



NEWSLETTER
NOVEMBER 2020

END OF SEMESTER EDITION

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UPCOMING EVENTS!

Friday, November 13
Theatre of the Oppressed Workshop
with Alum Rachel DeSoto-Jackson
12:00-1:30pm

Thursday, November 19
PowerPoint Party | 7:00pm

Announcements
Let us know if you want to join our-
GroupMe , get theatre memes and dog pics
delivered hot n ready!

Happy belated birthday to our favorite
bean and secretary, TJ!!

KAMI'S (RE)-DESIGN CORNER

I'm back, talking about the worst designed
set to ever exist - the set that is the United
States Government and the electoral college.
Many people will say that this system is
broken, but again, we know that it was
designed to oppress and harm. I'm writing
this before the election, and no one knows
what will happen after. We don't even know
when we'll find out what the results are. But
we can't think that work is done after, no
matter what happens. We still need to build
systems of community care through mutual
aid and support. We still need to plug in to
grassroots organizing in our respective
communities and see where we can help put
in work. We still need to be constantly learn-
ing and in conversation. At its root , theatre
is about storytelling, witnessing, and reflect-
ing - think about how you can use these
things to help the communities you're a part
of. Remember this chant: we keep us safe.

Hoping that everyone watches out for each
other + stays safe.

Tyler graduated from Pitt in December of 2017. He is currently employed with [a touring show]* as a touring assistant carpenter. Tyler is a member of IATSE local 260.

*The names of these companies have been omitted for the written interview

What did you do before touring? What do you do now?

After Pitt I started working for a masonry company as an estimator. It's a great field for someone who's interested in technical direction and I got experience with a 3D modeling masonry program and did some CAD work. I did a few summer stocks between school years while I was at Pitt, and while I was doing masonry I got a call from a former coworker asking if I wanted to work at another summer stock, and I was really happy to get back into the theater. As my contract was ending there I got a call from someone I went to Pitt with who worked on a different large tour, she told me who to send my resume to, and then I got a call from [touring company] to interview to be a head carpenter.

Is this what you thought you would be doing when you started out in theater?

Not really. I remember talking to a friend in advanced stagecraft and he was telling me about how he wanted to leave everything in his life behind to go on tour - I remember it sounded lonely. Now that friend works a stable theater job in Pittsburgh and I'm on tour.

How does touring differ from the theater we're all used to?

Touring can be fairly similar to school where you don't have a great work/life balance. You go "home" to the same 60 people I'm working with all day and it can be hard to not bring work home with you, but I feel that it leads to stronger friendships living with the same people who you've been through the trenches with at work. The tech and carpentry departments look very different than stationary shows. When you're on the road as a carpenter it's like "adult Lincoln logs" that doesn't involve much building - that's why it's load-in and load-out, not build and strike. It's often just metal truss that we need to put pins in, and we're also responsible for all soft goods. Our weekly job is to assemble and disassemble the metal truss, and we act as run crew during performances. Fun fact - I had never been on a run crew before being on tour.

Backstage, the stage manager does not call every cue on this show. It may be different on other tours, but on this show he is basically just in charge of technicians and individuals are in charge of their own cues, and we don't have headsets like you're used to. The stage manager's main job is more interfacing with the crew and the performance manager.

How do you balance the intense touring schedule with self care?

It can be tricky at first, especially coming in as the head of a department. A typical schedule is travel Sunday night into Monday, and when you get into the next city you have the whole day to yourself - capitalizing on that is very important to self care. Tuesday is a day off, Wednesday is load-in, and Thursday is time to finish up load in if we don't get it all done on Wednesday. The mornings before shows are important time off, but weekends can mean 3 shows a day, 12 hours in the theater. Sundays can often be 16 hour days, 3 shows, then load out before we get our next break travelling to the next city.

How is COVID changing your work on tour?

The company that produces this tour hired an epidemiologist who is taking a lot of notes from the WNBA, including frequent testing of company members with results in 10 minutes, twice a week. I'm glad the company's going to such lengths to make sure everyone is healthy. We also require masks all the time in public places, and eliminating unnecessary contact between company members to prevent quarantining the entire show. The wardrobe team, and any locals who come in contact with performers all need to wear face shields on top of their masks. Performers don't need to wear masks in stage makeup, but they still wear them throughout the entire rehearsal process.

Do you have a dream gig?

That's something that's always changing for me. Right now I really love being on the road. Especially Abeing laid off I realized this was my dream job, but being a technical director (or assistant) at the Met would be awesome. Touring is my dream right now, and it would be amazing to be able to tour internationally.

CONT. ON NEXT PAGE

Live events are obviously in the process of reinventing themselves - Do you have any advice for students who are just starting out in the industry?

My general advice would be particularly important now - networking is extremely important. All of my jobs outside of college have been because I knew a person, and having a good reputation is very important - that will carry you through a lot, but especially starting out, use your network opportunities. You have great resources with Gianni, Annmarie, Eben - they know so many people. The people you know are often as important, if not more important, than your skill set. The most important skill in my experience has been being a team player - people want to hire team players. Union rules can be tricky but try to help wherever you can. The soft skills are just as important as the hard skills. People (in my experience) are more likely to hire someone who is slightly weaker at actually building something if that person is hardworking and has a good attitude, rather than the person who knows everything about lights or carpentry, but is a jerk. No one wants to work with jerks.

And a final word from Tyler

I just have 3 last bits of advice: Get involved, Join IATSE, and don't sell yourself short.

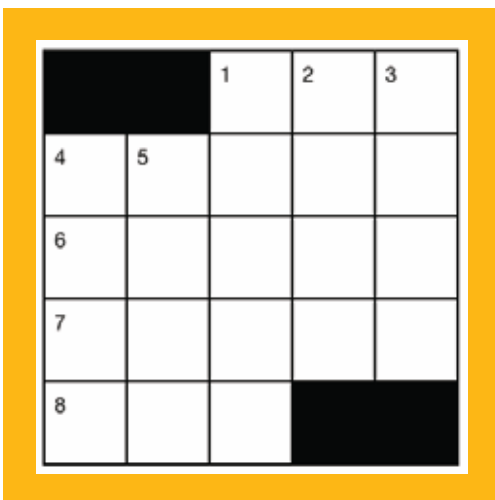
I know there aren't many opportunities to get involved in the current climate, but if you see an opening go ahead and apply. I imagine there are a few venues in the Pittsburgh area looking to start up again. Don't be afraid to reach out and ask if they are looking for interns or part time work. While I was at Pitt I was able to do an internship at the Pittsburgh Public Theatre as a Sound Design Assistant and it gave me some insight into the professional work environment and the specifics of working at that particular venue.

As a member of IATSE I recommend anyone who is interested to join. The union provides certain protections and guarantees that I didn't receive in other jobs. One quick example: it prevents workers from working long hours without meal breaks.

Lastly, I'll pass on a bit of advice from Jon West, who was the technical director when I first joined the theatre program at Pitt. Don't sell yourself short. Especially as young technicians, employers will likely try to take advantage of you. Know which skills you have, which ones you lack, and market yourself appropriately. Ask around and see what others are getting paid for similar work. As a technician, the work you provide is valuable. Try not to take unpaid internships unless you are learning a new skill. But in most cases, as a technician, you are providing services for which you should be paid.

Interviewed by Shamus Bonner

CROSSWORD CORNER!



Across

1. Element 50
4. What stars or clean dishes do
6. Speckled bean
7. Element 18
8. Look at

Down

1. Color slightly
2. Like something, with be (2 wds.)
3. Element 10
4. Places to get mani-pedis
5. Employ

OCTOBER

ANSWERS

		B	I	T
C	L	O	T	H
L	A	M	B	O
U	M	B	E	R
E	P	S		

Check your answers from last month! And tune in next month for more crossword fun!

JOURNEY TO THE 3RD DIMENSION

Though it is very hard for us all to be in theaters and creating together, there are plenty of computer programs out there that allow designers of all sorts to create digitally in 3D. Not only do these programs allow us to create when we can't be in a theatre, but they also have become increasingly popular to supplement in person work. If you are interested in Scenic and Lighting Design, but not sure you want to commit to a whole show yet, download these programs, mess around, and design some cool things! If you do, send them in to us and we'll feature them in our newsletter! Here are a few of my personal favorite 3d programs:

Vectorworks:

Classically, most people choose to draft in 2D for light plots and scenic drafting, but the benefits of drafting in 3D are quickly bringing a rise to the world of 3D drafting in Vectorworks. Nothing is nicer to me than being able to virtually look through an entire set in the exact way we expect it to look in the real world. There is far less confusion about what goes where in 3D. If a set is drafted in 3D, it is much easier to design with as a lighting designer. I remember having the next to normal set in 3D and drafting my light plot in 3D in order to make sure all of the frontlight would cover the areas I would want it to. It is so much easier to locate and visualize what is going on in 3D and I encourage everyone to learn how to draft, even if just basically in 3D. Gianni is a great resource for learning. Vectorworks is free to students to download. Just make sure to send in a picture of your student ID to confirm you're a student!

Augment3d (Eos 3):

This lighting program will make the job of a lighting designer far easier. First off, you can import the 3D Vectorworks file you have been working on into this program and instantly see your scenic elements and all of the lights in the space. Once you take some time to focus the lights virtually, you can simply just click on a light to select it. No more looking at a magic sheet and frantically searching for the light you want to turn on. Even better, when focusing moving lights, you can simply click and drag the beam of a light when it is on to focus it. No more taking forever to perfect the pan and tilt. It can be done in a click. This program is the same that is on all of the ETC light boards in our spaces, so if you know how to program one of those, you are all set to start designing virtually. If you have any interest, it is completely free to download and I highly recommend it. Feel free to ask me any questions and I'll try to answer them! There will be a 3D lighting workshop with this program in the future so stay tuned!

Honorable Mentions:

There are SO MANY 3D programs to choose from and my choices might not work best for you. For drafting there are programs such as Google Sketchup and AutoCad that can be used to draft in 3D. These programs are not built specifically for live events, but they are a bit more user friendly than Vectorworks. When it comes to lighting previz there is Vision, WYSIWYG, MA3D, and so many more. Each lighting control company basically has their own versions. Some of these programs incorporate automation and sometimes even pyrotechnics as well, which is why they are popular among concert designers. A Lot of these programs do tend to be a bit complicated to use because they require connecting between a few different programs. They also are usually not free, and tend to be very expensive. I encourage you to explore if you are interested!

by TJ Hays

COSTUME CLOSET!

This one is for all those theatre kids who miss dressing up. Chose a character and create a costume for them just from items in your closet! Feel free to send us submissions if you want your closet creation featured here!

THALIA GRACE | Percy Jackson and the Olypians



9 (THEATRE THEMED) THINGS TO DO

FOR WHEN YOU'RE ANXIOUS, STRESSED OR JUST NOT FEELING THE BEST

1. Try a new recipe ! Pretend that it's a food prop , but that the stage manager isn't around so you steal a bite, and eventually eat the entire thing.
2. Listen to a new soundtrack
3. Learn a new dance, and treat your downstairs neighbors to the sounds of you trying to do chorus line kicks and pas se bourrees
4. Rearrange your room ! If you rearrange the lights in your room and put ste gel over some lampshades you can call yourself a lighting designer
5. Go for a walk and pretend you're the main character
6. Do some stretching - everyone should be doing some stretching
7. Let yourself take a nap if you need , you're deserving of rest!
8. Organize a part of your space ! Pretend that your desk is a prop table
9. Make something with your hands - absolutely anything! Prop masters make something out of nothing, give it a shot!

PLANT OF THE MONTH!

Introducing: Sophia's Hoya plant!



SOPHIA'S TECH TIPS!

In theatre it's important to hide all the nuts and bolts of how stuff works backstage from the audience. One way to do this is to cover up all the less than pretty parts with black fabric. Black duvetyn is a popular choice, and it can be stapled into walls, scenery, etc with a T-50 stapler. The only problem is, then there are a bunch of shiny silver staples reflecting light and catching the audiences' attention. You could put tape over each staple, or do some fancy fabric folding so they're not visible, but that's a lot of work. Instead, black out the entire strip of staples before you put them in the stapler by drawing over the crowns of the entire strip with a black Sharpie. Then when you staple, the staple comes out black already. No distracting silver sparkle, no weird taping, and no mastery of fabric draping required.

Bonus tip: You can color over the staples with different colors if you need the staples to be a color other than black.

UPCOMING THEATRE

SEE HAIR WAITING + BLACK AND BLUE

Inside the Zoom: Two Online One Acts

Directed by KJ Gilmer
FREE on YouTube on November 12, 2020 at <https://bit.ly/insidezoom>
Vimeo On Demand Streaming available from November 13 - 21, 2020



HAIR WAITING
by Nicole Nero Gaines



Running November 12-21!

SENDING TONS OF EGGO WAFFLES!

STAY SAFE FRIENDS.