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theatre design & technology





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2016

By Douglas Gilpin

Design Expo 2016, the biennial juried exhibition of scenic, costume and lighting designs created by USITT members, was held March 16-19 during the USITT Conference & Stage Expo in Salt Lake City. With 148 individual entries of designers' work onsite, Design Expo 2016 was resounding success.

A panel of three top theatre designers and professionals judged this year's exhibition: Donna Ruzika, freelance lighting designer for such companies as the South Coast Repertory, Kansas City Repertory, Laguna Playhouse, Pasadena Playhouse, and the Utah Shakespeare Festival; Debra Krajec, artistic director and associate professor in the Theatre Arts program at Marquette University in Milwaukee and a USITT Fellow; and Gage Williams, resident set designer for the Idaho Shakespeare Festival in Boise, Idaho, and a professor and chair of the Department of Theatre at the University of Utah.

Judges' comments about the exhibition praised the quantity, quality, and diversity in this year's entries. The panel of judges specifically appreciated presentations that displayed a design

process and were drawn to panels that included a variety of materials such as examples of research, concept statements, rough thumbnails, finished sketches, models, and production photographs.

"The Design Expo is an excellent showcase of the talent that exists among our USITT members," said judge Donna Ruzika.

The Design Expo Committee wishes to thank everyone who entered this year. The following pages proudly present the work of 16 outstanding designs chosen by the panel of distinguished judges.

The committee urges readers to look ahead to USITT's open exhibition of design, "Cover the Walls," which will be on view in St. Louis in March 2017 and to the next Design Expo in Ft. Lauderdale in 2018. The Design Expo Committee welcomes comments from exhibiting designers and from readers of *Theatre Design & Technology*.

The expo's mission is to provide opportunities for designers and technicians from all over the world to exchange ideas and techniques and to discuss design philosophy.

Douglas Gilpin is chair of the Design Expo Committee

Juried competition showcases the best of scenic, costume, and lighting design

Lighting Design



Production Name: *Wait Until Dark*

Producing Organization: Saint Michael's Playhouse

Author: Jeffery Hatcher

Director: Sarah Carleton

Scenic Designer: Carl Tallent

Costume Designer: Debra Krajec

Lighting Designer: Anthony Pelleccchia

Sound Designer: Zach Williamson

Stage Manager: Adrienne Wells

ANTHONY PELLECCCHIA is assistant professor of design at the University of Memphis Department of Theatre and Dance. He received his MFA in 2009 from The Ohio State University. Pelleccchia's creative scholarship explores the fusion of lighting composition, automation, and projections with live performance. His professional and academic work in theatre, dance, and opera has received awards and recognition from the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival Region V, USITT Ohio Valley, and USA Weekender.

DESIGN STATEMENT

Wait Until Dark by Fredrick Knott, adapted by Jeffery Hatcher, used intensity and angle to enhance the tension and emotion of the unfolding action on the stage. Incorporating subtle color, strong complimentary practical fill, and intense key edges, the basement Greenwich Village apartment of photographer Sam Hendrix and his blind wife Susan quickly became an environment of excitement, mystery, and sinister intentions; the action culminated in the ultimate game of cat and mouse between a murderer and a blind woman.

The color palette of the show included varying degrees of correction with hints of warmth to enhance scenic and practical elements like the chandelier, match strikes, and table lamps. The numerous practicals gave the space a natural feel, allowing pockets of shadow around the perimeter through which characters could move. As the show progressed, the intensity of practical and conventional fixtures would increase to make the ending dark scenes more impactful. The lighting design was influenced by modern comic book television series, incorporating shadow and high-angled key to provide strong highlight on the performers as they moved through the space.



Preshow



Mike (Christian Kohn) says goodbye to Susan (Abby Lee)
Photos by Andy Duback



Roat (John D. Alexander) and Carlino (Bill Carmichael) observing Susan (Abby Lee).