



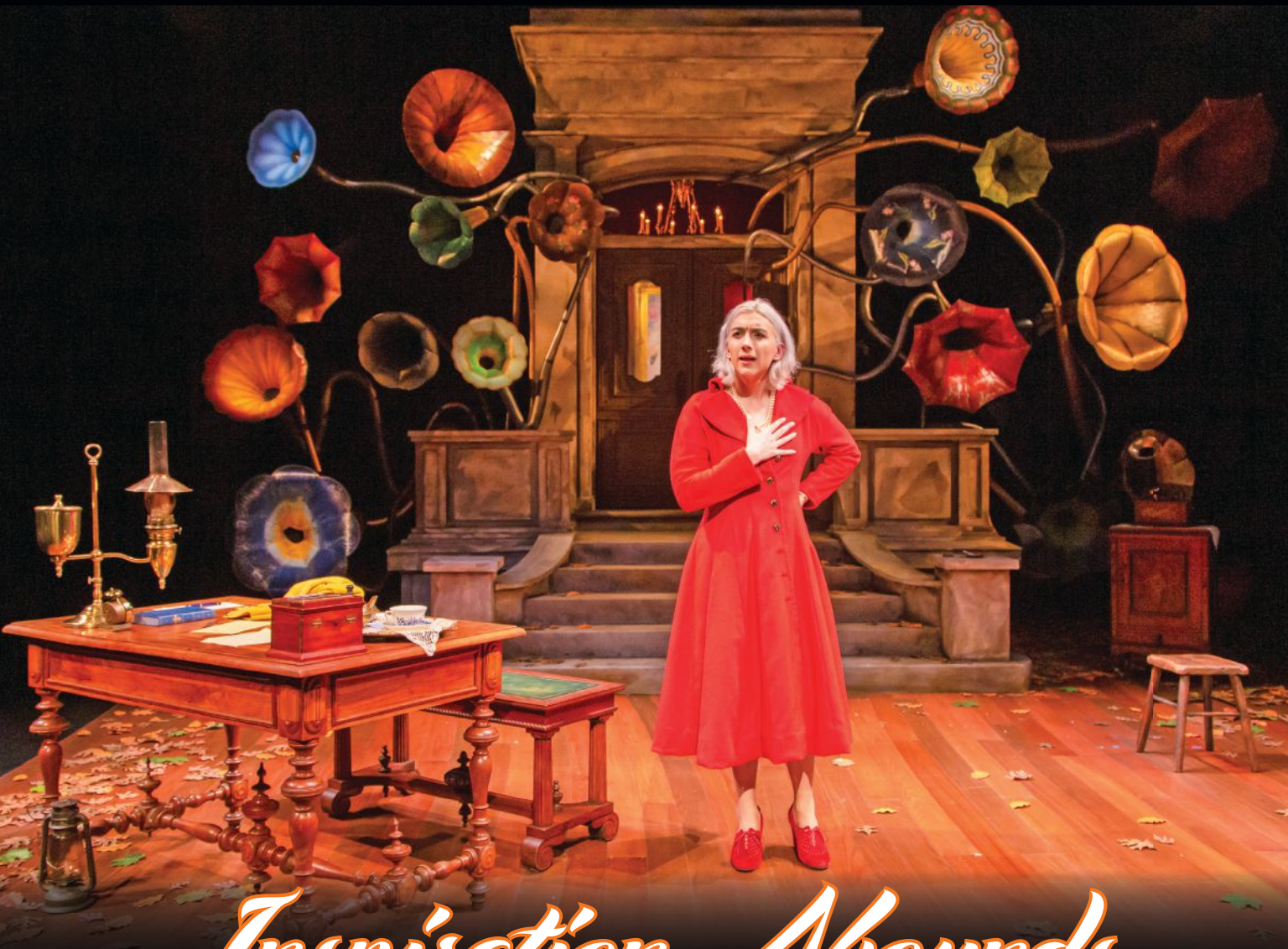
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MARCH 2020



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— Josef Svoboda, Scenographer

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14

SD Table Of Contents

March 2020

FEATURES

6 Conference: USITT 2020

A wealth of opportunities and offerings

12 Lighting: LED Specials

Solutions of LD Jen Fok & lighting supervisor James Horban

14 Illuminations: Vianey Salazar

Navigating POC Politics in Production

16 In the Limelight: The Humane Mentor

David McGraw guides the next gen of stage managers

18 Inspiration: Verdi

An exhibition on the creation of *Otello* and *Falstaff*

20 Scenic: Home SET Home

Two household sets that supported the narratives

22 Books: Journey to Stage

Revisiting Tom O'Horgan's Radical 1971 Broadway Production

26 Point Source Audio Sounding Board:

CO2 Double Microphones – A Winning Combination

DEPARTMENTS

- 2 Editor's Note
- 4 Q2Q Comics
- 8 Tools: For Consideration
- 28 Answer Box: Prop Tips

ON OUR COVER: Mason Alexander Park as Charlotte Von Mahlsdorf in Long Wharf Theatre's production of *I Am My Own Wife*. Scenic Designer Britton Mauk, Costume Designer Daniel Tyler Mathews, Lighting Designer Jen Fok, and Sound Designer Kimberly S. O'Loughlin. Photo by T. Charles Erickson.

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Recharging Inspiration

Welcome to the March 2020 issue of *Stage Directions* magazine.

This month I want to touch on inspiration. I went to school to become a lighting designer. I started out as an electrician and technical director but loved everything about light—how to bend and shape it; color and shade it; make a set or scene come to life onstage through light. Some of the things that inspired my thinking was going to museums, although growing up in Columbus, IN this was not as possible as often, or too varied a range of exhibits as I would have liked. In college, I looked at as many art books and slides of paintings that I could get my hands on; especially the work of those artists who had a mastery of using light. I particularly have always loved the Impressionists. Beyond light I also looked for inspiring ideas creatively, so I took a lot of art classes and explored collage, photography, and ceramics as well. In school, I really expanded my taste in music and film and I also was—and continue to be—a voracious reader. Fiction, non-fiction you name it, I'll give it a try.



Though I moved to New York and worked as a theatrical electrician as I hoped to be a designer, life and monetary considerations eventually led to a job on the manufacturing side of the industry—training users on lighting consoles at Kliegl. That job morphed into a career with multiple companies (Rosco, ETC, & Barbizon) eventually leading to my writing about the entertainment technology and design for almost 30 years now.

My passion for discovering new ideas, new creatives, and finding inspiration for my work has never abated. There are no shortage of museums and galleries, as well as libraries, theaters, and cinemas offering a wealth of treasures. With so many opportunities everywhere you should take the time to see and experience art that will inform and motivate creative work. No matter what you do in theater, I think that it's important to find something that speaks to you, challenges creative ideas, and sparks a new concept or direction within us. Everyone needs to recharge their creative batteries. Perhaps nothing is better for that than taking the time to see other's current work or look again at work long since done. Let the cross-pollination of ideas, themes, and images that you absorb from other disciplines—and people—both in art and life, be an important way to recharge and expand your own work. In this issue we look at people and work as well as an exhibit to help you do just that.

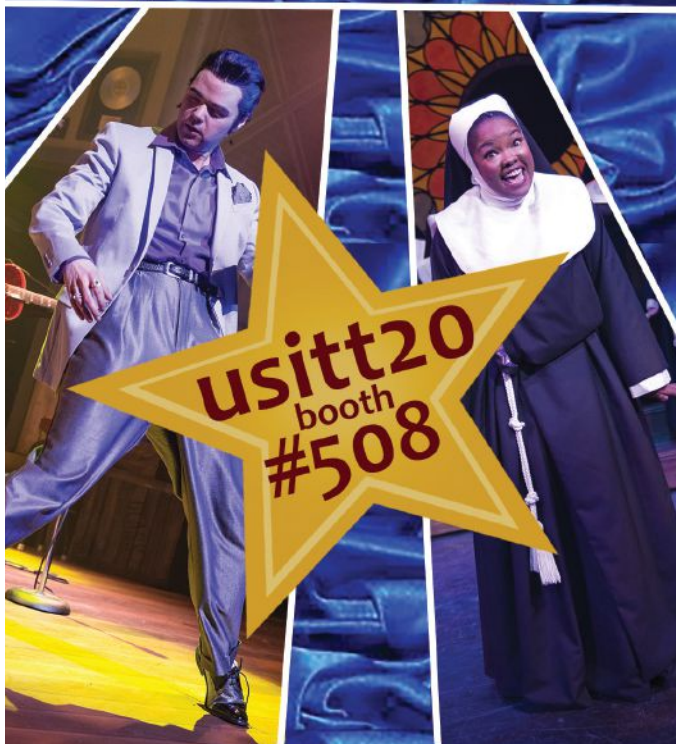
Speaking of places to get inspired and recharge your creative batteries, there are two upcoming opportunities that should not be missed. The 71st Southeastern Theatre Conference (SETC) February 26 – March 1, 2020 in Louisville, KY and the 60th United States Institute for Theatre Technology (USITT) Conference and Stage Expo April 1 – 4 in Houston, TX.

I hope that you enjoy this, and every issue of *Stage Directions* magazine and always find something inspiring in our pages. As always, we welcome your feedback and story suggestions. **SD**

Michael S. Eddy
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In Memoriam: Fred C. Adams

Founder of the Utah Shakespeare Festival

Fred Cruikshank Adams, founder of the Utah Shakespeare Festival, died on February 6, 2020 in Cedar City, UT at the age of 89. Adams was born in Cedar City, UT on January 30, 1931. He served at the Pentagon during the Korean War, in charge of entertainment and morale. Adams was a professor of theater at Southern Utah University from 1959 to 1997 and was named professor emeritus upon his retirement from teaching. In addition to teaching SUU students, he was a mentor to countless theater artists and administrators throughout the world.

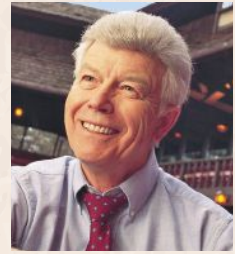
Adams earned his B.A. and M.A. degrees from Brigham Young University in theater arts and Russian. He did his pre-doctoral studies at Catholic University in Washington, D.C., and the University of Utah. The author of many articles appearing in several professional magazines, he was a lecturer for educational institutions and professional organizations throughout the United States and Europe. He also helped create and establish the Shakespeare Theatre Association, a professional association of Shakespeare theaters.

In 1961, Adams, with his late wife Barbara Gaddie Adams, dreamed up their craziest scheme to date: a Shakespearean festival in the hot Utah desert. With blood, sweat, tears, and glitter, they built the Utah Shakespearean Festival into the institution it is today. Throughout his career, Adams received a myriad of awards and recognitions, including the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre.

Adams worked tirelessly to have the Festival's first permanent building constructed: the Adams Memorial Shakespeare Theatre, named for Thomas and Luella Adams (the parents of Utah philanthropist Grace Tanner, wife of Obert C. Tanner). The building was finished in 1977 and was the home of the Festival every summer through 2015.

He was also instrumental in building the Randall L.

Jones Theatre in 1989, which later became the first building on the new Beverley Taylor Sorenson Center for the Arts, which was completed in 2016 and included three theatres: the Randall Theatre and the new Engelstad Shakespeare Theatre and Eileen and Allen Anes Studio Theatre.



After 44 years as executive producer, Adams retired from an active role at USF—though you wouldn't know it from looking at him. Not a day went by that he wasn't seen at the festival: directing shows, acting onstage, raising funds, or even pulling weeds in the statue garden. Adams loved his work and his work-family dearly and cherished them all his life.

Adams was the consummate theater professional. He was part teacher, part actor, part director, part producer, and a friend to all who worked with him. He spent much of his time crafting the future for the Festival as he met with artists and administrators to ensure the artistic integrity of the Festival's plays, educational offerings, and numerous peripheral activities. He was a mentor to many, including Brian Vaughn, who started at the Festival as a young actor and is now the Festival's artistic director. "I'm struck with deep grief and sadness as I try to measure the impact of love and generosity he gave to the world," said Vaughn. "The achievements he made during his lifetime are monumental and I am honored that I've been blessed to call him friend. A great light has gone out."



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Lots on Offer

It's coming up on that time of year again—the USITT Annual Conference & Stage Expo. This is the institute's 60th year and USITT 2020 will offer four days of education and networking in Houston at the George R. Brown Convention Center.

This year, there are more than 250 educational sessions, hands-on demos, and learning opportunities that will be available throughout the week. The Stage Expo includes 350 exhibitors, covering over 52,000 square feet of floor space, who will be debuting their newest products and answering any questions you may have.

Here's a highlight at some of the many offerings that USITT has put in place for 2020, including different areas, opportunities, and sessions to take note of at USITT 2020.

The Show Floor

With USITT's extended Expo-only hours, attendees will have plenty of time to pick the brains of the more than 350 exhibitors, but what if you could connect in a more intimate setting and go in-depth with these industry-leading companies and meet the experts? Exhibitor Sessions make doing just that, possible for all attendees. Think of these sessions as an extension of the time you spend talking to exhibitors on the show floor, and who better to learn from than those who know their products and the live entertainment industry best?

USITT has a record number of Exhibitor Sessions on the roster this year. A wide array of disciplines will be covered such as lighting, sound, props, cruise ship entertainment, rigging, and more. It's valuable to speak with exhibitors at Stage Expo but plan to see them in a new light and extend that value by attending one or all of these sessions taught by entertainment professionals.

Here's a sampling of a few of the exhibitor sessions that will be offered in Houston, but USITT encourages you to take a look at the **Full list of Exhibitor Sessions** to get the full scope of what is available for you to experience at USITT 2020.

- If you can't find it, you can't use it - Costume Inventory Resources
- Entertainment at Sea
- Verity Studios; The Magic is Real: Drones in Live Entertainment
- "I Found My Ears" at USITT
- Body Mic'ing from Head to Heel by Point Source Audio
- Don't Fall off the Stage! – ESTA's Technical Standards Program ANSI E1.46
- Wireless Lighting for Props and Costumes - Advanced Techniques
- RC4 Makes Your Prop Into a DMX Fixture!

Labs & Studios

USITT is hosting all new labs and studios for USITT 2020. This year includes an array of disciplines that will have studios for you to explore and learn more about specific disciplines, including: Make-up & Hair Artistry Studio, Lighting Studio, and the Digital Media /

Projection Studio. These studios are presented by USITT's various committees to provide hands-on training and education in a small group setting. Sharpen your skills by participating in a studio that enhances your career or try your hand at something new. Be sure to keep an eye out for any new selections that may be added.

Stages on the Expo Floor

USITT 2020, USITT is bringing even more education and connection to the floor. On the main Expo floor, there will be three stages: the Innovation Stage, the Collaboration Stage, and the Design Stage. The Dark Zone will be the location for the Technology Stage.

Speaking of the Dark Zone, it's back for the third year. Show management has dedicated a portion of the Expo hall to being dark to help show off light beams, projections, and special effects.

The Vault at USITT

At USITT 2020 in Houston, the USITT Theatrical Safety & Health commission will be introducing The Vault - a safe space initiative to provide Transgender, Non-Binary, and Gender Nonconforming USITT members a more comfortable and accessible way to find clothing that fits their stylistic needs. The Vault strengthens the USITT community by fostering members' freedom to authentically express one's self through their fashion choices. The Vault is available to all USITT members at no cost and has been supported by donations from the larger USITT community. The Vault will be in the Meyerland B meeting room on the third level of the Marriott Marquis Houston. The Vault will be open on a schedule, which will include offering sessions like How to Tie a Bow Tie (as an example), so please check the room for times and session listings. If you'd like to get involved, know more, or donate your clothing/time to our project, reach out to The Vault team at e-mail: thevault.usitt@gmail.com.

Extra Offerings in Houston

There are also a number of offsite opportunities that USITT is offering to attendees. There are two tours that will be held at the Alley Theatre during USITT 2020 in Houston. These tours include *After the Flood—A Tour of Alley Theatre Prop Storage* and *A Tour of the Alley Theatre Costume Shop & Facilities*. There will also be a generalized tour of the Alley Theatre that is included in the *Tour of Local Houston Performing Arts Facilities* that is part of the Professional Development Workshop. Learn more about these tours and register using the link below.

Professional Development Workshops

Also you can craft your very own puppet during the Professional Development Workshop (PDW)—*Creating Hand Puppets*. This workshop is one of many PDWs offering opportunities for in-depth learning on a range of topics from projection mapping, puppetry, and costume design, to console training, OSHA safety, and local tours. Workshops are offered as half-day, full-day, and two-day programs. There is an extra cost involved and advance registration is required. Sign-ups are available for workshops during your registration for USITT 2020. **Register for USITT 2020 today at www.usitt.org**

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Drama Operations and Production Manager	Full Time	Management		Charlottesville, Virginia
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Tools: For Your Consideration

Audio-Technica: Trade-In Program for 600 MHz Wireless Systems

As the industry looks to the phase-out of wireless systems operating in the 600 MHz band, Audio-Technica's trade-in rebate program has been extended through July 13, 2020. This initiative was designed for end users as the industry moves away from wireless systems operating in the 600 MHz band (614 to 698 MHz), mandated by law as a result of the ongoing FCC wireless spectrum reallocation. The program is designed to help wireless users switch to a new system that accommodates the new guidelines outlined by the FCC. The official cut-off date for any wireless system operating in the auctioned portion of the 600 MHz spectrum is July 13, 2020, including any device capable of tuning into that spectrum even if not being used.



www.audio-technica.com

ChamSys: MagicQ Stable Software



The new MagicQ Stable v1.8.5.2 software can be downloaded at no cost to all MagicQ consoles and PC platforms. In addition to being capable of importing open protocol GDTF personality files directly, the new software embraces a wide range of performance features that have been well-received when tested in Beta versions. Among these features is an Undo function that allows actions by the programmer and the console to be undone and redone. For easy reference, an Undo History is also available. Another notable programming function is FX Tracking Out, which allows programmers using Cue Stack Tracking to track out individual FX with different fade times.

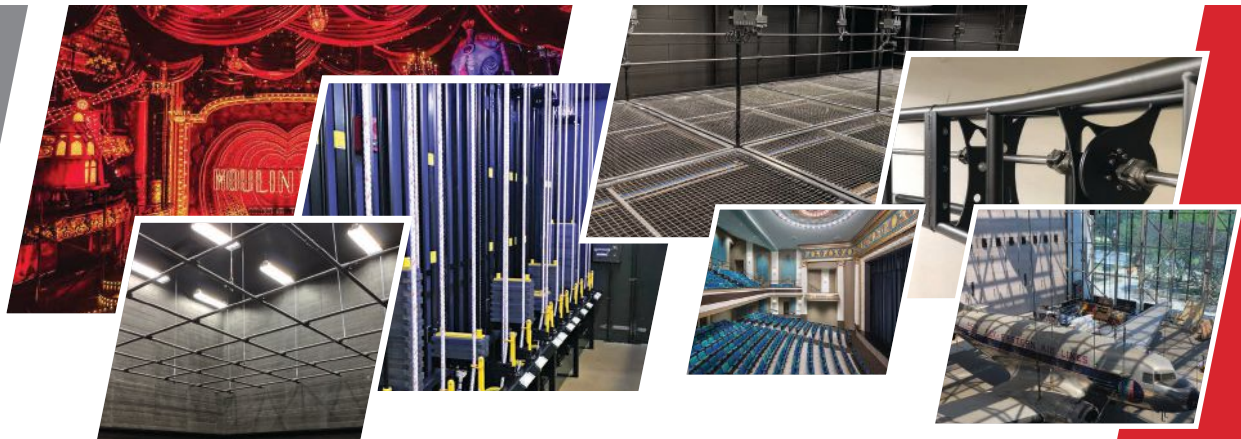
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DiGiCo: DMI-KLANG



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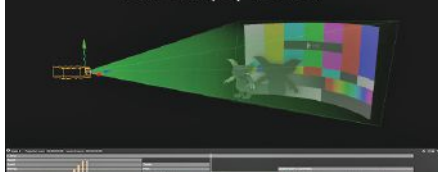
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Tools: New Products For Your Consideration

disguise: r17 Software Release

r17: simply better



r17 is the latest update designed to dramatically enhance the user experience, unlock better ways to work, and saves time and effort when producing live visuals. disguise software enables users to previsualize every pixel of a project. r17 introduces powerful Manipulators to previsualization that give users the ability to select multiple objects on a 3D stage and offset, rotate, and scale them at the click of a mouse. Also, SockPuppet projects—which allow users to control disguise via a lighting console, iPad, or networked device—now perform better and need less complex setups. In addition to 24 new features, the release includes 188 fixes and 35 improvements, all designed to enhance your experience using disguise and help you to deliver a faster production.

www.disguise.one

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www.l-acoustics.com

Meyer Sound: Spacemap Go Spatial Sound Tool

Spacemap Go

Spacemap Go, a new spatial sound design and mixing tool, leverages the processing power of the company's Galaxy network platform. Following installation of software and firmware updates for Galaxy, the new Spacemap Go iOS app will provide a flexible and easy-to-use touch pad interface for Spacemap multi-channel panning, using one or more connected iPads. Spacemap Go enables users to configure, program, and implement sophisticated spatial sound mixing with unprecedented ease and cost-effectiveness. Currently in beta testing, Spacemap Go will be offered as a value-added standard feature of the Galaxy network platform later this year, with the iOS app freely available from the App Store. The user need only supply the iPads required for the production.

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www.sennheiser.com

TMB: ProPlex: FOH Friend



The ProPlex FOH Friend, a new addition to TMB's ProPlex Data Distribution product range, is an entirely new, unique device which resolves an issue frequently faced by media, lighting, and audio programmers while working. Programmers often need to switch back and forth between timecode and audio tracks saved on their laptops and the primary live feeds from the stage. Absent the FOH Friend, this requires unplugging and plugging of cables, with all the associated inconvenience and potential malfunctions. The FOH Friend solves this problem by allowing instant switching between two timecode and two audio sources. This durable, compact unit also features extra timecode outputs, plus independently adjustable headphone and audio outputs.

www.tmb.com

Whirlwind: Power Link TLT Line Cord Testers

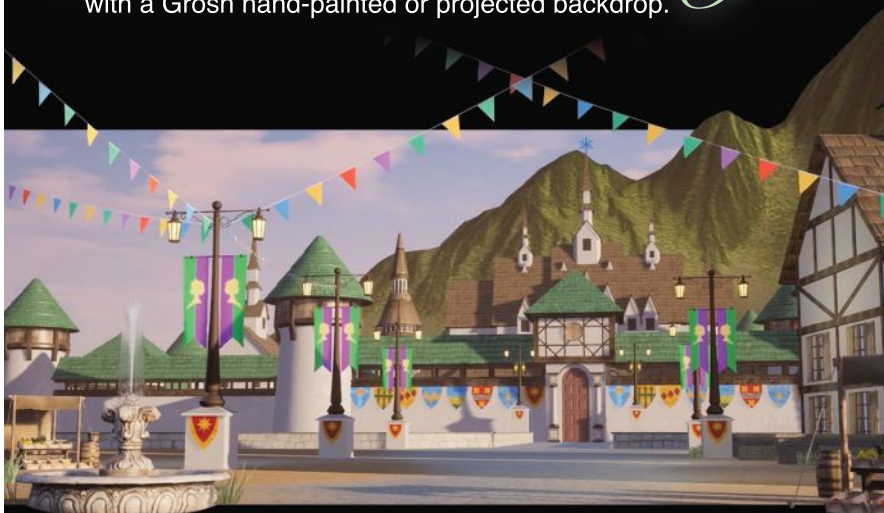
The Whirlwind Power Link TLT (Tester Line-True) is a dedicated test device for Neutrik True One three wire power cords. It's a battery-powered continuity tester that conveniently verifies the condition of power cables that are difficult to test without applying dangerous line voltage. Each of the three conductors is tested for continuity, shorts, and incorrect connections. The TLT has three green and one red LED that indicate correct wiring or any fault conditions. Operation is hands-free; there are no buttons to push or knobs to turn. The earth LED light comes on before the Neutral and Line LEDs to confirm the Earth connection making first and breaking last. The Whirlwind TLP is powered by a single 9V battery located inside the unit and has a test function.



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LED SPECIALS FOR

I AM MY OWN WIFE

New York-based Lighting Designer, Jennifer Fok is a big fan of tungsten as a lighting source; saving LEDs for very specific applications. She found just such a need when she recently lit *I Am My Own Wife*, at the Long Wharf Theatre in New Haven, CT, employing both standard and custom LED lighting solutions to support the narrative through her design. Fok worked with James Horban, Long Wharf's Lighting Supervisor to pull together the LED lighting systems being used as part of the overall lighting for the show which requires the lighting to help evoke the various locations of *I Am My Own Wife*, which tells the story of Charlotte von Mahlsdorf.

Fok explains that she has been recently exploring the use of LED tape and LED puck lights for effects and for hard to light areas. "I know that LED tape is not a new tool; but for me using LED tape in different ways, is new. Also, I've been using different LED puck lights and custom solutions, in my lighting designs." She continues, "I think that it's been very interesting in learning the variations and about the quality of light that can differ from manufacturer to manufacturer. I have been learning a lot about the different options because the shows that I've been doing recently have wanted a solution like that and needed it for the different ways of storytelling."

Fok, who works closely with the set designers, notes, "I've been learning a lot about how to hide LEDs around the set. I have found that LED tape is a really incredible tool to solve some challenges. In the design for *I Am My Own Wife* we had three systems of LED specials tucked in and around the set. There are LEDs in the gramophone horns; another system of LEDs uplighting the façade, and then there are ones in the seating area that serve as footlights. James came up with the implementation for the three LED systems."

Lit from Within

The first system consisted of 18 gramophone horns that surround the main door in the set, which was designed by Britton Mauk. To make the horns stand out and to create lighting that helps transport the narrative to different locations, Fok wanted to place an LED source inside the gramophones. Lighting Supervisor Horban researched sources and custom-built units from different manufacturers.

"I'm a tinkerer at heart and this kind of work lets me scratch that itch," says Horban. "One of the things that I love doing is finding parts and pieces that were meant for something else and re-purposing them for what we need. We custom-built these lights from different vendors. For the LED source, I used Epistar 2.7" round RGBW LED adjustable ceiling lights, purchased from a Nevada-based vendor, Ecolocity. They're normally a flush-mount downlight. I did modify them with a longer tail to fit inside the horns and still leave enough cable to connect to the decoder. I used aviation connectors to re-build and extend the original six-inch leads. For decoders, I used DMX-4 5000 units from Environmental Lights. In all, we made 20 of these units; 18 for the gramophones and two that were installed in the deck to uplight the columns on

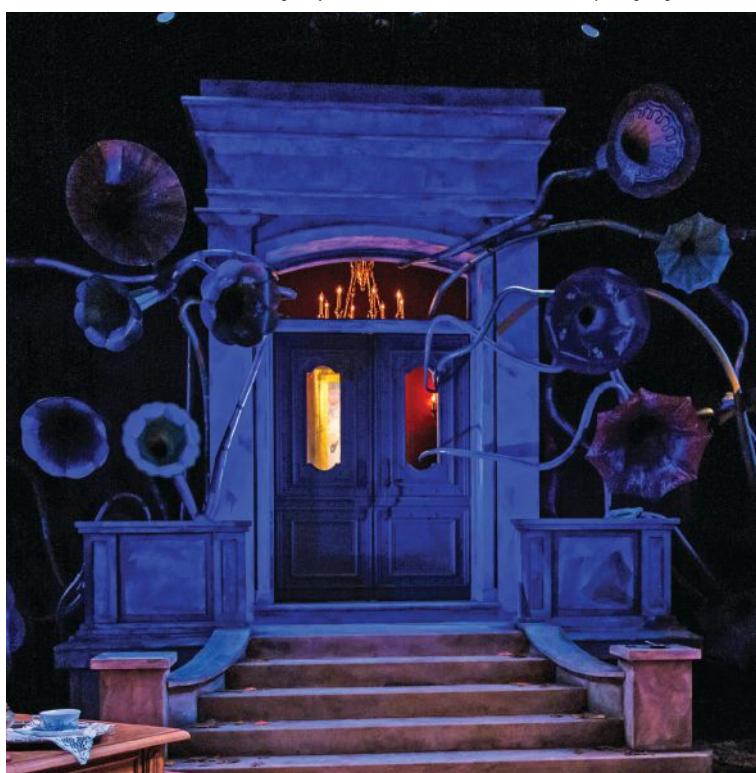


Fok worked closely with Scenic Designer Britton Mauk on Long Wharf Theatre's *I Am My Own Wife* with costume design by Daniel Tyler Mathews.



Custom-built LED units were installed inside the gramophone horns so a club location could be evoked by the lighting.

ALL PHOTOS: T. CHARLES ERICKSON



Fok uses deep saturated colors often in her designs. LED units are hidden within the set. Both custom-built and standard LED units were used to create this cue. The lighting behind the door was all tungsten.

the façade of the set.”

The gramophone LEDs are controlled in six different groups of three lights each. “We wanted to give Jen as much control as possible because we didn’t have the gear in house to drive 18 separate ones. Groups of three worked well and allowed her to have rainbow fades, or pulse, or be able to separate them.” “For one of the locations in the play, we used the horns to indicate when she goes to a club,” describes Fok. The horns are lit internally in red with no external lighting or toning on the horns; in fact, the overall scene is very dark. “As she travels through the streets and came upon this club, the door is no longer the door to the museum, it becomes the door to the club. I used the horns to give it some color; and to give a different meaning than gramophone horns.”

Set with Light

The second system consists of two of the custom LED puck lights that are embedded in the floor of the set to uplight the columns. “That was a little mini system,” says Fok. “They helped make the façade feel shadowy and menacing for a few moments in the show. There’s a lot of storytelling going on with the façade and the horns.”

The third system of LED specials were used as footlights. “We had CHAUVET COLORdash Accent Quads that James installed as footlights in the seating area and to light the façade. There were six lights, three on each side to uplight the grid and to provide a footlight for some scenes on the main show deck” notes Fok.

“We have quite a few of the CHAUVET COLORdash RGBA pin spots,” states Horban. “We use those for birdies, and she had some

of those hidden behind the façade of the building to do some scraping of the front and to do some toning.” For the footlights, the CHAUVET ColorDASH units were “hidden in nooks and crannies in our seating banks so we could have a few footlight options there,” says Horban. “I like those units because they have the amber engine, which makes a lot of the designers happy and they are nice and punchy for their size.”

Fok also had 10 ETC ColorSource Spot Deep Blue units, four of them with Rosco I-Cue mirrors and City Theatrical irises. “I think the colors with LEDs are definitely getting better,” she continues. “My favorite unit now is the [ETC] ColorSource Deep Blue. I think that those instruments—color-wise and matching—are pretty good.”

The wall behind the transom window and door as well as the chandelier were lit with traditional tungsten-source Source Four ellipsoidals. “I try not to replace tungsten,” points out Fok. “If I’m using an LED source, I try to mix it in with a tungsten source or some other type of source. I try to embrace LED but use it minimally. If I’m going to insert LEDs into a cue, I try to make it all blended.” She adds, “We did also use some micro-ellipses to highlight the painting on the wall behind the door.”

The visual result of the production is a truly well-conceived collaboration as Fok’s rich and varied lighting for *I Am My Own Wife* merged stunningly with Britton Mauk’s beautiful set and Daniel Tyler Mathews’ wonderful period costume designs. Together with the Long Wharf’s crews and director Rebecca Martínez, the creative team has produced a dynamic, well-designed production that is the first major revival in a decade of Doug Wright’s compelling play. **SD**

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NAVIGATING POC POLITICS IN PRODUCTION



Salazar was LD and sound designer on *Sans Merci* at Not Your Average Ingénue Theatre Company in Portland, ME



Speaking with Vianey Salazar

When I designed *The Last Five Years* at Portland Stage last spring, I met Vianey Salazar who programmed lights for me. Vianey Salazar (vya-NAY sah-lah-ZARR) is a Mexican lighting designer and electrician who was born in Chicago and raised in Texas. She received a BFA in theatre design & technology from Illinois Wesleyan University and has worked for American Players Theatre, Portland Stage Company, and Peninsula Players Theatre in various electrics positions. She is currently based in New Haven, Connecticut working as a sound & lighting technician for Long Wharf Theatre.

How has being as a person of color harmed and/or helped your career?

My name is always a five-minute conversation on how to pronounce it. It's so unique that it stands out. It's not a common Mexican culture name, either. The first introduction of my name makes it clear that I'm not coming from a white background. Sometimes people resort to calling me "V," never fully learning my name. This nickname is something I'm trying to be better about eliminating, because it's quite literally becoming erasure of my name. It's a double-edged sword, where I can be memorable because I stand out from most of my coworkers, but I can just as easily be "othered" from the beginning and therefore forgotten or erased. I can stand out but also be isolated; I can question and doubt myself, but also push myself towards perfection so that I can't be questioned.

How has your race/ethnicity influenced your career journey?

I'm usually the only person of color (POC) in the room, in the department, in all of production, or even in the whole company. I've never felt targeted, but I feel very isolated sometimes. I have no one to talk to when I feel like there's a question about treatment at work—is it who I am or what I've done? I'm usually filling roles where my predecessors were white men. I'm either the first woman or first woman of color filling a particular position at a company.

Multiple times I've seen productions that are specifically about non-white culture, and the cast and director may be POCs, but the

rest of the design and production team will be white. I don't believe that serves the story justice. The designers and production team are just as much a part of telling the story, regardless of the fact that we are never seen by the audience. I almost left production theater to continue my studies and pursue a career in academia, because I felt like that was the only area that could fully foster the conversations I wanted to have about race and culture. However, I think we need to take more action towards creating diversity in production than we currently do. I want to be a part of changing that culture so that there are POCs working in all areas of the theater, not just those that are directly seen by our audience. Essentially, I want to be a part of telling my own culture's stories to ensure that they're being told authentically.

What would you like people of color considering, or in the early stages of a theater career, to know? Is there any advice you wish you'd be given?

I wish I had been more aware of my own racial politics. Working in primarily white institutions, I'm super aware of my accent and



The Girl Who Fell through a Hole in Her Sweater at Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington, IL with Salazar's lighting design

how much Spanglish I use. I'm learning to analyze where POCs are positioned within a company and how long they've been with a company, so I can know whether a specific company is a place to foster and develop as a person of color. I make an effort to connect with POC peers and coworkers because I think it's really important to have people you can get a second opinion from. This is definitely something I'd recommend, especially because it can feel so isolating as a POC in a PWI (primarily white institutions).

Who was a role model of yours in your respective field; who was it that helped formulate who you are as a person of color trying to express your art in a white-dominated field?

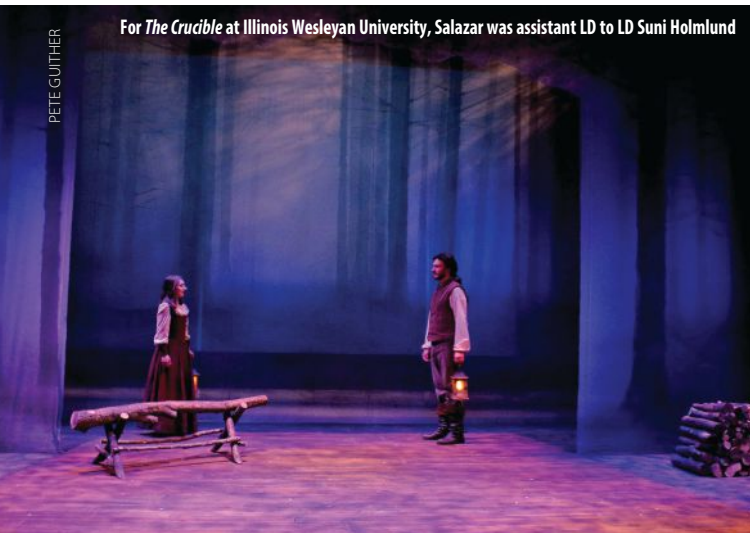
This was actually a very hard question for me, and frankly, I don't think I've ever thought about it before now. I think because I live in such an intersectionality regarding my identity, I don't have one specific person which I can say is my role model. Of the nine designers who I have worked with professionally, only two were POCs, one of which was a woman of color. Of the twelve theater professors and lecturers under who I studied in college, only one was a person of color and three were women. Of the eight supervisors under who I've worked, half were women and none were POCs. I respect Eliot Garfield and Cody Westgaard for their intense work ethics. I'm grateful to Faisal Hamadah for teaching me to question the authenticity of poc theater and whether it's appropriate or appropriated. I have been so incredibly fortunate to learn from strong women, such as Armie Thompson and Betsy Smith. I don't know that I've found just one person who has helped me shape and formulate my identity and art as a POC in theater, especially in lighting, where POC politics oftentimes feel overshadowed by the gender inequality situation. I feel like I'm living at an intersection of little bits of all these identities and experiences, which I'm still trying to piece together while also formulating my own.

What's the best thing about where you are right now, in your career?

I'm in a time of new discoveries. What does it mean when people of color become integrated into the works Shakespeare and Jane Austen? I'm at a point where I could go anywhere and do anything. When I studied abroad in London, I did a semester looking at performance studies in relation to racial, cultural, and global issues. After that, I wanted to produce more non-white art because that's where my Latinx identity felt relevant. However, I'm realizing that we, as theater artists, have the tools and power to create a seat at all tables. I'm finding new places to exist as a person of color that aren't exclusively Latinx and non-white art. **SD**

You can see more of Salazar's work at vianeyasalazar.wixsite.com/lighting

For *The Crucible* at Illinois Wesleyan University, Salazar was assistant LD to LD Sumi Holmlund



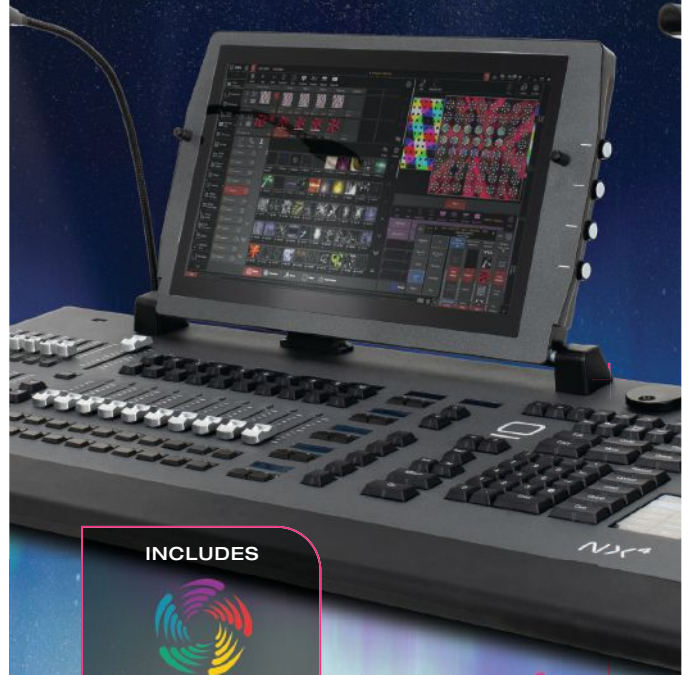
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THE HUMANE MENTOR

David McGraw's empathy and insight guide the next generation of stage managers

David J. McGraw exemplifies the notion of generosity in leadership. McGraw is a stage manager, educator, and contributing writer for *Stage Directions* including his SM Kit blog. McGraw has also overseen five editions of the SM Survey (<http://www.smsurvey.info>), the largest stage managers' study in the world, which looks at trends in stage managers' lives and work. He has also recently launched the SM 2030 Project, a new longitudinal study of early career stage managers, which dovetails nicely in with YSM2020, The Year of the Stage Manager celebrations. McGraw thrives in his role as assistant professor and program coordinator for the arts administration program at Elon University. Additionally, he previously served as the head of the stage management and arts entrepreneurship programs at the University of Iowa and he held the position of executive director of the Iowa Summer Rep. More distinctive achievements McGraw has earned: he designed the UI Certificate in arts entrepreneurship and authored *The Epoch Model: An Arts Organization with an Expiration Date*, which was featured in *20 UNDER 40: Re-inventing the Arts and Arts Education for the 21st Century*. And if that is not enough, McGraw also founded SM-Sim, LLC, a business focused on developing tools for stage managers.

McGraw's extensive stage management experience include work for Chester Theatre Company, Iowa Summer Rep, Arizona Repertory Theatre, Capital Repertory Theatre, Geva Theatre Center, Oldcastle Theatre, Perishable Theatre, Stageworks on the Hudson, Vilar Performing Arts Center, White River Theatre Festival, and the Yale Repertory Theatre. He also is serving as a director-at-large for the Stage Managers' Association (having served as a second vice chair in 2007). In addition to this hands-on technical and creative work, McGraw was selected by the South African State Theatre for the Share Your Journey, Set My Journey project in May 2019. His work on the project included an investigation as to how the new musical *Freedom* can tour the United States as well as offer workshops on stage management, producing theatre, grant-writing, and touring theatre.

And most admirable of all? McGraw wants to share the knowledge he has accumulated with as many budding ASMs and SMs as possible. Here, he explains his philosophy on key issues in stage management, and discusses his approach to helping his mentees meet their own boundless potential

Appreciating the Creative Artist

McGraw's first significant experience with theater was pure emotion. "In my junior year of high school, I saw a production of *Hamlet*—it was a real moment of love," he says. "I saw a group of Cleveland area artists who found a school basement and put on the most low-tech production you can imagine for maybe 30 audience members. There was such a sense of com-

munity in that room—you had to be there!"

Following that indelible experience, McGraw knew he loved theater—but initially didn't know how he wanted to pursue his interest further. "At first, I never had a career plan regarding stage management," he recalls. "Like so many people in our industry, I kind of fell into my work. I lucked out on a job with the Perishable Theater and started focusing my attention on stage management when I was at the College of the Holy Cross." He excelled at the job but was realistic about what it entailed. "I saw very early how difficult it was to be a stage manager," McGraw explains. "Managing creative individuals is the goal, with an approach geared toward the creative potential of the group you're working with as a whole. You know, in working on the SM Survey, it is very clear to me that there's no single 'right' way as to how this should be done."

One experience in particular taught him the importance of flexibility in his management style. "I once stage managed a production that had a company consisting of three artistic directors," says McGraw. "It was a poker game, and I was the dealer playing with a room of card sharks. What I needed to do was look for openings for growth in terms of what we could all do that was best for the production. But the dynamic was challenging. Collaborating with these three artistic directors meant using three different approaches. One needed a task master; one needed a support system; and one was a peacemaker who wanted to stay above the fray, who wanted not to have conflict when one of the other two thrived on conflict. In managing different artists at the same time, it's important that no one feels like they have given up their voice."

Navigating the Unexpected

A stage manager's goal is always to maintain efficiency, even in the face of turmoil or unwelcome surprises. McGraw's approach in these situations is to deal with problems quickly and decisively. "You don't want issues people on your production are having to affect other areas of your production," he explains. "When I think that when there is going to be conflict—when I see, as the stage manager, that we are not going to be able to avoid it, that we just have that disagreement early. I will say, 'Let's have it out now.' You don't let problems get worse; you discuss the problem and as the stage manager, try to show everyone the way to its solution."

Because McGraw has done extensive research in the field of stage management, he understands from both physical experience and from a point of academic theory what the less experienced need. McGraw's projects include faculty and artist workshops, as well as writing and producing the info-rich training film, *Standby Cue 101: An Introduction to Calling Live Performances*, [which is available on Amazon]; he also devel-

oped a stage manager simulator. When it comes to one-on-one advice, McGraw unfailingly cuts to the chase. "In working with an ASM, I will always ask, 'What is it that you want to work on?'" McGraw says. "Knowing what you need to learn is so important."

As is the ability to keep going. "When you make a mistake, how well can you move on? How can you forgive yourself? This is a question stage managers need to be able to answer," McGraw stresses. "I think it's very important to identify what happened as stage managers, and ask ourselves, how are we responsible? You never want there to be a situation where there is abuse in a rehearsal, for example, and people are asking, where was the stage manager? You have to take responsibility to stop it. Safety and trust are so important."

McGraw also believes in total mutual respect on a show. "Because I believe there is no singular approach to stage management, I'm very happy to work with younger people, of course," he says. "I think, here is a fully fledged collaborator, a complete artist—who just happens to have less experience than me. I can fill in the gaps. I also view it as, here is my colleague who has information that I lack! What really matters to me is, what are my colleague's values? Simple knowledge can be learned—when working with my mentees, I always emphasize the fact that we are ALL artists."



Facilitating the Future

McGraw's accolades, which include selection as a Fulbright Specialist for 2017-2020, the New Venture Challenge Award, the Innovations in Teaching with Technology Award, and Iowa Centers for Enterprise Elevator Pitch Award, inspire the next generation of stage managers he works with for sure. Yet he is equally impressed by their potential. To this end, he's starting a new project to track it—SM2030. "I look forward to following a group of stage managers after they graduate through the first 10 years of

their career," McGraw says. "I want to know about their journeys in terms of how their expectations change, or don't change. What their support systems are like. How do they sustain themselves in that period of time? In checking in with them every two years, we will see how they see their profession, and we'll all understand more about our work as stage managers."

In the end, gaining competency is what stage management is all about. Often, there's a moment when you feel you've made that leap, and it gives you the confidence you need for years to come. McGraw

remembers his. "A pivotal moment happened for me when I decided to go to grad school," he summarizes. "I made that decision because I didn't have a network, really, and in terms of stage management, my undergrad studies were not in depth. But I got what I needed at Yale. I remember sitting at the table read for a John Guare play there and I realized I was on the same playing field as everyone else in the room. That felt very good." Thanks to McGraw's commitment to sharing his knowledge, scores of other stage managers have enjoyed their own moment of making it as well. **SD**



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Giovanni Zuccarelli (1846–1897), Set design and diorama for *Otello*, Act 2, at Teatro Costanzi, Rome, April 1887. The original set designs by Carlo Ferrario (1833–1907) for the Milan premiere of *Otello* have survived only in the form of black-and-white photographs of two of the designs. The set design and diorama displayed here were created by Giovanni Zuccarelli for the Rome production that same year.



Reproduction of opening-night poster for *Otello* at Teatro alla Scala in Milan, February 5, and Franca Squarciapino, designer (b. 1940), *Otello* costume worn at Teatro alla Scala, 2001–2 season

VERDI CREATING OTELLO AND FALSTAFF

Highlights from the Ricordi Archive

Making their U.S. debut at The Morgan Library & Museum this past fall were some wonderful treasures from Milan's famed Ricordi Archive as the basis of the library's insightful exhibit, *Verdi: Creating Otello and Falstaff—Highlights from the Ricordi Archive*. The Morgan exhibit presented highlights from the Milan-based, Bertelsmann-owned Ricordi Archive, along with

holdings of the Morgan itself, offered visitors insight into the production of these two operas, as well as the complex enterprise of bringing an opera to life. Set designs, costumes from Milan's Teatro alla Scala, and other objects in various media came together to reveal the tremendous collaborative work behind an operatic production. Drawings from Archivio Storico Ricordi.



Reproduction of opening-night poster for *Falstaff* at Teatro alla Scala in Milan, February 9, 1893 and Ezio Frigerio, designer (b. 1930), Falstaff costume worn at Teatro alla Scala, 1980–81 season & from 2001

Alfredo Edel (1856–1912), Desdemona and Otello costume designs for *Otello* at Teatro alla Scala in Milan, February 5, 1887. In close consultation with the composer and the librettist, Ricordi instructed Alfredo Edel to study Venetian paintings of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries in order to prepare some 60 historically accurate costume designs for the principal roles in *Otello*, along with all the accessories and stage props. Pursuing the goal of "authenticity" in representation, the publisher even authorized the commissioning of custom-designed fabrics.

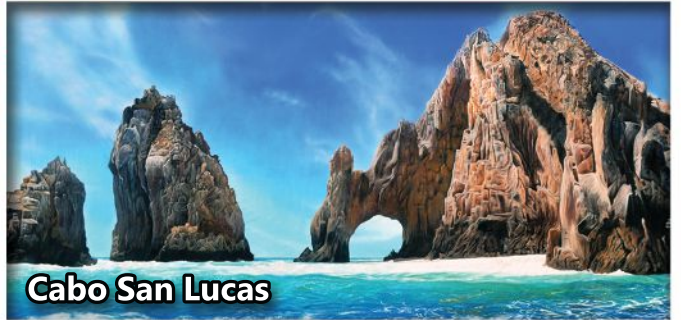


Adolf Hohenstein (1854–1928), furniture and musical instruments prop design for *Falstaff* at Teatro alla Scala in Milan, February 9, 1893. Hohenstein, trained as a painter, came to Milan in his twenties and began designing sets and costumes for several theaters. In 1889, he joined the design team at Ricordi's famous graphic arts division, soon becoming its artistic director. Casa Ricordi assumed the role of impresario at La Scala for both *Otello* and *Falstaff* and supervised all aspects of the production. As historical authenticity was in vogue, Giulio Ricordi sent Hohenstein to Windsor and London to study period architecture for the *Falstaff* sets and to examine garments at the British Museum dating from the Henry IV era for the opera's costumes.



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MILWAUKEE REP

Set designer Arnel Sancianco noted that, "Every time we do *[The Nerd]*, it becomes more and more a period play, and so this version is a blast from the past. It is a look at the mid-century modern world of when Larry Shue first wrote this play. The way that I layout the set informs some of the physical comedy; the way that the characters run from one place to the other. There are a lot of obstacles that I create to help heighten Shue's text." See more of Sancianco's work at www.arneldesigns.com

The Nerd at Milwaukee Rep

Director: JC Clementz

Scenic Designer: Arnel V. Sancianco

Costume Designer: Misti Bradford

Lighting Designer: Lee Fiskness

Sound Designer: Pornchanok Kanchanabanca



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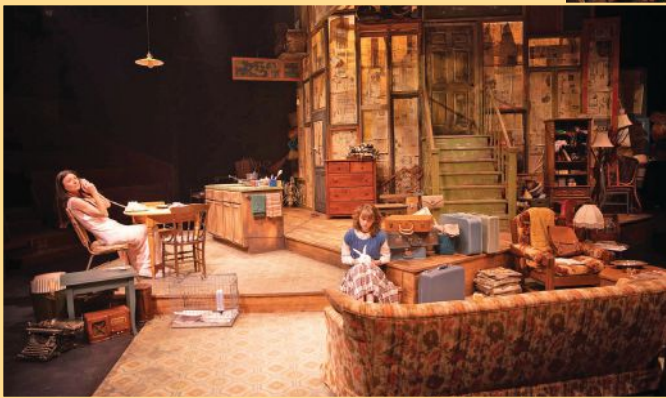
Reviewer Kathleen Kirby wrote of the design, "The set speaks volumes about the family residing there. Lauren Nigri's design took us into an aging wooden structure with newspaper covering the windows, faded paint, dilapidated furnishings, and volumes of clutter strewn everywhere." And reviewer Patsy Isenberg noted, "Nigri conveys that quality (images of death and decay) to the audience masterfully through her artful choices of props and creating an uncomfortable disorderliness." See more of Nigri's work at laurennigri.carbonmade.com




MIKE NADDEO


The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds at The Flint Repertory Theatre

Director: Kathryn Walsh
Scenic Designer: Lauren Nigri
Costume Designer: Katherine Nelson
Lighting Designer: Jen Fok
Sound Designer: Matthew Tibbs





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Revisiting Tom O'Horgan's Radical 1971 Broadway Production's

JOURNEY TO STAGE

In these excerpts from Nassour's forthcoming book, *Superstar: Jesus Christ Superstar: Landmark Rock Opera to Worldwide Phenomenon*, he looks at the road to getting it on stage.

MCA Records backed the October 1970 launch of Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber's rock opera *Jesus Christ Superstar* with a campaign that could elect a president and an initial pressing of 100,000 copies [which would hopefully gross \$1-million in sales]. In spite of much critical praise, it was a hard sell. ...

... Months earlier, Lloyd Webber approached music mogul Robert Stigwood of Bee Gees fame for his help in fulfilling his dream of a stage production. He wasn't interested. However, the morning after the New York launch, Stigwood, who'd missed "The Last Supper" presentation at an Upper East Side church, made a call to MCA that was forwarded to the label's director of artist relations. He wanted to locate the composers. The executive promised he'd get a message to them.

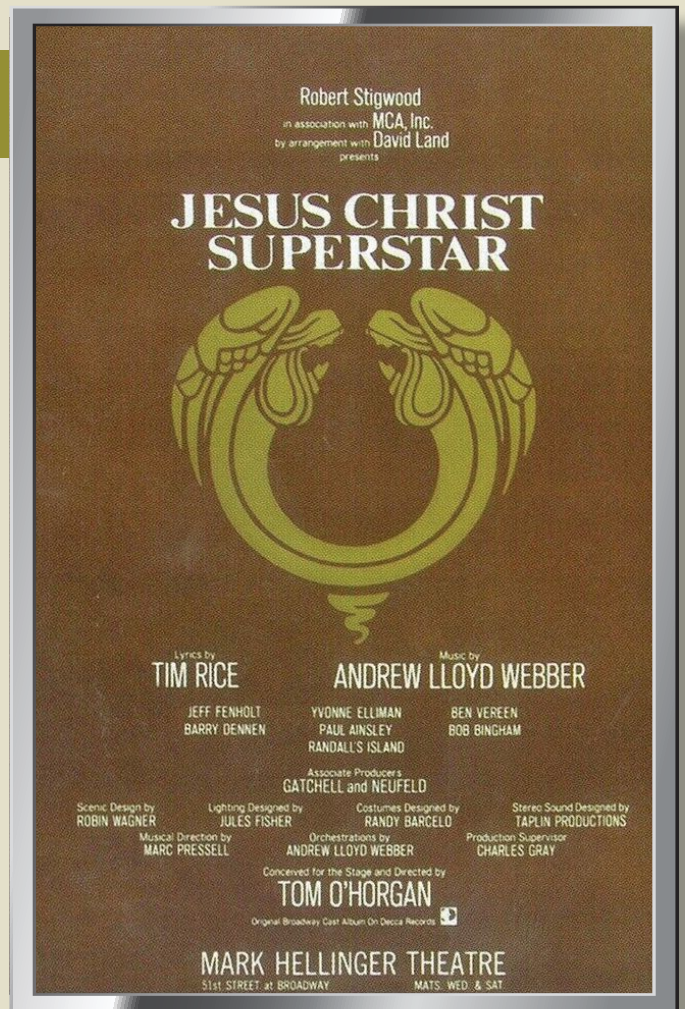
Stigwood wasted no time giving "the boys" the royal treatment. He would now back a stage production. Within days, contracts were signed. Though it was a slow path, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, mainly thanks to FM radio programming, was finding favor with young audiences. ...

... The album was suddenly enjoying worldwide sales. In fact, it was on its way to becoming, for a time, the best-selling album of all time. Stigwood found that a good omen and wanted to open on Broadway as soon as possible.

Stigwood was desperately in need of a savvy, fast-paced director. Lloyd Webber was thrilled to learn Hal Prince expressed a desire to meet. That was of no interest to the producer, who was now in complete control. He had his ace in the hole: avant-garde director Tom O'Horgan, who was riding high as a result of his total reboot of the Public Theater's *Hair* into a Broadway smash. Stigwood licensed that show to present on the West End, where it was a huge hit.

O'Horgan met Stigwood, associate Peter Brown [whom he knew working with the Beatles following Brian Epstein's death], and Lloyd Webber in November 1970. Old friend and *Hair* set designer Robin Wagner, accompanied the director. "Stigy and Brown grilled him about what his concept would be," recalls Wagner, "but Tom said, 'I couldn't tell you, even if I knew. I have to see the material and go from there.'" Stigwood informed him time was of the essence. O'Horgan replied, "I've got my design team in place and ready to go."

He would have Wagner, a veteran of numerous Off Broadway shows and an assistant to 10-time Tony-winning designer Oliver Smith on shows such as *My Fair Lady*, *West Side Story*, *Hello, Dolly*, and *Camelot*, do sets; and, for lighting, Jules Fisher, then 34 and already the preeminent lighting designer Off- and on-Broadway. O'Horgan was high on the eclectic style of young Cuban costumer Randy Barcelo, whom he worked with at La MaMa and who'd be designing costumes for his upcoming Broadway production of *Lenny*. "Randy can go from funk to sexy to Upper East Side elegance



in a flash."

Marc Cohen, O'Horgan's young partner, personal assistant, part-time stage manager, and, when needed, actor, recalls, "When Stigwood and Brown couldn't get what they wanted, the meeting abruptly ended." ...

... Suddenly, letters on how he'd stage the musical arrived from Frank Corsaro, acclaimed for his opera stagings and librettos which varied from traditional to avant garde; and, like O'Horgan, wasn't averse to raising eyebrows. Stigwood and Brown met with him over several dinners. ...

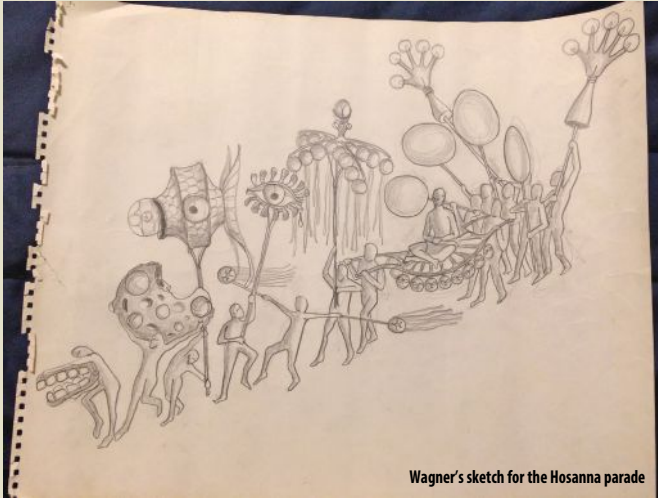
... Stigwood couldn't get O'Horgan, but after Corsaro agreed, he hired Wagner, Barcelo, and Fisher. ...

... Corsaro was on payroll and working with Rice and Lloyd Webber, but without a contract, or any announcement he'd be directing. By the end of January 1971 he put pressure on Stigwood to produce one or he'd walk.

It was never resolved. Corsaro offered his resignation on Friday, July 30. Stigwood assured him the contract would be in the mail the next day. That afternoon, heading to his weekend home, Corsaro was involved in a head-on collision which left him hospitalized with numerous injuries, including a broken leg. "I notified Stigwood I was in the hospital," said the director. "I never heard a word – not even a 'hello' or 'hope you're better soon.' He'd be out two months. The producer decided he couldn't wait. "The next thing I heard," said Corsaro, "was O'Horgan was taking over." ...

... O'Horgan listened to the album over and over, but had no idea of what to do. With his reputation as the reigning king of avant-garde, the show couldn't be a straight-tale of the passion. ...

... Rehearsals began in late August. As they did, O'Horgan was signed to coproduce and direct *Inner City*, a musical about the



Wagner's sketch for the Hosanna parade

ing the lyrics and even using the album's libretto insert as script. Nothing came to him. His stage manager Galen McKinley suggested they go to see a French sci-fi documentary *The Hellstrom Chronicle (Des Insectes Des Hommes)*, which was drawing crowds. O'Horgan couldn't find the time. Cohen and McKinley went. The next day they raved about it, describing it as the scariest horror film.

In it, Dr. Hellstrom, in incredible visual detail, explains how the savagery and efficiency of the insect world could result in their supremacy of the planet. "It was insects v. humans," says Cohen, "The stunning cinematography was interspersed with clips from horror films to achieve dramatic effect." That night O'Horgan and Wagner went and were equally blown away.

Exiting the cinema, O'Horgan blurted, "Robin, what about this as our concept? Insects are a super race who take over the world and put on the passion play." Wagner, not quite sure what O'Horgan had in mind or how there'd be a parallel to Christ's passion, replied, "Sure, Tom, I'll see what I can come up with." He was certain a new day would bring other ideas. It didn't.

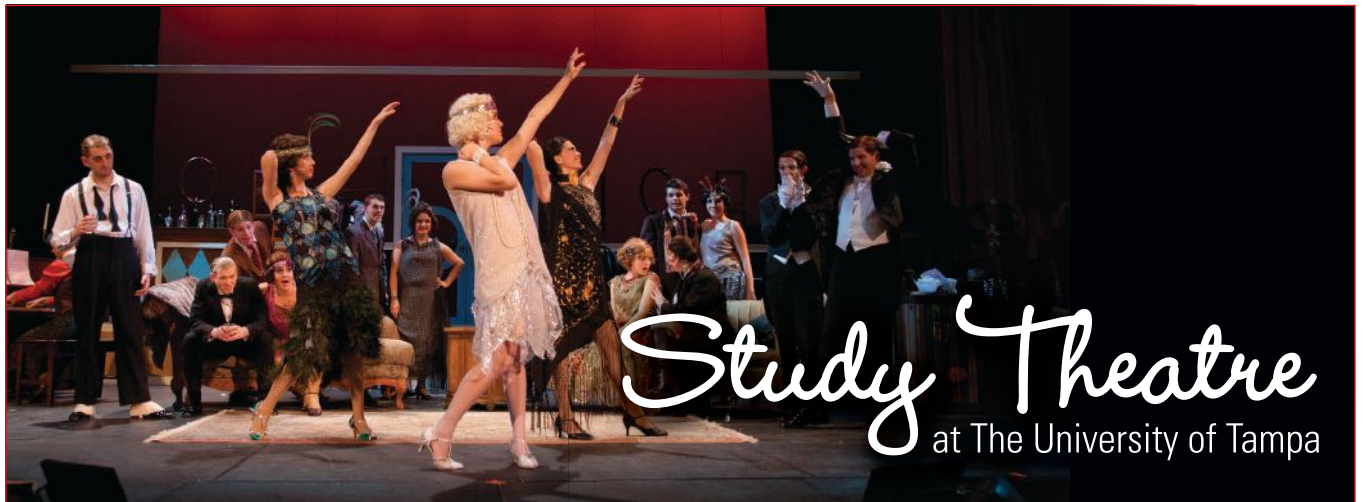
However, they went to the Museum of Natural History to catch an exhibit of giant protozoa. After much thought, O'Horgan turned to Wagner and exclaimed, "Robin, how's this? Reflect nature in the sets. I'll get with Randy, too. For 'Hosanna,' I want the company carrying poles with all manner of protozoa as they dance into Jerusalem." Wagner replied as before.

O'Horgan, Wagner, and Barcelo found inspiration for the swirls of color which became *Jesus Christ Superstar* in David Bindman's *The Complete Graphic Works of William Blake*. An 18th Century poet and painter, Blake had enormous influence on the 1950s beat poets and 1960s counterculture; and was a leading proponent of the Free

pratfalls of New York living, set to start rehearsals mid October. Stigwood moved up the *Superstar* premiere. That gave O'Horgan a short six weeks to put a production together. Wagner was given only three weeks to blueprint new set designs. There were all-night sessions. Barcelo, a fast study, returned daily with dozens of new sketches. O'Horgan, his mind on the new show, came up with zilch.

Even Wagner, long aware of the director's way of working, was getting antsy. Arrangements had to be made with prop and scenery shops. Stigwood and Universal Pictures, part of MCA and now a co-producer, wanted to see storyboards. O'Horgan's rebuffed, "I don't use storyboards. It's all in my head." It wasn't.

Looking for inspiration, he went back to the music, devour-

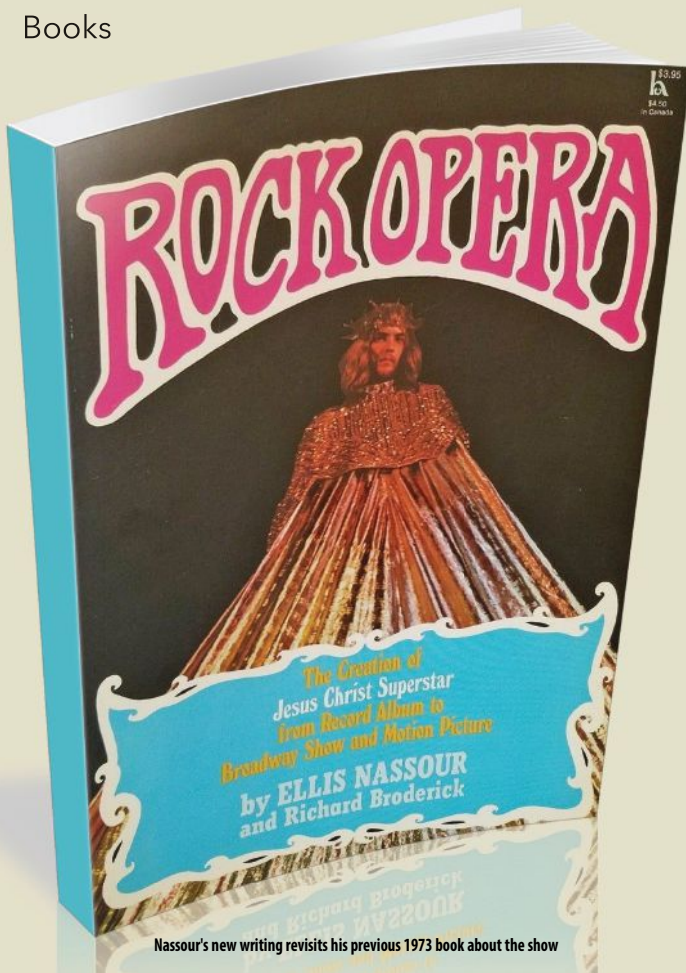


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Love movement.

Wagner notes some ideas also came from Joseph Handler's two-volume *Encyclopedia of the Mind, Body and Health*, which is filled with surreal illustrations. Finally, a concept was in the works. ...

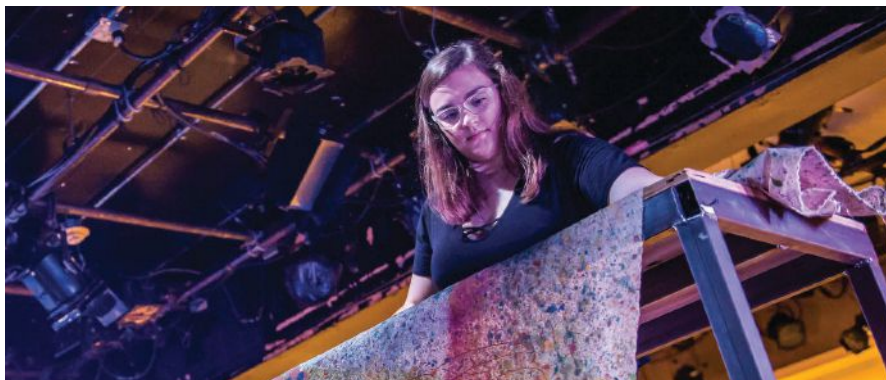
... "He wanted the stage to be a window for audiences to look at Christ's passion from the point of view of 10,000 years into the future. When you would, you'd have it mixed up with the 70s. The sets and costumes would deliver meaning, be part of the message." ...

... Wagner, who hadn't given up his day job as a draftsman, revealed how they worked. "I'd come up with an idea that would enhance one of Tom's, then we'd sit and wait for a third idea. We'd sit and look at each other until it happened. We were constantly brainstorming. I called a lot of our ideas nightmares. I can't tell you which were mine and which were his. There were times when I wanted to kick myself. I kept asking, 'What the hell have I gotten myself into?' It all looked terrific on paper, but it became a gigantic headache. I wondered 'Why did we have to be so different?'" ...

... September 13, the company moved into the Mark Hellinger Theatre, where the stage, still a beehive of construction, was only partly usable. O'Horgan rehearsed in the lobby ...

... Wagner noted, "it was far from smooth sailing. Everything talked well, but if you can think of something that didn't go wrong, let me know what it was!"

His dragon head, a background prop for King Herod's entrance, arrived at the theatre where there was no wing space to store it and was returned to the scenic shop and made smaller. "When pieces were too large, we brought them through the lobby, otherwise they had to be junked and remade. It would have helped if we'd thought to measure the load-in door!"



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Photo: Stage Manager working on production of *The Fantasticks*

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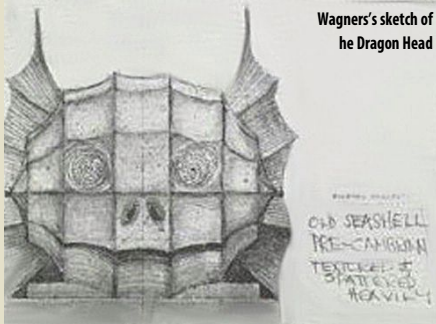
PHOTO: (L-R) JOSHUA KEEN, JOSHUA KRING, AND KAYLA MATTOCKS IN THE WILD PARTY. DIRECTED BY KATHERINE MCCREER. ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR AND CHOREOGRAPHER: ANDREA LEIGH-SMITH. MUSIC DIRECTOR: BRIAN CIMMET. SCENIC AND LIGHTING DESIGNER: ALEX KROZDARA. COSTUME DESIGNER: CARMEN MARTINEZ. SOUND DESIGNER: JACQUELINE R. HERTER. MAKE-UP AND WIG DESIGNER: SARAH STARK. PHOTOGRAPHER: MICHAEL DAVIS.

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DEPARTMENT OF
DRAMA



Wagner spent most days trying to figure a way around hurdles. The Hellinger stage proved to be the biggest obstacle. It wasn't fitted with traps that could be removed. Two sequences involved Jeff, ascending through the floor. Wagner cut through it only to find an ancient turntable from the musical *Coco* with huge steel I-beams. Holes had to be blasted. With the hydraulic machinery in place, there was another problem. The fire sprinkler system hung too low in the basement. A false ceiling was the temporary fix.

Previews approached. The huge butterfly wings for Judas' Descent from the flies for the "Superstar" number, the flying bone bridge used for the high priests, and the stunning gold proscenium-wide fan that would descend over the cast during curtain calls weren't finished.

For the crucifixion, Wagner designed an effect that baffled everyone. Using a mechanism secured to the back wall, a thin, ultra strong pin propelled Fenholt on the cross with through the "Eye of God" cut into the scrim. To audiences, it appeared to be floating in air.

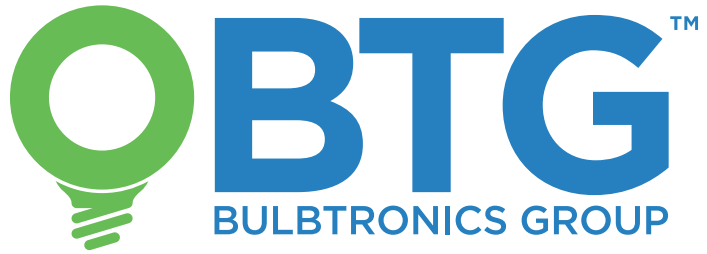
New pieces arrived daily. Some didn't fit, such as the hydraulic piston lifts that would raise the stage for the opening sequence to become a 30' wall – then, lower during the overture.

"I continued making changes right up until the last minute," notes Wagner. "I'm never ready to open until three days after the show opens. "Money was going down a bottomless hole. For a show adapted from a hugely-successful sung-through record, much was expected. ...

... Opening night, backstage and onstage chaos and tension reigned. Stagehands, prop masters, and electricians were here, there, everywhere. Wagner, five minutes prior to curtain, was on a ladder making finishing touches. ...

... The budget was an estimated \$750,000, setting a record for the 70s. Scene design topped \$129,000, with costs for costumes reported to be \$80,000. ... **S**

[Ed. Note- *Jesus Christ Superstar* opened October 12, 1971. It received 5 Tony Award nominations including *Scenic*, *Lighting* and *Costume Design*. The show ran for 13 previews and 711 performances before closing on July 01, 1973.]



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CO2 Double Microphones A Winning Combination

The Point Source Audio CO2 Confidence Microphone collection, which was introduced in January 2019 and had a well-received showing at last year's USITT Stage Expo, has gone from strength to strength in its first year. The CO2 Confidence line of dual-element mics have been granted a U.S. Patent for design, have been brought into use in a number of theaters around the country, and has now won a *Front of House* magazine Gold Star award at the 2020 NAMM Show.

From Launch to Industry Award

The CO2 Confidence mics have throughout its first year been recognized by a number of organizations and publications as setting a new industry standard. Most recently the Confidence collection was presented by *Front of House* magazine with the FOH Gold Star Award for Best New Theater Product at the 2020 NAMM Show. Quite a wonderful way to celebrate the one-year anniversary of this exceptional product line!



Patented Design

PSA was recently granted U.S. Patent No. D850,422 for its CO2-8WL Dual Lavalier Microphone, a fully redundant microphone in a wearable housing. It provides an all-in-one solution for critical live sound applications that require back-up miking.

"Exceptional sound quality is our baseline," says Point Source Audio President James Lamb. "But it's not just about the audio superiority of a product; we take a hard look at the ways people are using audio tools in their jobs and develop products in response to those real-world challenges. We always focus on the usability of a product, whether that's the microphone, the housing or an accessory. Products like the CO2-8WL make the process of redundant miking fast and seamless, so sound engineers can focus less on technology and more on getting their job done."

With Point Source Audio's award-winning products in use on Broadway and the West End on theater productions including *Hamilton* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and venues including the San Francisco Opera, Lincoln Center, and Berklee College of Music, it is no surprise that theater companies have quickly responded to the CO2 Confidence mics. When it comes to needing confidence in having a back-up mic there are two theater environments — in the round and outdoor theaters — that can be challenging but the CO2 Confidence mics have proven to be the right solution.

Combination of Value and Reliability

Theater in the round always presents challenges to design and production teams for a show. The stage at the North Shore Music Theater (NSMT) in Beverly, MA is no exception. In addition to hav-

ing the cast surrounded by the audience, the NSMT production of the Tony-Award winning *Jersey Boys* had the four leads rarely leaving the stage. If there was a microphone problem, there was not a lot of easy ways to address it—aesthetically, expediently, or cost-effectively.

Sound designer Daryl Bornstein did some research to find exactly the right mic to solve the challenge and selected Point Source Audio's CO2 Confidence mics as the ideal double miking solution. "For this production of *Jersey Boys* at North Shore Music Theater, we needed a discreet, robust, affordable, dual boom mic for wireless," comments Bornstein. "Typically, we mount a second element to a single element boom. For this production we looked at a number of solutions before deciding on the Point Source CO2 Confidence product. In the end, I chose these mics for the combination of value and reliability."

Bornstein also noted that he was very happy with his choice of the PSA CO2 Confidence mics. "The mics saved a tremendous amount of time, were easy to adjust and secure to the actors' heads. We will be expanding our inventory of Point Source Audio elements in the future to include lavs, single element booms, and additional dual element booms."

Waterproof and Rugged

The outdoor drama, *The Lost Colony*, has been telling the story of the first English colonies in North America since 1937. The Waterside Theatre is located in the Outer Banks of North Carolina and is as named—a waterside theater space buffeted by the elements



The *Lost Colony* character John Borden

daily. The show is produced from the end of May through to the end of August so the theatrical equipment has to stand up to the many natural elements, including water—in the form of rain and perspiration—as well as wind, heat, and other elements which could potentially shorten the useful life of production equipment.

"I am beyond pleased with the addition of Point Source microphones to our production," Joseph Reynolds, A1, *The Lost Colony* (TLC). "The water-resistant elements are paramount to an outdoor period drama, where the perspiration of the talent could compromise mic functionality. I especially enjoy the dual behind the ear headsets. It helps to have consistent placement and keeps the mic off the talent's face."

This season, the audio team at TLC added a PSA CO2 Confidence dual element mic for one particular character that requires the actor to be quite active each performance. "We've got one that we've assigned to one of the more active principles—John Borden," explains Lance Culpepper, TLC Associate Producer. "This character is most likely to have a mic failure due to do any number of issues between the activity required by the role; stage combat; perspiration. We were excited to see a product that made the application of the dual elements simpler. By combining those wire runs and keeping things as tidy as possible. That's been a great benefit to the production." SD

The Sounding Board monthly column is presented in partnership by Point Source Audio and Stage Directions Magazine. To read the PSA Sounding Board Blog, go to <http://www.point-sourceaudio.com/sounding-board/> or visit www.point-sourceaudio.com

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Creating Crusty Rust

There are times when I try and go all gangbusters with the things I write. Sharing information with you, the reader, since you are so very special to me and I appreciate your feedback and questions. But there are times when maybe you don't want all that falderal or rigmarole. Sometimes you don't have time to read an entire article. It's situations like these when bite size information will work out fine. So here are a few quick tips.



Creating 'Raw Meat' to Eat

I just learned this one recently. One of our students at Pace University, Alex Church-Gonzales, wrote a show where the lead character gets addicted to eating raw meat. It was written in the script that he eats a little at first; picking at it. But eventually he starts to eat it in large amounts. You can see the problem is one, that's unsafe for an actor and two, we can't afford real delicious steak tartare. So, Alex did something inspired. She found a vegan

and Other Prop Tips

recipe for Rice Krispies Treats using vegan butter and vegan marshmallows. Make sure you put aside a ¼ of the mixed treats, leaving it white. Then in a separate bowl, you add red and orange food coloring to the remaining ¾ of the mix. Be careful putting the 'fat' and the 'meat' colored mix together; don't over mix. Too much mixing will make the 'fat' look pinkish instead of white. The stark white of the 'fat' against the orange/red 'meat' color really sells it. It would be best to roll out the treats and then add small amounts of the white 'fatty' bits randomly over the slab or 'meat' and then roll it back into the shape you need. Also, don't buy the Styrofoam meat trays because they are very expensive. You can get the same thing but more affordably. They're sold as Foam Craft Paint trays. Then cover the meat and packaging with clear plastic wrap and Photoshop a label. Boom prop done!

Faux Liquor Safety

I cannot take credit for this, so credit where credit is due. I got this one from properties designer Morgan Rodgers' Instagram (@proptartss) and as Long John Silver would say 'It's smart as paint!' When you have liquor bottles or a decanter on stage as dressing and you put in grape juice for wine or watered-down cola as whiskey, or maybe tea for a bourbon and they look great at the top of the run. Then later, during the run of the show, have you walked through to do a quality check on your props and see mold or maybe small creatures growing in your bottles? There is a way to prevent that. Instead of using water, use white vinegar. The acetic acid in vinegar kills microbes and stalls food spoilage. I mean if it's good enough for pickles it's gotta be great for the stage! (Thanks, Morgan!) **SD**

Creating Realistic Crusty Rust

This tip is for making built-up crusty rust that looks great, even up close. First, you want to get cellulose loose-fill insulation that's made up of a high percentage of recycled paper and does not contain minerals. You can get this at home improvement stores. [It looks like the shredded gray paper that's used inside of padded mailing envelopes.] You will need equal parts of the paper mulch and Jaxsan 600 white acrylic latex coating. [Jaxsan 600 is a non-toxic, FR, flexible acrylic latex coating used for Styrofoam and Urethane foams, as well as on canvas, fabric, wood, metal and as an adhesive. You can thin it with water, and it can be tinted. You can get it at theater supply houses like Rose Brand.] As always, wear gloves and have an old chip brush standing by as well.

In a bucket or paint can, add in the paper mulch and Jaxsan 600, then add in carpenter's glue and burnt sienna paint. Mix by hand very well and thoroughly until the paper mulch has absorbed all of the liquids. You would be able to roll it or squeeze it into a little ball and it will keep its shape. If it doesn't add a little more glue and keep mixing.

It's best to apply this mix in small sections at a time so you



The rusty mix, ready for application



Start small and build up areas of rust with lumps and bumps



Finished table leg with crusty rust

have good control over the final look. Crumble a little, maybe dime-sized, of the mixture in your hand and press it onto your surface. Use your fingers to spread it out over a quarter-sized area leaving odd bumps and lumps. Continue doing this until you have covered the place you want rusted. Take the paint brush and stipple over the top so it pushes the bristles well into the goo, creating little hills and valleys. Look for places where water would naturally pool or have built up on your piece. You can lightly dry brush some mustard yellow over the raised areas to add a bit more punch, but the result is pretty amazing.



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