

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2021

WELCOME BACK EDITION

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POPPORTUNITIES!

Assistant Sound Designer - Anon(ymous): 100% virtual, no experience necessary - email Gianni Downs - gdowns@pitt.edu

Assistant Scenic Designer - Collective Rage: 100% virtual - email Alex Dolinger - ard108@pitt.edu

Electricians - Spark: learn to hang and cable lights, an in person opportunity with health and safety measures in place! No experience necessary - email Annmarie Duggan - duggan@pitt.edu

Carpenters and Painters - Spark: in person opportunity with health and safety measures in place! No experience necessary - email Gianni Downs or Annmarie Duggan ASAP if interested! - gdowns@pitt.edu duggan@pitt.edu

WELCOME BACK

TO SITTING IN FRONT OF YOUR ZOOM SCREEN AGAIN, BUT WITH FRIENDS!

We hope you got some time to rest over break, maybe you picked up an old hobby, knit a sweater for your cat, listened to an abnormally large amount of jazz, or started watching the Great British Baking Show (a good show). Whatever you did to find some calm + some moments to breathe over break, we hope that you continue to find a way to incorporate it into your daily routine as we start classes.

USITT will be here going strong again in the spring. Look forward to us biking around to deliver supplies to you for our “hands-on” virtual workshops, events, game and social nights (more of Annmarie being the imposter in Among Us after pretending that she didn’t know how to play!), and finally! USITT laptop stickers. As always, never hesitate to reach out if you need anything from us/have any questions about anything! We’re all learning together.

Xoxo
Your USITT board

Music is an inseparable part of existence. Literally, so many memories are structured around sound. Gospel music blasting from the living room on the weekends means that it's time to clean. You fall asleep in the car coming home from visiting relatives to the R&B radio station blasting Fantasia and Boyz II Men, commercial free after 8 pm. Spirituals have forever been a collective coping mechanism across the diaspora. It's no surprise how much music has African roots - jazz, soul, gospel, dancehall, R&B. You name it, we probably influenced it.

So when we get to see all this greatness in theatre - it's almost too much amazingness to handle. Black performers are really unstoppable. The riffs, the vibrato! The drama, the pure emotion in every single word, the growls and rawness to their voices. And I don't even like musicals that much. Anyways, here are four of my favorite performances that I revisit almost weekly to re-energize myself
I hope you check them out!

Jennifer Holiday - "And I'm Telling You" - Dreamgirls

The original Effie, specifically her performance from the 1982 Tony Awards (where she won best actress, as she should!). If I was in this theatre, I literally would have ripped my seat out from the floor and threw it at a wall - it's that good. There's such a rawness and pain to her voice that gives me immediate goosebumps. The grit in her voice is straight from my mom's gospel CD's, I love it. The belt at the end? No one does it like her. (also yes the recording looks like it was filmed on a potato)

Billy Porter - "Beauty School Dropout" - Grease!

Literally the rest of the cast in the background is also losing it as Billy is singing. This is the best version of this song, hands down. The riffs? The runs? He sangin sangin. I don't even like Grease that much haha.

Cynthia Erivo - "The Color Purple Reprise" - The Color Purple

The song where she finally decides to unapologetically take up space, this is one of my favorites of all time. She literally just belts like it's nothing. And the hope in her voice is so comforting. When the choir joins her in the back, and it builds up to the song's peak, I literally have the energy to punch through a brick wall. The riffs? I love it. This song is my coping mechanism

Melba Moore - "I Got Love" - Purlie!

I just can't get over how easy this seems for her? Like a walkin the park? Her breath control is unreal. She's a powerhouse, I always get goosebumps. This is a CLASSIC, it always makes me smile.

by Kami Beckford

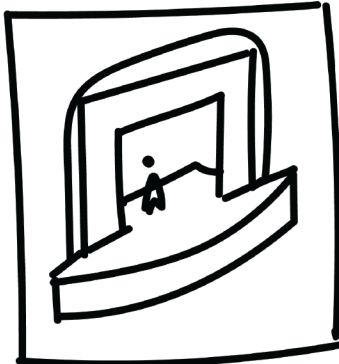


Billy Porter- "Beauty School Dropout"



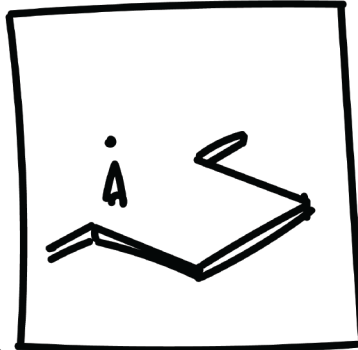
Cynthia Erivo- "The Color Purple Reprise"

HOW SCENIC DESIGNERS FEEL DESIGNING ON DIFFERENT STAGES:



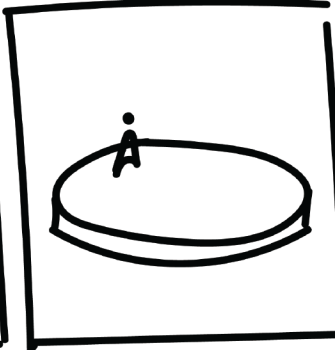
PROSCENIUM

"excellent ... the audience is too far away to see any of my mistakes. I am safe behind this arch. Reality does not exist, gravity is fake, I will figure out how to annoy my TD in every way possible."



3/4 THRUST

"back up a lil bit, don't look too close. please. Yes, that is wood painted to look like wood. And what about it? Are you going to contribute to the show budget since you wanna be so picky?"



IN-THE-ROUND

"sightlines? I don't know her. If a piece of scenery is blocking your view, it's not my fault. you should've come to the theatre with x-ray vision."



SITE-SPECIFIC

"am I a joke to you?"

WINTER BREAK RECS

Juliet Takes a Breath:

Juliet Takes a Breath is both a novel and graphic novel which follows Juliet, a self-proclaimed BX Puerto-Rican 'baby-dyke' as she moves to Portland to intern for a famous queer feminist author and activist. Over the break, I read the graphic novel and devoured Celia Moscote's outstanding art inside. The color palette and way she draws bodies of all sorts is beyond beautiful. In addition to the art, this novel explores race, being Queer, intersectionality, who white feminism leaves behind, self-love, healing, and finding one's identity. Made me cry and want to shave my hair-- a great time!

Kipo and the Age of Wonderbeasts:

More beautiful color palettes and storytelling came my way this break in the form of Kipo and the Age of Wonderbeasts. I went into this show having no idea what to expect and just had a fun time watching Kipo and her friends navigate a post-apocalyptic world. Some highlights include the amazing soundtrack, mutated lumberjack cats who love pancakes, an all black main cast, the found family trope, and an impromptu friendship Praum. Overall a fun and funny show that's definitely worth a binge-watch.



TEAMWORK TEAMWORK TEAMWORK

Teamwork and collaboration are words that are integral to theater, without them we would all be lost. But a concept I hadn't really thought of before was thinking about the type of collaborator/team member you are, or the role you fill when working in groups. Are you the type to assume the role of the leader? Or do you prefer to hang back and make sure everyone is getting along? There are many ways to contribute to a team, none better or worse than any other. One less talked about aspect when it comes to teamwork is what weaknesses come along with your strengths. Sometimes leaders are too eager to speak, talking over other team members, or organizers focus more on solutions than the feelings of everyone in the group. It's something that I've learned recently and it can significantly help you the next time you work in a group.

by Shamus Bonner

ASNOWYBOIFORYOU!



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!

PHAETON | *Metamorphoses*



CROSSWORD CORNER!



Across

- End of the night
- What covers 71% of Earth's surface
- Tropical fruit used to make jelly
- Fender guitar made from 1954-present
- Long skinny fish

Down

- First domesticated animals
- Angle < 90°
- "___ The Champions" (2 wds.)
- Relating to ships
- Washington baseball team, for short

NOVEMBER

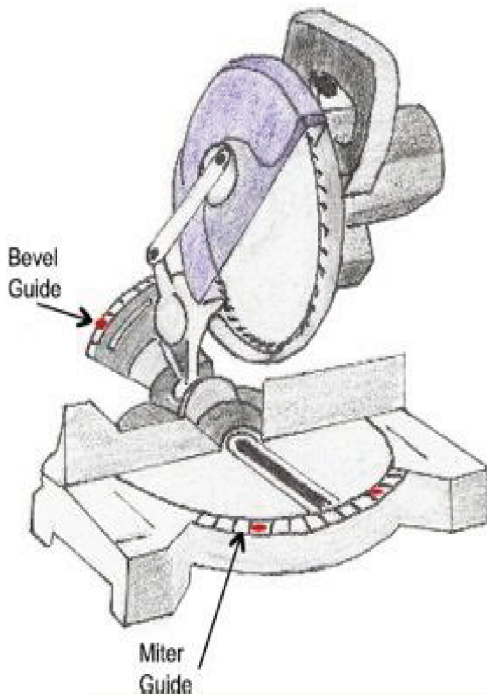
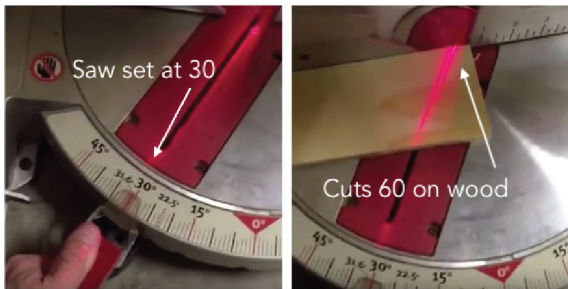
ANSWERS

		T	I	N
S	H	I	N	E
P	I	N	T	O
A	R	G	O	N
S	E	E		

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

SOPHIA'S TECH TIPS!

Cutting angles on a miter saw can be a little complicated, but hopefully this tip helps you out the next time you have to cut one! There are two ways to cut angles on a miter saw: miters, and bevels. We'll just be focusing on the miters here. The way the miter gauge works is that you can change the orientation of the saw to cut various angles. At its base position, the saw cuts 90°, or square, cuts. The tricky part is that for square cuts the miter gauge is set to 0°, not 90°! When you are cutting angles using the miter gauge, you should set the gauge to 90 minus the angle you want the piece of wood to end up having. For example, if you want your piece of wood to have a 60° angle in it, you would set the saw gauge to 30°.



PLANT OF THE MONTH!

Introducing: TJ's funky pitcher plant! TJ is currently open to name suggestions so throw them in our Groupme!



UPCOMING THEATRE

SEE COLLECTIVE RAGE: A PLAY IN FIVE BETTIES



SENDING TONS OF FUZZY BLANKETS!

STAY SAFE FRIENDS.