Samuelson Concert Productions.

□

Check Points

Stress & Wellness Strategies

Since the first appearance of the Check Points column in December 1988, I have received much positive feedback from readers. It would be productive to get even more people involved. First, I would appreciate hearing from those of you who are responding to and benefitting from the material but have yet to communicate that to me. Secondly, I would appreciate receiving material for inclusion in the newsletter.

I am sure many of you have heard of or used stress and wellness techniques that are worth publication. Send me your ideas and/or articles to the address listed below.

The objective of Checkpoints is to raise awareness and inform; to allow the membership to have access to techniques and strategies which can be used on a regular basis, thus making them combative and alert individuals responding positively to the stresses around them; and additionally, to improve their general wellness.

In the next six issues of *Sightlines*, we will publish some advanced techniques and strategies concerning an area of stress

management and wellness in which many of us do extremely poorly—**DIET**. This focus was chosen because too many of us do not contribute to our well being via our eating habits. Solid, practical, and simple ideas will be proposed which may, quite bluntly, increase our lifespan and our productive years in our chosen fields.

So, if you are sitting there smoking a cigarette and having your fourth beer, getting ready to rush over to Hamburger Heaven to snarf down a meal before going to rehearsal—enjoy, because the next several issues will be hard for you to digest. (But not as hard as the burger!)

Send your feedback and/or article ideas to:

Stan Abbott
Purdue University Theatre
Stewart Center
West Lafayette, IN 47907

—Stan Abbott □

CURTAIN CALL

Deadline for next issue of *Sightlines*:

The deadline for inclusion in *Sightlines* is the 5th of the month prior to the desired publication date.

Thanks for your support and interest in *Sightlines* and all the USITT Publications.

□

CALENDAR

- November 17-19 • Lighting Dimensions International '89, Nashville, TN
- Nov 30 - Dec 3 • USITT Southeastern Region Conference, Columbia, SC
- December 1-3 • Winter USITT Board Meeting, Milwaukee, WI
- December 2-5 • NADI (National Association of Display Industries) Design Market, New York, NY
- April 11-14 • USITT Annual Conference & Stage Expo, Milwaukee, WI

□

Sightlines

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