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Midwest
Regional Section

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The Midwest Regional Section Congratulates Several Student Award Winners!

By: Shane Kelly, DePaul University, and USITT National Office

Three students from the USITT Midwest Section have been awarded *free* conference admission to this year's USITT National Conference in Milwaukee for their work in three design competitions.

Eric Pettit's bean bag shooter for assistance in playing the popular tailgating game, Cornhole took first prize at the Midwest Mechanical Design competition in May. Eric at the time was preparatory courses at Indiana University and is now pursuing his MFA in Technical Production at Florida State University. When asked why he submitted his design, he said that "My father repairs pneumatic staple and hog ring guns for a living, so this project was a great opportunity for me to spend more time with my father; bouncing ideas off of him. Also, I believed that a traditional approach to the challenge (trebuchet, springs, etc.) would not provide enough power to safely throw the beanbag the required distance; I knew pneumatics could do the job. At the end of the day, my design was much more simplistic, powerful, reliable, and accurate." Eric is looking forward to the Technical Production sessions and new products on display at this year's conference as well as catching up with friends and colleagues from around the country. But he says, "I really hope the weather cooperates; the Florida winters will really spoil a person."

Jennifer Sampson a BFA performance candidate at University of Wisconsin-Whitewater was awarded first place in the Midwest Digital Design Competition this autumn for her unrealized make-up design of *The Ice Wolf* by Joanna H. Kraus. Positive feedback from her presentation of this design at the 2012 KCACTF Region 3 Festival led her to submit it here. She has never been to the conference before, so is not sure what to expect, but she is

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We want to see

YOU in Milwaukee

The USITT National Conference will take place March 20-23, 2013 and we want to see YOU at the Delta Center! We will hold our annual Membership meeting at 8:00am Thursday in room 202-D, at the conference.

Please join us for a light breakfast, numerous Awards presentations, and important Section announcements and business.

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Regional Awards, Cont. from Pg 1

hoping to learn some interesting things about theatrical design.

Niffer Pflager was awarded her conference admission through the Midwest Digital Design Competition for realized design. Her scenic design for *The Cradle Will Rock* produced this autumn at University of Wisconsin, Madison, where she is a MFA candidate in set design. Niffer said that this competition was a great opportunity to showcase her skills in Sketch Up, 3D Max, and Photoshop, which she has been working with a lot lately. When asked about this year's conference Niffer said: "I look forward as always to the USITT Expo as well as meeting up with old friends and making new connections."

Congratulations to all three of our design competition winners! And a big thank you to Beth Martell and M.C. Friedrich for organizing the competitions and to the several judges and adjudicators for their expertise.



Purdue Lighting Student wins National Award from USITT

By: USITT's Barbara E. R. Lucas

Student lighting designer Ethan Vail, who will graduate from Purdue University in May, is the winner of the *USITT Lighting Design Award* sponsored by *Barbizon Lighting Company*, the United States Institute for Theatre Technology has announced. Vail, a theatre "techie" since junior high, has designed lighting for many plays and musicals at Purdue Theatre, Purdue

Division of Dance and the Millbrook Playhouse summer theatre in Mill Hall, Pennsylvania, among others. He is among nine winners of 2013 *USITT Awards for Young Designers & Technicians in the Performing Arts*, which include the lighting design award.

The 2013 YD&T awards will be presented in a special ceremony at USITT's Annual Conference & Stage Expo in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, March 20-23, which draws 5,000 people from the world of theatrical design. Vail will receive his

Bachelor of Arts in

Theatre from Purdue in May. He started in theatre by auditioning for a play at Mainstreet Theatre in his hometown of Michigan City, Indiana, and soon moved to the technical realm. He specialized in dance lighting early, and brings that experience to his theatre work. He was nominated for the YD&T Award by Purdue professor and lighting designer Michael McNamara.

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A Midsummer Night's Dream, at Purdue University, photo by Michael Banks



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The awards are held annually by USITT, the national association for performing arts design and technology professionals. Nine awards sponsored by industry leaders honor young designers in the areas of production, sound, lighting, costumes, makeup, stage management, set design and scenic technology. Winners are nominated by USITT members and chosen by a panel of experts in each field. Vail submitted a resume, essay, letters of recommendation and a portfolio of photos, diagrams and hand-drawn storyboards he did for the 2012 Purdue Theatre production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The USITT Lighting Design Award was established by Barbizon Lighting in 1997 to honor company cofounders Sid Bloom and Sam Resnick. It recognizes outstanding potential in the field of lighting design.

The adjudicators who selected Vail called his work "very impressive." "The use of texture, shape, color, direction, and movement is fantastic," one wrote. "I can see your dance lighting influences emanating throughout the production photos," wrote another. "Each scene was somewhat different and unique to the worlds you wanted to create." Vail will receive a \$1,000 cash prize and free registration to the USITT Conference next month.

A total of 60 young designers were nominated for the 2013 YD&T Awards. The winners will be honored in a special multi-media event on opening night of the Conference & Stage Expo, and with a separate reception during the four-day event to meet their award's sponsors and adjudicators.



A Midsummer Night's Dream, at Purdue University, photos by Michael Banks



USITT Student Chapter from DePaul University Visits ETC

By: Chris Barker, Student Chapter Chair

In December, group from the USITT Student Chapter at DePaul University in Chicago visited the ETC factory in Middleton, Wisconsin. We were greeted by the ever-popular “Town Square” lobby fully decorated for the holidays, complete with a holiday gnome tucked into the scenery. The marquee of the main product demo room, The Century Theatre, followed the factory tradition of welcoming guests reading “ETC Welcomes DePaul University”. Immediately, we felt at home and Senior Hospitality Coordinator Rick Wolff took it even further by giving us a personal welcome and laying out a plan for the busy day.

Rick started out with a thorough tour of the building. He first explained to us the story behind the incredibly detailed lobby designed to mimic a 1940’s street scene, complete with a lifesize replica of the famous Edward Hopper painting, *Nighthawks*. ETC’s notable focus on people becomes more apparent with every fact about the lobby; the human resources department sits behind the facade of an insurance agency named after the company’s first insurance agent whom founder Fred Foster says was the first person to take the new company seriously. The training room is behind the facade of a school “PS 8” which is where VP of R&D Steve Terry attended elementary school in New York City. Everything has a meaning and it is all a tribute to the company’s dedication to great people.

From the lobby, we passed through a massive arched wall to the production floor. We first encountered the wire harness department where all wire for every product is assembled for installation. Rick led us through the S4 Revolution assembly area and explained how the fixtures are tested at different voltages before they are packaged for shipment. The group proceeded through the optics quality control testing area before arriving at the dimmer module assembly area. Students saw the choke winding area and were fascinated by the machines that actually coil the wire around the porcelain ring. From the module area, we headed to the Selador Desire section of manufacturing where we were greeted by assemblers who happily assisted Rick with his tour by taking some extra time to demonstrate the multiple variations of the Desire line. When leaving the Desire area, Rick pointed out the Source Four HID’s hung from the high bay ceilings with colored glass gobos which were shining on the aisle ways to show pedestrian and forklift right of way between the high shelving units that divide the

factory floor. He noted that this product combination is actually being sold as an industrial safety product to manufacturers who would like to do the same. We passed through the Sensor dimming rack area on our way to the metal shop where all of the sheet metal for ETC product is punched and bent before being sent to the paint line. We took a few minutes to watch the massive CNC punch machine do its work and were amazed by the level of precision the machine was able to achieve despite its colossal form. We wrapped up the manufacturing area with stops at Source Four assembly and repairs before proceeding through the phone support room.

We were able to see members of the technical services team working to help callers solve problems with their equipment. The team has access to every product that they receive calls on; if a caller asks for assistance on an Ion, they will actually sit at an Ion and work through the problem with the caller until it is fully resolved. Our group was excited to meet the people they have called at half-hour to help make sure the curtain goes up on time. After tech support, we made a stop with Systems Group to see the area where Project Managers, Applications Engineers, and Quotations staff work to help facilitate the design and manufacturer of ETC lighting systems around the world. They work with consultants, engineers, architects, dealers, and manufacturers’ representatives to meet customer needs and ensure that everything is done on spec and on time.

After our tour, we had an awesome opportunity to have lunch with Fred. We grabbed a bite to eat from the Broadway Deli and sat down for an intimate conversation with the company’s founder and CEO. He was down to earth and extremely welcoming as he told us about how he started the company. Fred told us about his business journey from the start in his parents’ basement to the moment he realized he couldn’t let the company fail. One day he parked his car and was walking to enter the building they were in at the time. As he passed car after car, he knew that each one of those cars carried someone to work for him. He thought of the families that depended on ETC to stay afloat and knew that he had to work as hard as he could to make sure that they kept making money. It’s this motivation that drives ETC to this day and again, it’s the quality people as much as the quality product that makes it a model company for our industry. Students in our group noted how well employees are treated and were in admiration of the company culture; they hoped to take elements of that culture with them and put them to use in their future endeavors.

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DePaul University Student Chapter Tour of ETC, continued from previous page

Our product training was next. Spencer Lyons, Field Project Coordinator for the Midwest, and Ellen White, Outreach and Training Specialist were on hand and gave us full reign over the full Eos product line. The Element, Ion, Gio, and Eos were set up for the group to explore and experience the difference between the four consoles. This experience proved to be a phenomenal eye opener for the group and allowed for the group to compare and contrast the whole line. We even got a sneak preview of the Eos 2.0 software update which includes the highly anticipated virtual magic sheets. It allows for the user to select and control lights using a visual interface rather than the traditional keyboard input. We even heard there will be a “swap patch” feature in the update which prompted great celebration from all the electricians on the trip.

ETC has intelligently introduced their LED fixtures as another tool in the lighting designer’s box rather than the incandescent replacement. Tom Littrell gave us his famous Layers of Light presentation and demonstrated the many features of the Source Four LED and the Desire line. He proved that LEDs can be a perfect complement to the incandescent fixtures creating stage picture after stage picture using different combinations of technologies. We learned about the metamer, the technical term for each way to mix the same color and how these can be used to highlight very specific colors on stage.

When Tom finished, ETC Rigging Project Manager and Quotations guru Blake Rothstein gave an overview of the company’s rigging product line. He was able to show both controllers: the Foundation and QuickTouch, and each of the products they control. He expertly presented very detailed information in a way that every student in our group could understand. He excited all of us and encouraged us to ask questions and dive deeper into the world of automated rigging.

USITT at DePaul is extremely thankful to everyone at ETC for welcoming us with open arms and providing us with excellent programming to fill the day. Special thanks to Heather Robbins for getting the trip squared away for us! We all look forward to our next trip to Middleton and can’t wait to see everyone from the factory at the Conference in March!



Small Theatre Spotlight:

Remy Bumpo

Used by Permission of Nick Sandys, Artistic Director

The company was founded in 1996 as Remy Bumpo Productions by Chicago-born Artistic Director James Bohnen and two producers from Colorado, Carol Loewenstern and John Stoddard. The absurdly named theatrical venture was named for Loewenstern's cat (named after Remy Martin cognac) and Bohnen's black Labrador (named for Natty Bumpo, the protagonist of James Fennimore Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales*). The founders' goal was to find a city that would support their vision of a classical repertory theater producing plays that thrill the mind and utilizing the talents of top-notch professional actors and designers. After a national search, they decided to test the waters in Chicago. They chose to lease space in the acclaimed Victory Gardens Theater building on the north side of Chicago and produced Tom Stoppard's *Night and Day* in the intimate upstairs mainstage theatre. The response from audiences, critics and artists immediately inspired a second production - Anton Chekhov's *The Seagull*.

“Remy Bumpo is an Equity theatre company whose mission is to delight and engage audiences with the emotional and ethical complexities of society through the provocative power of great theatrical language.”

After reaching new heights of financial and critical success, in 2001 Remy Bumpo Theatre Company incorporated as a not-for-profit, inaugurated its Board of Directors, and added Artistic Associates Annabel Armour, David Darlow, Shawn Douglass, Linda Gillum, and Nick Sandys, later including Joe Van Slyke and Gregory Matthew Anderson. The company’s critically praised work,

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The 2012 Tony Award winning set designer, Donyale Werle, will be on hand at the USITT National Conference in Milwaukee to present her approach to Greener scenery design. Her work has been seen on Broadway in *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*, at the Old Globe Theatre, and most recently in Broadway's hit, *Peter and the Starcatcher*. Ms. Werle's presence at the Conference is a joint venture between USITT and the Broadway Green Alliance (BGA). The session is scheduled for Saturday at 2pm. You may also find her at the BGA's table on the Expo Floor.

USITT Executive Director, David Grindle, said of Werle attending the Conference, "I can't express how excited I am to have Donyale speak at this year's conference. I believe the potential for partnerships between BGA and USITT is huge. I hope this is the beginning of a fruitful partnership."

This is just one of many exciting opportunities available to us in the Midwest Section. See you there!

Go to <http://www.usitt.org/> and click on "Conference & Events" for complete Conference information, session offerings and schedules, and registration information.

Small Theatre Spotlight, Cont.

featuring such writers as Shaw, Stoppard, Albee, Pinter, Wilde, and Barry, has received numerous Joseph Jefferson Award Nominations, and was describe by *Copley News Service* as "the kind of intelligent, adult, in the best sense of the word, and stimulating language-driven theatrethat has made the Remy Bumpo company such an essential member of the area theatre scene."

In July 2011, Founding Artistic Director James Bohnen stepped down from his post. His replacement, Timothy Douglas resigned his post unexpectedly in December of 2011. The Board of Directors appointed Nick Sandys as the new Artistic Director, and under his leadership, the company now enjoys its 16th season.

Remy Bumpo Theatre Company
3717 N. Ravenswood Ave.
Suite 245
Chicago IL 60613
773.244.8119

Performance Address:
Greenhouse Theatre
2257 N. Lincoln Ave.
Chicago, Illinois 60614
773.404.7336



USITT Midwest Elections

Kathleen Donnelly, Costume Designer at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, and our immediate past Chair of the Midwest Regional Section, is calling for candidates for upcoming Section Elections. The Board consists of a Chair, a Vice-Chair for Programming, a Vice-Chair for Membership, a Vice-Chair for Communication, a Treasurer, a Secretary, and eight Director's at Large who represent the Section Membership.

The Board is populated by active and passionate persons from academic and professional theatre as well as sales and service businesses. The overarching goal is to serve the Section members with quality programming. If you'd like to become more involved, please contact Kathleen Donnelly, Chair, at Donnelly@uwosh.edu.

