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A Note From Our Chair

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Welcome back to the start of another school year! I'm Megan and I will be serving as your chair for this year and I'm super excited to go on this journey with all of you! We are so excited to host some new and some returning workshops for everyone to come out and get involved in, as well as fun social nights for people who just want to come hang out if you can't make our normal meeting time. As always, stay tuned for all our opportunities for fun ways to get involved with USITT, the department here on campus, as well as our fellow clubs. Our monthly newsletters are also a great source of information about upcoming events and opportunities, as well as a good place to get to know your board members a little better!



We are so excited to see everyone at our meetings and gatherings, whether you are an old friend or a new face, please never hesitate to reach out and stop by, we'd love to have you!

Megan

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*An Introduction*

Welcome to a new school year everyone! Coming back to another year at Pitt, or your first year ever, can be a really exciting, but also a really nerve-racking experience.

Where am I going? How do I get involved? What is there to even get involved WITH? Technical theatre? – Who is she?

Well, I'm here to hopefully alleviate some of that back-to-school stress! Let us start with our three major theatre spaces to get us grounded.

We have three main theaters here at Pitt. There is the Richard E. Rauh Studio Theatre, the Henry Heymann Theatre, and the Charity Randal Theatre. The Charity Randal is our largest theatre here at Pitt. It can be found in the Stephen Foster Memorial Building whose main doors stand parallel to Forbes Ave. This theatre is an incredibly impressive space, and houses many large-scale plays and musicals. It is the traditional proscenium stage. The Heymann Theatre is found in the same building, but underneath the Randal! Once you enter the Stephen Foster Memorial building, there are steps to either side of the entrance that bring you down to the Heymann theatre. This stage is a three-quarter thrust to accommodate for the low ceilings and limited space. The last stage is found in the basement of the Cathedral, referred to in shorthand as the Studio Theatre.

This space is an incredible black box theatre that allows for all types of seating configurations with the mobile seating platforms! Seeing a show in this space is truly an incredible experience, and I recommend it highly.

To get involved with a show going on in one of our amazing theatre spaces, it is super easy! Talking with any theatre arts professor and expressing interest in working on a show is almost always a surefire way to find a way to get involved. There are constantly new positions opening on productions and opportunities to lend a hand are always welcomed. If you have a specific interest, such as lighting, sound design, scenic, props, etc.; it really helps to connect directly with the professor that oversees that area. For example, if you are interested in scenic, get connected with Gianni Downs! By talking with a USITT board member you can find out who to go to for aid and assistance for these specific areas. Here at USITT, we also strive on publicizing as many opportunities as possible through our email list; so get signed up to hear about many amazing opportunities here within the theater department and beyond!

From every member of the board, we are so happy that you are here and are interested in technical theatre! Reach out for absolutely anything, and as always, HAIL 2 PITT!

By Rachel Nolen, Vice Chair



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## *Finding Your Scene*

*Ah, the first day of school.*

For many, it's a time for excitement—a chance to see old friends and make new ones; a start of a new year full of productivity and accomplishing tasks; the beginning of a whole new trip around the sun where you can find new ways to learn, grow, and better yourself.

For others, though? Not so much.

Maybe you dread school—maybe tests aren't your thing, or you have social anxiety, or you just straight up don't enjoy it.

Me? I fall somewhere in the middle. I think a lot of people probably do.

On the one hand, I love learning. I love experiencing new things and gaining experience and knowledge from those wiser than me. I also hate math, though, and that's kinda required, even though they definitely played up the whole "in college you can take whatever classes you want!" card in high school. As if, amirite?

Not only do I hate math, but I also reallllly don't like science. The problem with that is that I chose to go to a medical research university and therefore am basically silly to expect to not have to take science classes up the wazoo (am I being dramatic? Yeah kinda, it's just three classes for my major, but I promise I'm getting to my point!).

All that is to say: schools hard. It's like, easier and yet harder at the same time in college, too, so that's complicated, and there were points last year in which I felt very very lonely and very very unintelligent because I couldn't understand how neurons work overnight. And I had no friends, which isn't an exaggeration.

Transferring schools is hard too. Even harder than that is transferring schools in the middle of a pandemic, which basically requires little to no socialization anyways. If that's you, I don't blame you for maybe wanting to drop out. I don't blame you for being lonely and wanting to make friends but not knowing how. I was you at this time last year, and that first month was one of the hardest I've ever had. There I was, a new student at said medical research university as a humanities major surrounded by STEM folks, not a freshmen but also not a true sophomore, and really coming close to just going home.

And then I found USITT.

I guess it's a little (a lot actually) cheesy for me to write a tribute to USITT at Pitt for my first article in my first newsletter as a board member, but I have to. I literally didn't know what to do at this school before I found USITT, and I owe Shamus (shoutout) a lot for an email reply that has stuck with me almost a whole year later:

It's never too late to get involved with us.

Maybe you're in the position I was in 365 days ago. Maybe you're reading this because you found our flyer at the Activities Fair and are considering joining because you're lonely (and lowkey love theatre like a lot). Or, maybe you're reading this months from now, for some reason, on a whim, and you're looking to make some new friends or learn something new about the arts. I dunno man, but whoever you are, I hope you're doing well, and I encourage you to find your place—even if it's not with us at USITT—because through finding your place, you'll find your people.

You won't be lonely for long. (Especially if you join USITT!)

By Lauren Holmes, Outreach Coordinator





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## *Just Keep Swimming*

As the hustle and bustle of the semester begins, are you already forgetting about your “me time”? Are you forgetting to do the small things you enjoy most? I know I most certainly have! Regardless of if it’s as simple as five minutes of your favorite music or as complex as hanging out with friends, be sure to make time for the things that refill your cup – the things or people you love most. Now I know that’s easier said than done, but I’m willing to try if you are!

In the short period of time that we’ve been back in school, I’ve already felt discouraged and overwhelmed. Because I’m human, I must allow myself to feel how I feel, BUT after a little while I remind myself of what a very wise fish once told me, “When life gets you down, you know what you gotta do? Just keep swimming. Just keep swimming. Just keep swimming. Swimming. Swimming. What do we do? We swim.” So, in light of a wise fish’s knowledge, as we step into September, I’d like to challenge us all to be intentional about doing at least one thing throughout the week that helps us keep swimming.

On my list of things to help me keep swimming will be USITT and the marvelous individuals who partake in this club. I hope USITT can also be an escape for you and a part of what keeps you swimming during the rough weeks. Most importantly, I hope you find ways to think about yourself in the midst of the demanding blackhole we call college (I promise I love school....sometimes lol).

I’d love to hear what your methods will be to just keep swimming! Oh, and as a band of imaginary dragons like to say, “It’s okay to be not okay. It’s just fine to be out of your mind. Breathe in deep, just a day at a time.”

### *Ty'Mariya's Just Keep Swimming List*

- Religious text/music/conversation
- A few pages of a book
- Music
- Time with friends
- USITT
- Calling loved ones
- Some TV time

By Ty'Mariya Moss, Secretary

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## *A Reflection on Summer Jobs*

This past summer was my first experience with professional theater contracts, and boy oh boy are they a whirlwind! I started my summer in our lovely city of Pittsburgh working on *Rigoletto* with Resonance Works as an assistant stage manager. This was my first professional contract and my first opera, so it was a wild experience. I learned very quickly that opera is set up very differently from theater, so it was a bit of a crash course. The whole process was one week of rehearsing 3 times a day, 3 days of tech, and 2 performances. The whole experience taught me a ton about working in an environment with a quick turn around and having to learn very quickly on my toes.

About a month after *Rigoletto* closed, I moved on to my second contract, a full summer season in Lincoln, New Hampshire. On this contract I have gotten to asm for *Sound of Music*, *Cabaret*, *Mamma Mia*, and *The 39 Steps*, and it has truly been one of the best experiences.

Coming in, I had never been to New Hampshire, I had only one professional contract under my belt, and I knew absolutely no one here, so it was intimidating to say the least. Quickly, I found that all of the actors, tech crew, and pit musicians were so welcoming and kind, and I worked very well with my stage manager very early on. I met so many people with so many different paths that led us all to the same place, and it was always so fun to get to engage with all the people in the company. It was hard work and long days, as are all summerstock jobs, but this past summer is an experience I would not trade for the world.

By Megan Franco, Chair





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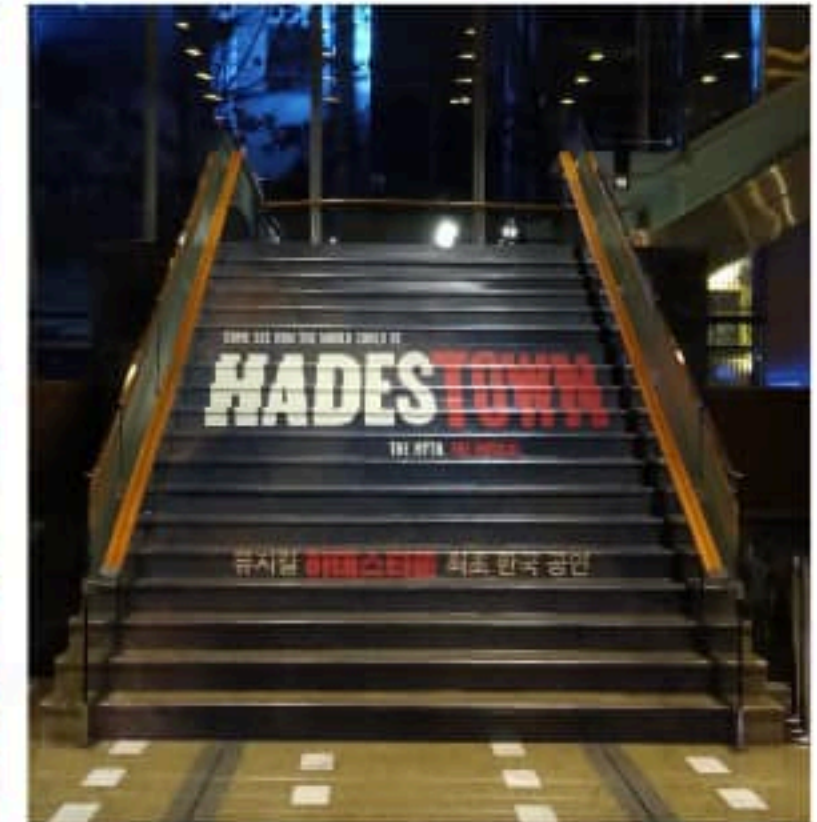
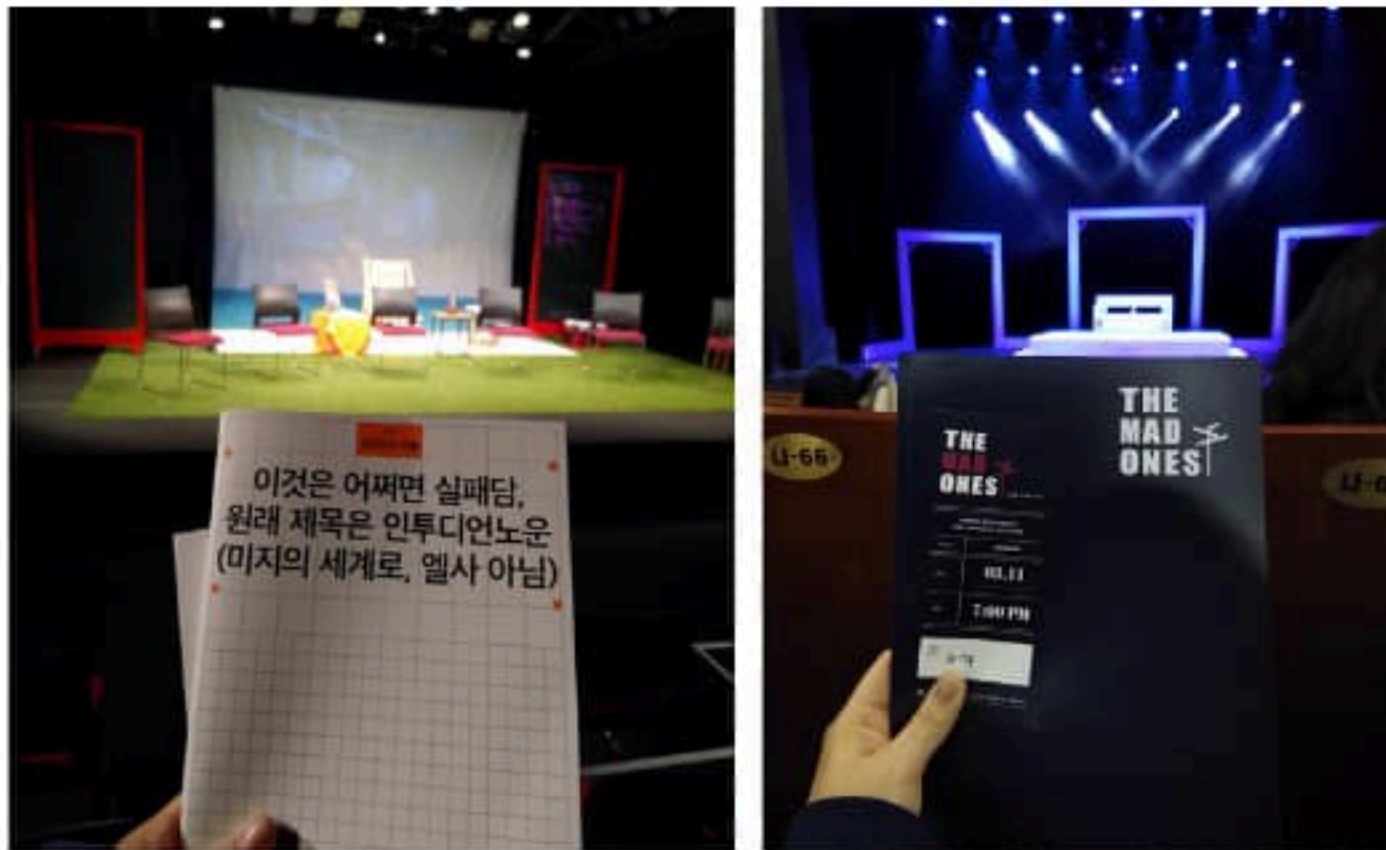
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## *Theatre in Korea*

This past spring, I had the time of my life traveling to Korea for a semester. And I made sure to get my taste of theatre there, but not as a designer, but rather an audience member.

Within the first week I was there, I booked a ticket to see the Seoul production of "Hometown." The fantastic part was that due to its sung-through nature, and my previous familiarity with all of the songs, I could follow along with the entire plot, despite it being in a different language. Since I already knew the story, I could really focus on the visuals and the performance. And let me tell you, it was a gorgeous set, and I audibly gasped when the set split into three sections in the middle of the show. And little did I know, but a famous kpop idol had been cast as the lead, and I was lucky enough to see him perform right in front of me!

The next show I saw was a college production of "The Mad Ones." Though I had never heard of the musical before, it was fun trying to guess the context of the show and to see how well I could follow along. The set was impressively simplistic, with just a few set pieces here and there. And the lighting was impeccable, I think I counted maybe 9 moving lights! The cast knocked it out of the park and I realized just how much I missed college theatre!



My next adventure was an original piece by a local theatre company (NTCK). This production utilized two languages I did not know: Korean and Korean Sign Language. My brain was certainly working in overdrive trying to understand everything that was going on. I was really forced to focus on the actors' movements and expressions, and saw how valuable body language impacts a performance.

And my last theatre endeavor was "Something Rotten" (and on closing night)!! This show is undoubtedly funny and its comedy spoke so strongly through the actors. I was able to laugh even though I couldn't fully understand the jokes. Tap dancing eggs, a big mid-show musical number, a brooding Shakespeare, I enjoyed myself so much that night and I could tell the actors were really giving it everything for their last show.

All in all, I couldn't stay away from theatre, even on the other side of the world. It was so interesting to see what theatre was like in Korea, and I can definitely say that the art of performance never loses its touch anywhere.

P.S. Fun fact: it's common in Korea for audience members to bring binoculars to shows to see better.

By Elizabeth Amstutz, Business Manager





## *What We've Been Up To*

- We attended the Pitt Stages Open House as a student organization on 8/25
- We also attended the Pitt Activities Fair on 8/28
  - If you missed us at either or both, scan the QR code below to join our email list!
- Lauren did a Meet The Board series on Instagram/Facebook
  - follow us on both!
    - IG: @USITT\_at\_Pitt
    - FB: USITT at University of Pittsburgh



## *Announcements*

- Our first meeting is September 9th in the Heymann at 1pm
- Scan the QR code below to join our club GroupMe!



## *Poppportunities*

- Department
  - Lighting Designer needed for Dance
    - November 28-December 2
    - Charity Randall
  - Assistant Stage Manager for *Dance Nation*
    - *NOTE:* please review the script available at the reserves desk under auditions in the Hillman
  - Assistant Technical Director on *The 39 Steps*, *Dance Nation*, *Seven Guitars* and *Abduction*
  - Head and Assistant Electrician for *Dance Nation*
  - Assistant Costume Designers for *Seven Guitars* and *Abduction*
  - Wardrobe Supervisor for *Dance Nation*, *Seven Guitars*, and *Abduction*
- Musical Theatre Club
  - Assistant Costume, Lights, Sound, and Props Designers needed
- Other
  - 2 ASMs needed for Resonance Works' production of *I Am A Dreamer Who No Longer Dreams*
    - paid, but you would need a car
    - rehearses during the day
    - email us for more info
  - RSW Entertainment Group Fun Crew is looking for a high energy, engaging individual to be a Production Assistant/Stand In for the UPMC Hillman Cancer Center Gala September 13-15
    - September 13th: 8am-6pm \$120
    - September 14th: 8am-6pm \$120
    - September 15th: 8am-11pm \$150