



Written by Gary Fails

Since we are celebrating the 30th anniversary of City Theatrical this year, it's a good time to put the history of the company down on paper. Many very talented people have put a lot of their lives into growing CTI, and it has been quite an adventure. For all of us, it has been about how we invent, manufacturer, and customize unique lighting accessories.



By the time I started City Theatrical in 1986 I had already spent 15 years in technical theatre, the only career I have ever had after dropping out of Columbia University. I spent 10 years travelling around the U.S. and around the world first with Dance Theatre of Harlem, and later as an electrician working for Broadway production electricians Mitch Miller and Steve Cochrane. I went back to New York City to become a Local One apprentice, spending 39 months in that role at Four Star Lighting in the South Bronx. In 1986 I was still working during the daytime at Four Star, and at night I was a Local One electrician on Broadway. At that time I was the house electrician at Circle in the Square Theatre on West 50th St.



My Local One apprenticeship gave me some skills that are important to me to this day. I became a certified welder and licensed New York State laser operator, and those were great skills, but the skill that actually ended up being the most important to me was that I was trained in sheet metal. Sheet metal design is a unique skill and it's vital to both the entertainment and architectural lighting fields since nearly all products and accessories of that era were made from sheet metal, and many still are today.



My mentor there was a gruff old ex Navy machinist mate, Bill Maier, who taught me everything, and along with Willie Callier, we made everything from strip lights to PAR cans, to top hats. The owner of Four Star was Frank DeVerna, a real entertainment legend, and a smart businessman. I suggested that we could set up a manufacturing operation and sell a catalog of products instead of just being a lighting rental shop. Frank wasn't interested in that. He had the top Broadway lighting rental shop (the PRG of its day) and was happy to stick with that.



I began spending my weekends driving up and down every street in the South Bronx looking for a small garage that I could rent and where I could set up a shop. In those days nearly all entertainment shops were in the South Bronx. My objective was to duplicate the Four Star sheet metal and welding shop and to do custom work and whatever came in the door. I had no partners and very little money but I knew I wanted to start a business and to make things out of metal.



I found a small, old, empty building with a wooden garage door. It had no lights, no plumbing fixtures, and only a few small electrical circuits. But it had a concrete floor, and it had reasonable height, the rent was low, and the landlord (who owned a small machine shop next door) didn't care what I did to the building as long I cleaned it up and improved it. Many of my Broadway friends helped me set up the shop and helped on early projects, including Andrew Holliday, Tom Kilcommons, Tim Buchman, Joe Sabo, and Pat Cheeseman. I started to build a shop there and I worked there every day before going to do my show at night. I went to an auction and bought a shop full of sheet metal machines and other shop equipment. It was still the era of manual machines so they were not very expensive, and I had a shear, two brakes, several punch presses, a spot welder, a notcher, drill presses, a milling machine, and a Lincoln arc welder. I added a range of other machinery and equipment and I had successfully created a small sheet metal shop a lot like Four Star's.



In the early days in 1986 I didn't have any business, but that didn't bother me since I had a shop and I loved working in the shop. Since my earliest days in show business I worked in shops and I have always enjoyed the shop environment. Even today I prefer to work out in the shop rather than in an office.

In 1986 I also got married and my wife Terri Klausner (a Broadway actress and singer who I met on the stage of Radio City Music Hall on an Oldsmobile industrial) had our first child, Greta. We had Joe the next year and Mike the year after and ended up with three in diapers, and later three in college. They all grew up in the shop running punch presses and milling machines and assembling barn doors as kids.

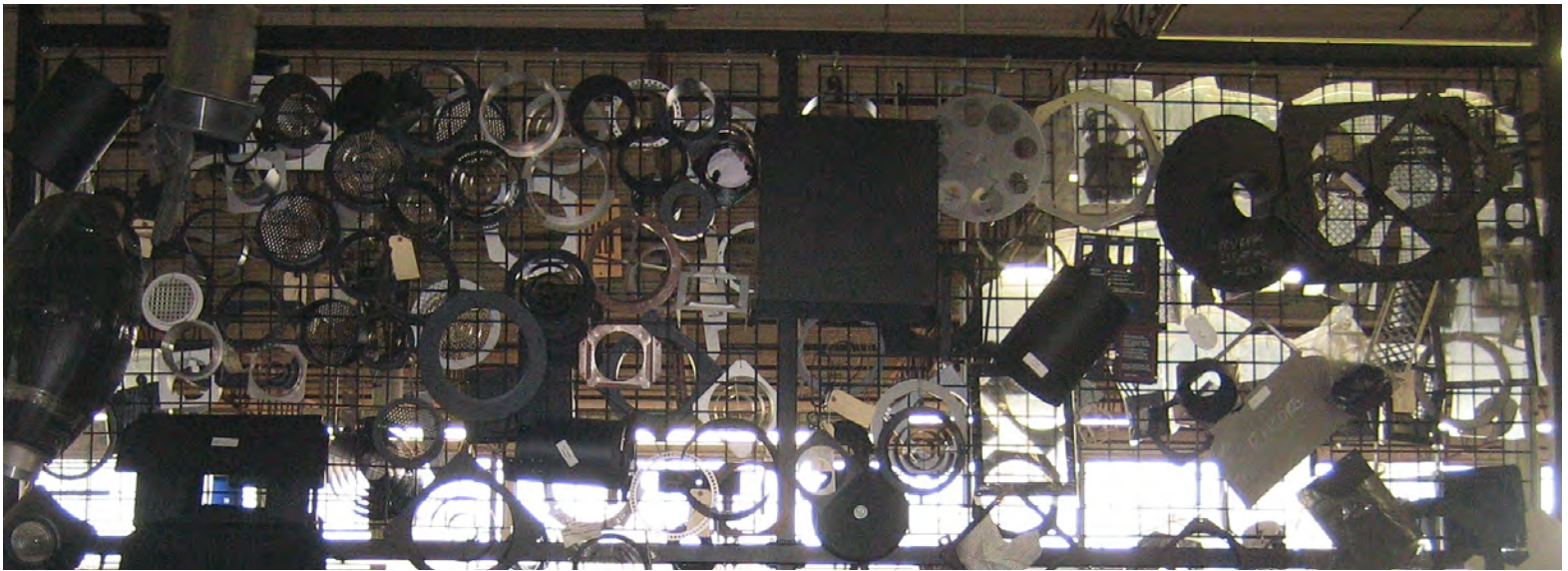


My routine for the first 10 years of CTI was to work a full day in the shop, then drive home (we lived in the Bronx), spend a few minutes with the family, then head into the city for my show, returning around midnight. This went on month after month and year after year. Counting my time at Four Star, I went 16 years working two jobs this way, and since the theatre and shop off days overlapped, it was often seven days per week for months on end.

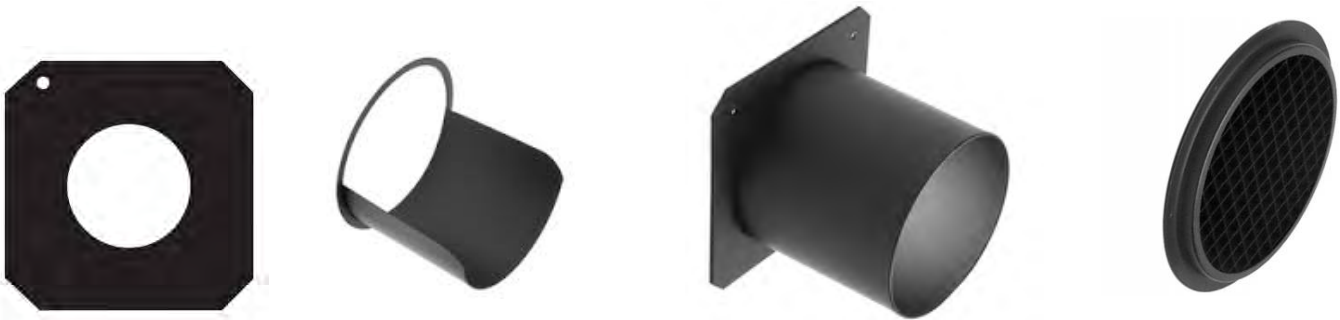
The rare times when I wasn't on a show and only worked in the shop felt like a vacation. If it sounds inhuman, I was only doing what many other Broadway guys did and I was inspired by both Petey Joe (Sr.) and Lee Iwanski who both worked two jobs many more years than I did. Petey Joe especially was an amazing guy. While I was a Local One apprentice I worked nights on the rail at the Ambassador Theatre and sat with Pete every night and we would talk about our day in the shop. Pete was a top layout man in a scenic shop.



During my time at Circle in the Square, I was the production electrician as well as the house electrician. In all, I was production electrician on 28 Broadway shows there and had the unique opportunity to work with nearly every Broadway designer. This was the first period that City Theatrical began to gain some momentum.



When we loaded in a show we often faced challenges and would brainstorm solutions with the designers and crew. I'd build these solutions in my shop and test them, then refine them. Many of our accessories were born this way.



The best thing about this era was meeting and becoming friends with so many Broadway designers. Examples of some of the big ones of the early days were Tharon Musser, Richard Nelson, Arden Fingerhut, and Marc Weiss. I had already done two shows with Jules Fisher while I was on the road. At Circle in the Square, I was the production electrician for Don Holder (before he went on to Lion King) and for Ken Posner on his first Broadway show. I worked with many young assistants who were on their way up and would later become Tony Award winners themselves, including Peggy Eisenhauer and Jeff Croiter.



All of the designers and assistants, including Allen Lee Hughes, Mary Jo Dondlinger, Steve Rust, Heather Carson, Kevin Rigdon, and Michael Lincoln (and many more), were great people that I learned a lot from. I still enjoy working with many of them on the lighting challenges that they bring to City Theatrical.





CTI seeks out and tries to meet as many working lighting designers as possible since much of what we do is done to meet their needs.





Several large opportunities presented themselves in the early '90s. The first were in the field of dry ice fog. *Phantom of the Opera* had just opened on Broadway and was a huge hit. The show had several fog cues that were vital to the show, and they used dry ice fog to achieve these effects. At that time, 55 gallon steel drums were used to make dry ice fog. That was state of the art at the time. They were manufactured by a couple of companies including Big Apple Lights in NYC, and Howard Eaton in the U.K. I believe the Phantom machines were made by Howard, who I did not know at the time but has since become a friend and colleague of mine in the entertainment world. The 55 gallon drums, being steel, were prone to rusting and leaking, and needed to be replaced often. The show asked me if I could design a machine that would not rust.

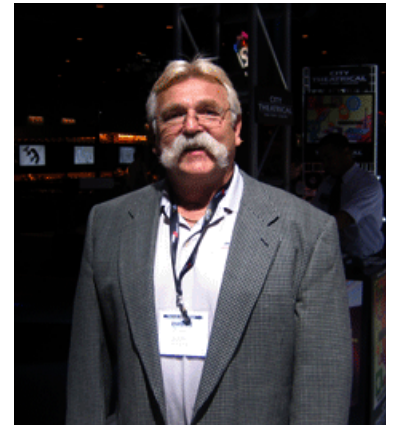
We had a lot of experience forming and welding stainless steel, so it was pretty easy to design a large fog machine with a stainless steel tank. We made a pretty nice design and sold six to Phantom in NYC, then made them for all of the Phantom road companies, and the Miss Saigon companies, and the Les Miz companies and many other shows. At one time, if you were using low lying fog on Broadway it was one of our SS6000 Dry Ice Foggers. The Phantom dry ice foggers are still in use and working perfectly after more than 25 years!



Around this time there were maybe 5-6 people working in the shop. I worked in the shop all day doing sheet metal, welding, or running the lathe or milling machine, worked nights at the theatre, and in any remaining time did the bookkeeping, payroll, and ordering of supplies. We made a small range of products for the New York lighting shops like Four Star (Darren DeVerna), Bash (Donny Stern and Bob Cannon), Vanco (Teddy Van Bommel), Production Arts (John McGraw and Steve Terry), Big Apple Lights (Patrick O'Roarke), scenic shops like Hudson (Neil Mazzella and Gene O'Donovan), and sound shops like Pro Mix (Bob Rendon and Lou Mead), and they kept us pretty busy.



But when we got slow, we often made up some top hats or template holders and put them on the shelf since we knew the shops would need them when they got busy. Significantly, although I didn't realize it at the time, this was our birth as a make to stock manufacturer.



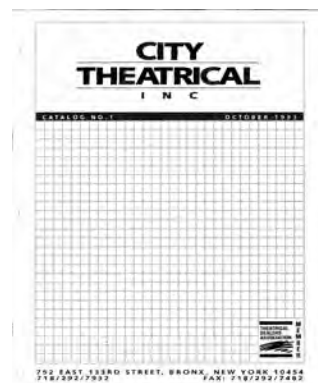
At the Production Arts Christmas party in 1992 I saw the Source Four for the first time. The very first moment I saw it I realized that it had a smaller lens than the Altman 360, and that everyone would need new accessories. I borrowed a tape measure and took some measurements, and the next day had the first Source Four accessories.



ETC did not have any accessories, and the New York shops were placing orders for 5,000 fixtures at a time, and they needed a lot of accessories, and City Theatrical was the only one who had them.



Being so busy all the time, I had never been to an industry trade show, but in 1993 I decided to go to Orlando to LDI and to see what was going on out in the world. I made up a [small black and white catalog](#), walked around the show floor with template holders in my pockets.



I walked into the booths and showed the catalog and the parts and got great feedback. At lunch time I sat down to have a coffee and shared a table with a guy who turned out to be at his first LDI also, and also was walking around the show with metal parts in his pockets. It was Erik Von Fange of Light Source.

At that LDI, I suddenly realized that what I had been doing for the New York shops was also needed around the country, and for that matter, around the world. That was a revelation for me, and I signed up dealers all over the U.S. and later, all over Europe.



In 1994 we exhibited at our first LDI, which was in Reno. We had a tiny booth and showed accessories and our SS6000 fogger. We won our first product award at the show, which began a long period of winning dozens and dozens of awards for innovative products, both mechanical, electrical, and for business. We won all types of awards and were thrilled by them all.



The shop was still in its original building. It was an old cottage cheese factory from the early 1900s, and it had been subdivided into four sections. As the years went by and we needed more space, the landlord would let us expand into the next space by breaking through the wall. We did this four times in all, then added first one, then another building up the street into what was finally a rambling Dickensian mess of old Bronx industrial buildings.



We fought a constant battle against the rats. We had no loading dock, no windows, and no parking except on the street. It was a rough and tumble neighborhood but we had some excellent workers with great creativity and mechanical aptitude, including Marcus Soobyiah (our first shop foreman) and his brother Tony, Mark Tater, Johnny Vieira and our great mechanical engineer Naum Bronz.



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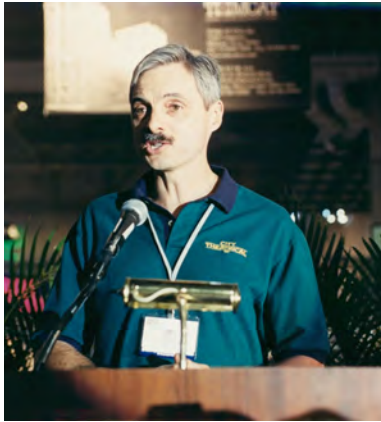
These guys were extremely talented problem solvers and we did some of our most creative mechanical work in this era and we learned a lot about metal forming, die making, fabrication, welding, and basic electronic assembly.



Around this time (mid 90s) Patrick Eagleton and Larry Lieberman had joined the company as heads of sales and manufacturing and we started to search for some larger challenges. The SS6000 fogger was a big hit but expensive and labor intensive to fabricate so I had an idea to make a smaller machine out of a plastic tank. We designed the Aquafoq 3300 and it was a beautiful design but extremely challenging and expensive for us to develop.

When we came to the product launch date the tanks were leaking and we couldn't get them to stop. We were faced with not launching and losing our potential sales, but we couldn't risk it leaking in the booth at the LDI.

In desperation, we lined the tank with fiberglass just to plug the leaks, hoping no one would notice. Although the booth had a strange fiberglass smell, it did not leak at the show, and we won a product of the year award.



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The AQUAFOG™ 3300 and SS6000 DRY ICE FOGGER™ from City Theatrical represent the state of the art in dry ice fog technology. Designed at LDI '95 for its simplicity and ease of use, AQUAFOG is lightweight, portable, and molded from a highly durable thermoplastic which will never corrode, dent or leak, and with a dry ice capacity of 75 lbs, it can produce large quantities of dense low lying fog. The larger and more powerful SS6000 has a 150 lb. dry ice capacity and blasts out huge amounts of fog at 465 CFM. Its stainless steel construction and extra heavy duty fittings mean trouble free operation for years of use.

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We had another success the EFX Plus2, an effects attachment for a Source Four, and produced it in partnership with lighting designer Paul Palazzo. His product took us deeper into electronic design and manufacturing. We sold thousands of them and they were a sensation at the time. There still is no way to produce the effects that they could make.



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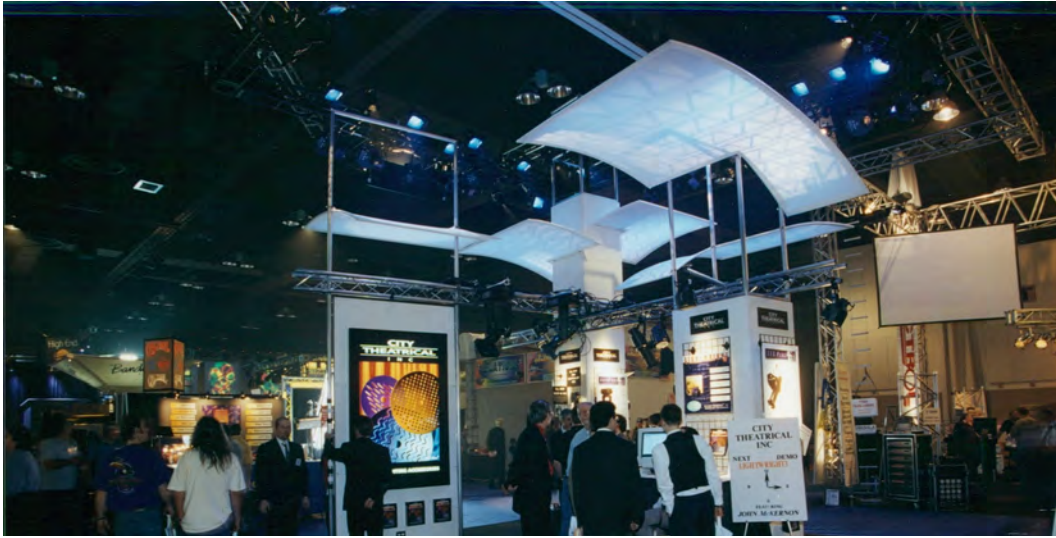
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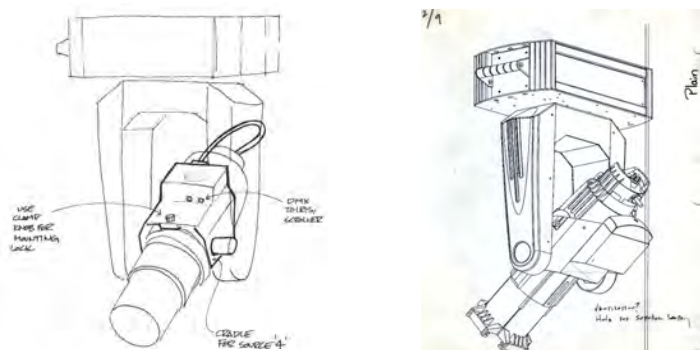
Steve Smith, Mick Smith, David Paige, Phyllis Newsome, and Jeanette Ruiz were with us in this era and our reputation and level of experience and professionalism continued to rise. Around 1997 we were asked by designer Brian MacDevitt if we could motorize a Source Four into a “refocusable special”. I thought that was an excellent idea and we began the project that became the AutoYoke. The only problem was we had no real engineering department, no experience with stepper motors, and not enough money to invest in a project of this size. At that time, there were only a few companies in the world making moving lights, and at heart, this was a difficult moving light project.



As a prototype, we ripped the guts out of a High End Studio Color, did some metalwork and some plastic SLAs and made a very respectable prototype version of the AutoYoke to show to customers at a trade show. In a classic bit of trade show magic, the Studio Color circuit board was hidden in the truss.



At that trade show, Mark White, who was the theatre consultant for the renovation of the Royal Opera House, came in the booth and looked at the AutoYoke. He said, “That might be what I am looking for for the Opera House. If you can show a more advanced version at the next trade show, we might consider it.” We put together a team of mechanical, electrical, and software engineers, and an industrial designer. I convinced our bank to lend the money, and all they required of me was a personal guarantee of all of my business and personal assets, and an insurance policy so in case I died they would still get paid. Philip Nye played a major role in the software design. Noele Stollmach was our project manager and she ran the project with an iron fist. Chris Ryan joined us at trade shows and helped introduce us to lighting users around the country. Ronaldo Sia became our Electronics Assembly Manager and led our six person AutoYoke assembly team.



At the end of a hectic year of challenging product development, the project culminated with a meeting in the Royal Opera House boardroom where their directors considered their choices. They had tested all available moving lights in the world, including the best efforts of VariLite, High End, and Martin, and after much deliberation, and because it has no fans and is silent, chose the AutoYoke to form the heart of the ROH's refocusable lighting. I walked out into the streets of London and felt like I was floating on air.

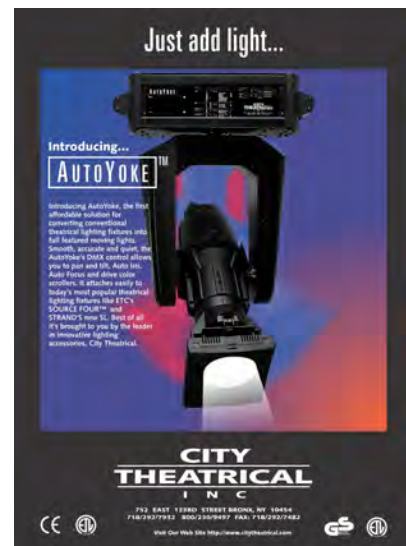


We still sell many AutoYokes today. . . . more than ever since we now install the Source Four LED and it is considered a "modern" fixture even though it is approaching its 20th birthday.



After the AutoYoke project we looked for new challenges. Although I had good mechanical aptitude and problem solving skills, and a healthy appetite for risk, I came to the realization that I didn't really understand how to run a business. I had no formal business training and didn't even have a college degree. I by chance heard Michael Porter give his famous Harvard Business School lecture "On Strategy" and I was inspired to go back to school and to study business. I decided to apply to Columbia University Graduate School of Business, which would kill two birds with one stone: It would help City Theatrical, and it would tidy up that awful loose end that I created when I dropped out of Columbia the first time in 1970, 30 years prior to returning.

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I got admitted to Columbia Business School, even without an undergraduate degree, and had a blast there. We studied everything I was doing every day in the business and my classmates enjoyed hearing about the challenges of a small business even though most of them worked for banks, insurance companies, and consultants. I was attending graduate school full time, working full time, and had a wife and three growing kids. It was an exhilarating two years. I am extremely proud to be able to say I am both a member of Local One (the top entertainment technicians in the world) and a graduate of the Columbia University Graduate School of Business (one of the best business schools in the world).



While in business school and thinking a lot about ways to grow and improve City Theatrical, I began discussions with two colleagues, Larry Dunn and Paul Kleissler, about working together to develop a new wireless DMX system.

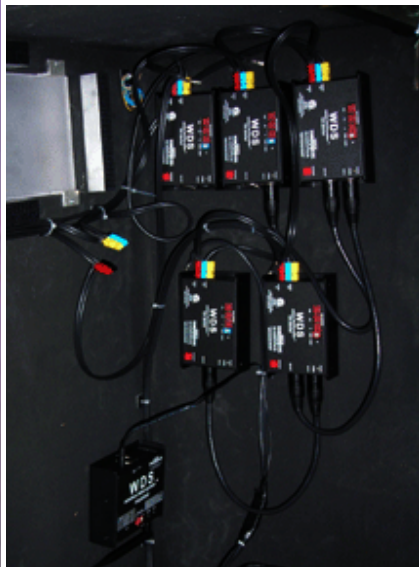
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wireless dimming system™

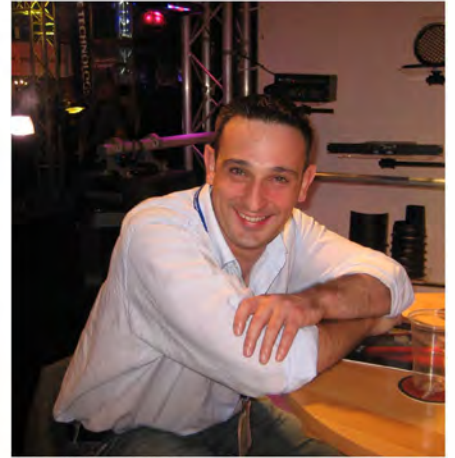
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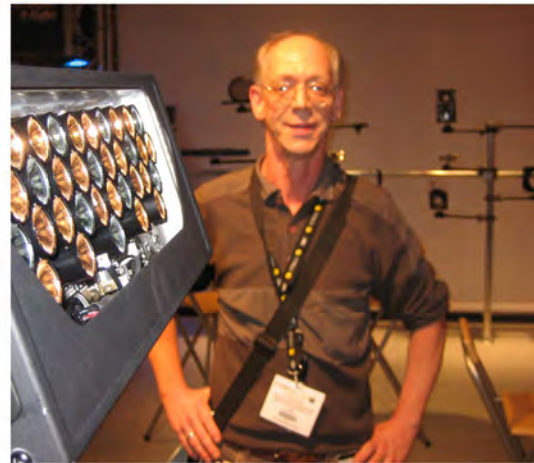
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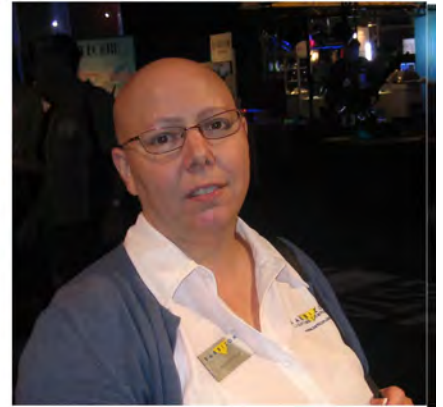
Paul had founded Logical Lighting and had produced most of the wireless dimming on Broadway in the 90's (Howard Eaton also produced wireless dimming for Broadway and West End shows). Paul, Larry and I worked together to develop a new system, and we named it WDS (Wireless Dimming System). WDS soon became the standard of Broadway and West End shows for wireless DMX and wireless dimming.



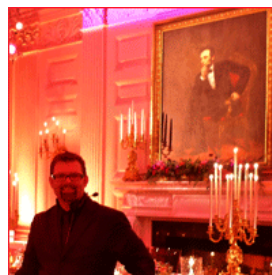
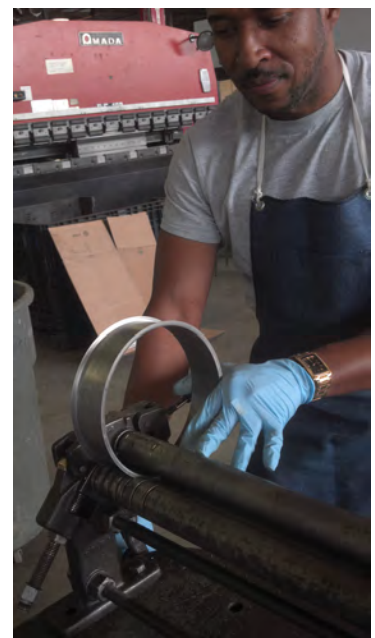
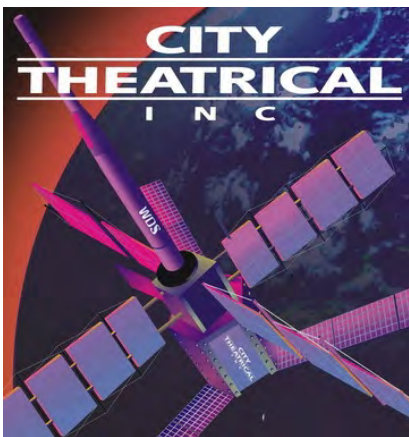
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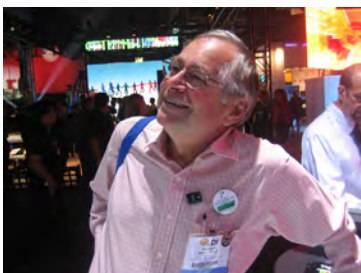
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Larry joined City Theatrical full time and Paul joined a little later and we became a great product development team with a wide ranging mix of skills and temperaments. One day Larry and I were sitting in the office we shared in the South Bronx shop, and we brainstormed the system of wireless RDM that became the basis for our wireless patent. We continue to believe that wireless DMX will play an important part in the future of entertainment lighting.









In the middle of this wild period of activity and growth, 9/11 happened, and the entertainment industry came to a screeching halt. Our business shrank by 50% overnight and stayed that way for quite a while. We had the only round of layoffs in the history of the company but we made it through and into another period of growth.



This time the growth came from the beginning of the LED revolution. Through an initial contact from our dealer Port Lighting, who were very early adopters of Color Kinetics LEDs, we formed an accessory development partnership with Color Kinetics as they were beginning their ramp up to going public.



They were in high growth mode, and to achieve the sales they needed with architectural lighting designers, they needed beam shaping accessories. In our partnership, we developed over 200 different accessories for them at no cost to them, and in return we were able to sell to them, their worldwide dealer network, and to our worldwide dealer network. This produced a great boost of business for us as CK grew.

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Power/Data Supplies for Color Kinetics® Lighting Products

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PDS-750 TRX™

PDS-750 TRX POWER/DATA SUPPLY FOR CKDMX FIXTURES

There has never been an LED power/data supply like this!

The PDS-750 TRX™ is the most advanced and most flexible power/data supply for Philips Color Kinetics LED fixtures ever created. The unit can be controlled with all popular Ethernet protocols including Streaming ACN, Art-Net, or KI Net, as well as wired and wireless DMX512, and is fully RDM enabled. Every unit includes a built-in SHoW DMX® receiver.

The PDS-750 TRX provides full control capability for the new Philips Color Kinetics ColorBlast 12 TRX, as well as 16-bit and 8-bit ColorBlast 12 TRs, iW Blast 12s, and conventional 8-bit ColorBlast 12s, ColorBlast 6s, ColorSplash 2s, and other CKDMX fixtures; and it can control any mix of these fixtures without wasted DMX Slots.

Features & Specs

PDS-750 TRX
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Patent Pending

Along the way, PRG and other companies began to use CK LED fixtures like the ColorBlast 12, but they were hampered by a lack of entertainment grade power data supplies, so we invented one and also marketed that through CK's network and our network. This drew CK deeply into the entertainment market.





We called our power supply the PDS-750 TR (for touring). They reinforced this by producing a "TR" version of their ColorBlast. This is a rare case where the lighting fixture took the name of the accessory.







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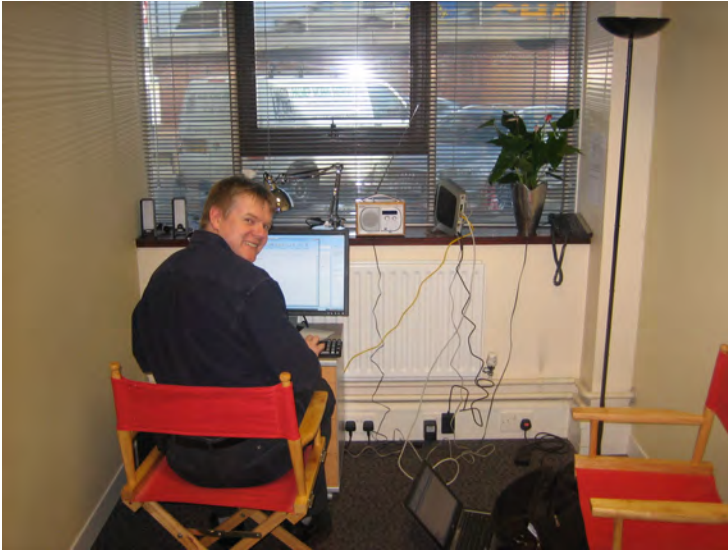
Our growth through the middle of the first decade of the 2000's was strong and we added many excellent people to our manufacturing staff including Brian Batease, Anuj Verma, Sunder Nemani, Scott Tiede, Adam Klein, Ben Merrick, Tony Kambic, Pranav Shah, Sergiy Kovtun, Marat Chmut, Marvin Hammond, Marcus Rolle, Lenny Holloway, Jason Lumabao, and Anna Rosario. In sales Andrew Nickel became our Sales Manager, and Ken Bruns, Susy Simpson, Sabrina Asquith, and J.C. Moore joined him. These great staff members propelled us to set some large goals. We decided to move the company across the river to a much larger space (four time larger than our ramshackle space in the Bronx) and to make a large investment in production equipment to lower our manufacturing costs. We put in a new Amada CNC punch press, large metal stamping presses, a new powdercoat line, and a new lead free surface mount pick and place line. This was heady stuff for our home brewed manufacturing organization and it helped us compete on the world stage. We were joined by many new staff members in New Jersey, including Kevin Fix, Iliana Angel, Neil Krogh, Kelly McConville, Cleveon Reeves, Elgin Villalta, Liz Blessing, Chris Rossi, Joey Schaeffer, Thomas DiCosta, Daniel Escobar, Jorge Zavala, Isaac Incantara, Richard Maj, James Romero, Rafael Castro, Jaime Robles, Jorge Garcia, Connie Jaramillo, Carlos Rivas, Diego Duque, Peter Nickel, Enerio Montesino, Jennifer Tipton, Olivier Odom, Nick Koprivica, Laura Chrismon, Ryan Dreeland, and Glenn Kelsey.



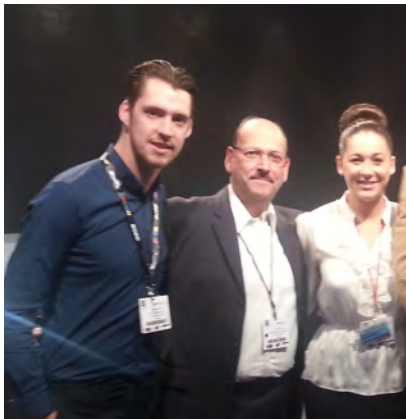
With our move to New Jersey we also launched our SHoW DMX line of wireless DMX which continues to evolve as time goes on. SHoW DMX is the standard of Broadway and London's West End and lighting professionals trust it to perform night after night. We later launched SHoW DMX Neo and added Maximum Bandwidth Technology.



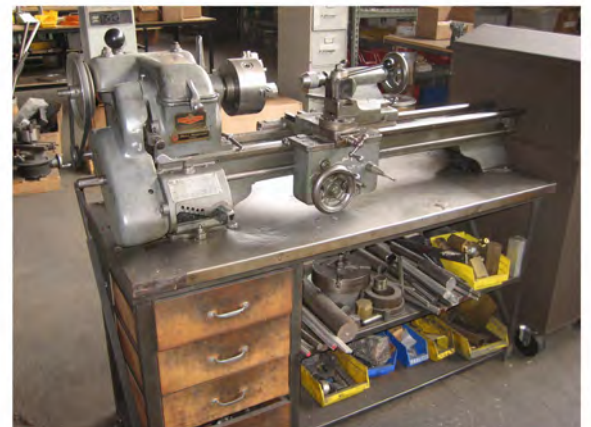
We also decided at this time to open a London office. We had been trading in London ever since we started manufacturing and had quite a bit of experience there and some excellent contacts. We had met Martin Chisnall on our London trips and somehow convinced him to become the head of our London office in 2008.



Our London office had been a great part of our adventure and we have steadily grown it over the years. Adam Klein moved his family over there for a year to run it, then Alex Cowan took over and now the office is run by Lauren Drinkwater, Grant Bailey, and Matt Stearnes. We are committed to being part of the London and European lighting world.











At the end of 2012 we faced what proved to be our largest challenge ever. Hurricane Sandy hit the east coast of the U.S. and our factory was hit extremely hard. I described the flood in our [newsletter article](#) shortly after it happened, at a moment when we were still in shock.



During those very dark days as we struggled to understand what happened and what we would do to try to move forward as a company, I spoke to the staff every day telling them that we would bounce back better than ever, and that from this devastation, something good would come. If evidence is ever required to show the value of positive thinking, this qualifies. Unbelievably, after a long and bleak recovery period, and a fight for insurance money (we lost \$1.5 million with only a small portion covered by insurance), we started to grow by throwing everything we had into a plan for the future. We hired and trained what I believe is the best sales staff in our industry (Gary Vilardi, Andrew Nikel, Carl Camenisch, Lorlyn Sia, Erin Giblin, Harrison Hohnholdt, Michael Lamago, and Kelly Ascolese), and added Jennifer Gennaro to our Marketing department. We brought in new leaders, managers, and workers on our manufacturing team (Domenic Fulvio, Jeff Uva, Frank Volpicella, Heather Sanguesa, Sharonda James, Brian Hamilton, Fullgencio Cepeda, Allyson and Andreas Romero), and we grew our engineering team (Paul Kleissler, Philip Nye, Andras Joo, Matteo Vigni, Emily Merow, Mike Mason, and John Majjerowski) to enable us to develop the products that will produce our future growth.



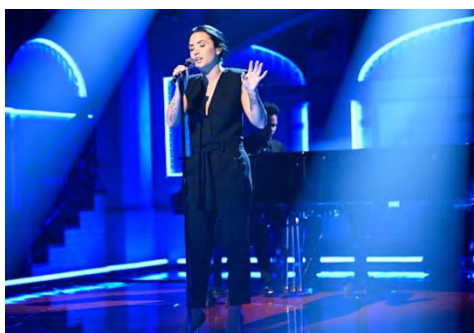
After the flood, very few of our neighbors returned to business. The task was just too large and too daunting. It actually seemed so overwhelming as to be impossible, but we never hesitated, and never once considered not returning to business. We did not lay off any workers or cut anyone's salary. Everyone pitched in and worked incredibly hard under awful conditions. They knew that the future of the business was at stake. In difficult times, the true culture and personality of the company came out and every member of the staff stepped up to do the extremely hard work to get us back on track. Some "Sandy" recovery loan money was made available to us by New Jersey and we took full advantage of it to make a serious investment in new state of the art circuit board making machinery and to build a new electronics assembly lab which allows us to make and assemble our products with great speed, accuracy, and quality.



Through my son Mike, who was working in feature films, we were introduced to Mark Friedberg who was the Production Designer of The [Amazing Spiderman 2](#), and CTI was asked to provide expertise with LED tape and dimmers. We created the LED tape effects for the major climactic battle scene of the film, and thanks to Mark's help and support just when we needed it most, we were on our way into a booming field.



Working with Stiegelbauer Associates and designers Eugene Lee and Peter Baran, we created the LED tape set lighting for the new Jimmy Fallon Tonight Show, Late Night with Seth Meyers, the new music set of Saturday Night Live, Best Time Ever, Maya and Marty, and many other important network television shows and Broadway shows.

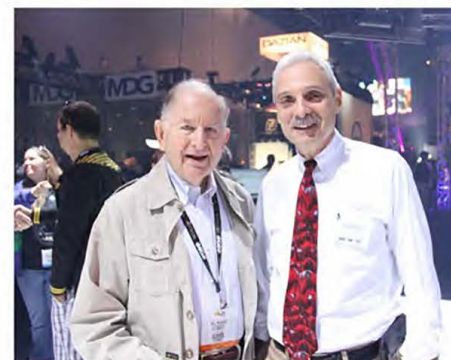
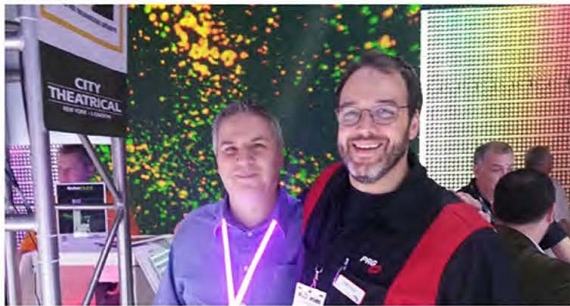


Most of all, I have enjoyed personally working on these shows and being back on stage with the crew and designers, participating in the design, and looking for new products to create to help designers and electricians do their jobs better, faster, and more artistically.

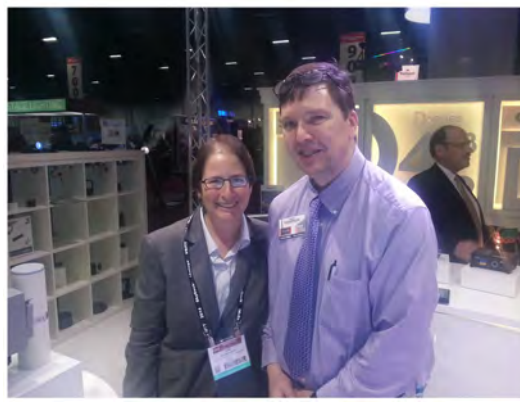


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PROFESSIONAL LED LIGHT TAPE









**ULTRA-SMOOTH
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COMPACT**

2 & 4 CHANNEL WIRELESS LED TAPE DIMMERS

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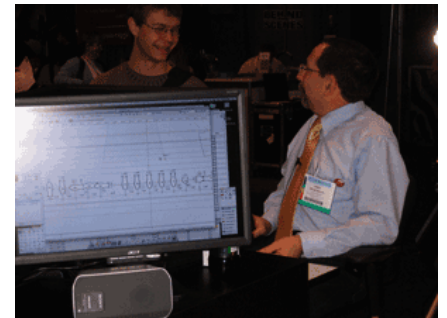
CITY THEATRICAL
NEW YORK • LONDON

SHOW SHOW Baby
CITY THEATRICAL

For Transmitter, Connect DMX IN - For Receiver, Don't

SEE OUR LINE OF
PROFESSIONAL LED
LIGHT TAPE
AND ACCESSORIES

City Theatrical has made a number of important product relationships over the years. One of our most important and long lasting was with John McKernon and his lighting paperwork program Lightwright. I was using Lightwright on every Broadway show I worked on and I knew that Broadway designers, assistants, and electricians found it essential. I contacted John and let him know how important I thought Lightwright was to the industry and that I thought that City Theatrical could be a good partner for him since we sold a range of accessory items that most shows used. Our work together began with Lightwright 3 which was the first Windows version of LW, and has moved over the last 20 years to Lightwright 4, 5, and now Lightwright 6. The program has grown and is now iconic in the lighting world and John is famous worldwide for it.



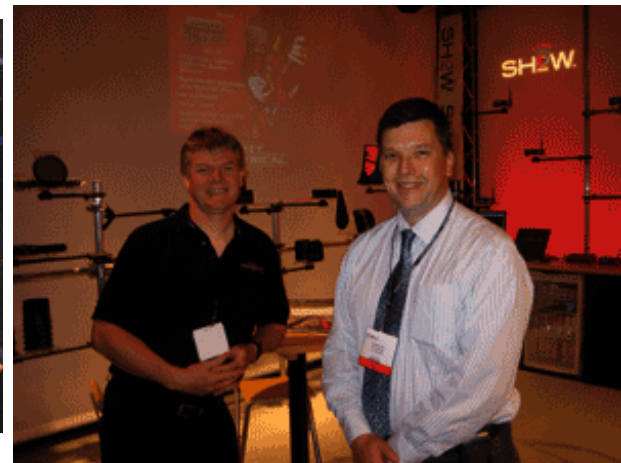
We've more recently begun a similar relationship with Andy Voller and his software program Moving Light Assistant which is gaining wide acceptance as a way of tracking moving light data on shows.



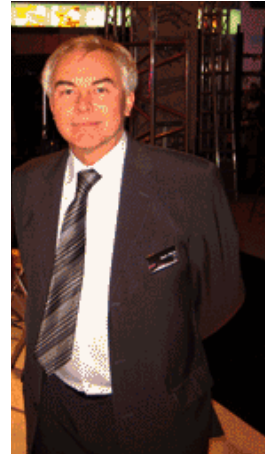
Other business relationships that have been important for CTI include Dave Johnson's Candle Lite Unlimited company and Alan Crawshaw's ACT Enterprises. Mark Lacko, Ed Gilchrest and John Laverack have together and separately provided us with world-class product development guidance for over 20 years.



Other important companies and inventors that we have worked with include Stuart Gibbons of LeMark, Phil Ion of Core Lighting, Laurie Friedlander, Chris Lewton, the late Terry Richardson, Future Light Inc., Eric Bovie, and Martin Chisnall. Besides the lighting designers already mentioned above, we have been privileged to have worked with many great designers to create products including Jules Fisher, Peggy Eisenhauer, Ken Billington, Vivien Leone, Ken Posner, Allen Lee Hughes, Mike Baldassari, and Noele Stollmack, all of whom have created or inspired products in our catalog, and many, many other designers and electricians who we have helped bring custom products to life for their shows.



We have a number of OEM relationships and all are important to us but our relationship with ETC has been special to us for over 20 years. Fred Foster has taken a real interest in City Theatrical's success and we have developed many close working relationships and friendships with ETC staff members over the years. We look up to ETC in many ways.



All companies change, grow, and develop their own culture. Around the year 2000 we began to explore a different kind of organization for the company. It is based on openness and the concept that "Those who produce the profits for the company should share in those profits." Our open book management system includes a monthly company meeting in which we print out 30 charts that show the health of the company from a variety of angles. These include a variety of financial and operational measures including revenue by week and month, profit, inventory, inventory turns, gross margin, accounts payable, and accounts receivable days outstanding, fill rate of orders, number of orders shipped, and a variety of other financial, marketing, engineering, sales, and manufacturing measurements.



The entire company can see the figures and trends before the meeting starts to better understand how we are doing and what the trends are. In the meeting we discuss our recent and upcoming events, and have an open forum for any discussion. Our UK company joins by Skype.





MANUFACTURER MEMBER

ESTA



ENTERTAINMENT SERVICES & TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATION



We as a company have a lot of celebrations and symbolic events. These range from a monthly company lunch or cookout, to monthly recognition of anniversaries of employment and birthdays, to our morning departmental huddles.

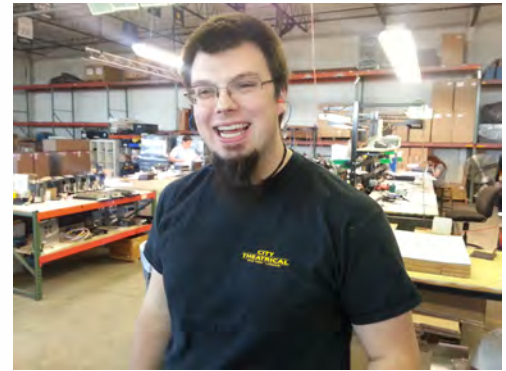
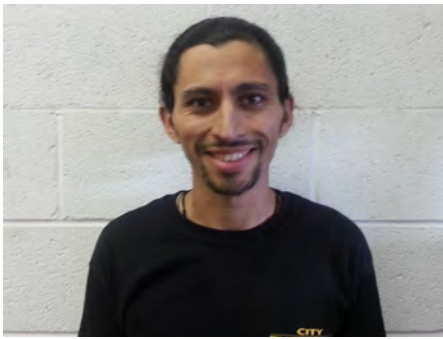


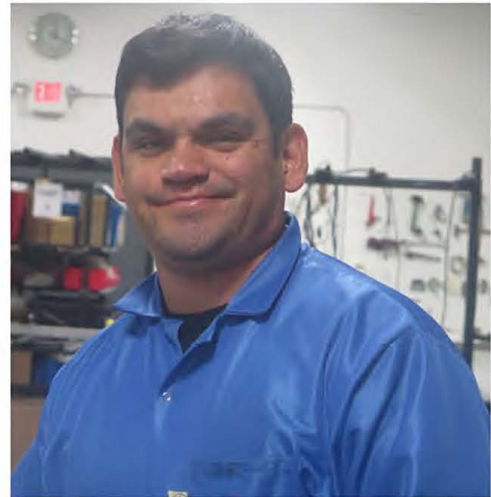
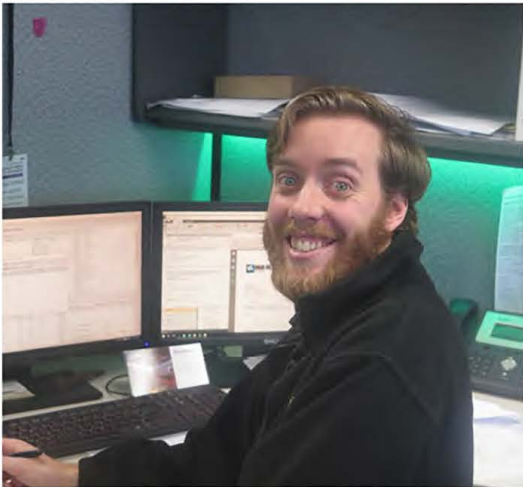
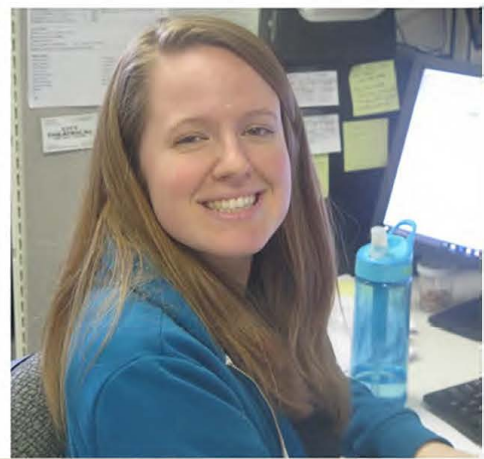
Our profit sharing payouts take place on our loading dock where each staff members is called one by one to the loud applause of the crowd to get their profit sharing check. It is our most fun celebration!

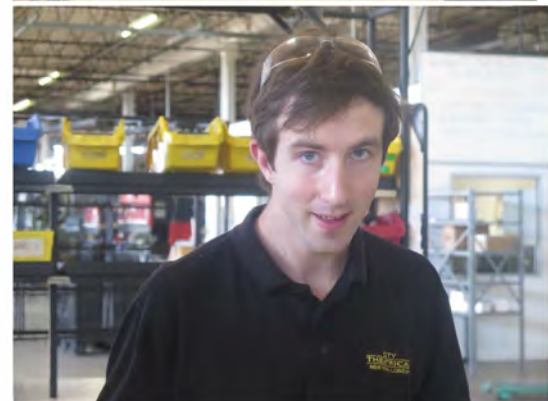
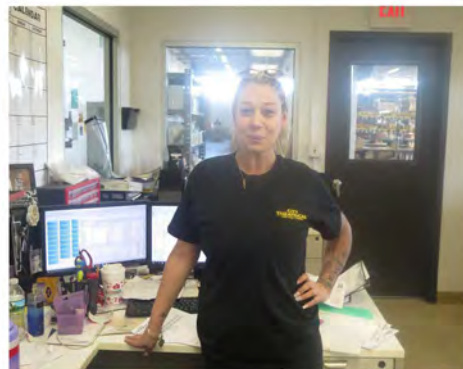


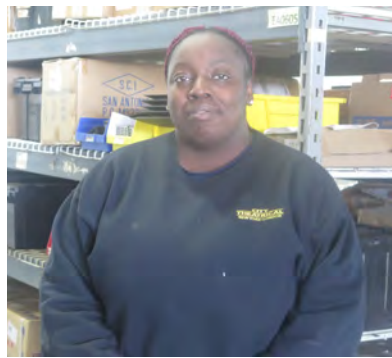


City Theatrical has incredible people , and we like to say, "We are the best we have ever been, but not as good as we are going to be." It is a company of great optimism and our staff has a great spirit.









Each month we post a Thought for the Month and discuss it at our monthly meeting, and each year we post our Thought for the Year. Here are some examples of our Thoughts for the Year:

- “Make no small plans; they have no magic to stir men’s blood.”
- “You can have anything you want, if you want it badly enough.”
- “Every great achievement was once considered impossible.”
- “Only action leads to successful change”
- “Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much.”
- “Words don’t move mountains. Work moves mountains”
- “Whatever the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve
- “Continuous improvement in the pursuit of excellence.”
- “Respice Finem” (Think of what you want in order to achieve it.)
- “Action is the foundation of all success”

We often discuss the fact that we spend more hours at work than we do with our families, so we'd better enjoy it. We have faced many incredibly good moments, and some that were pretty bad, but we always come through them with equal optimism for the future.



As we move forward we continue to build an interesting mix of sophisticated electronic products, metal lighting accessories, software, and custom electronic and mechanical products. We have an extremely highly skilled and experienced group of engineers and shop floor workers who have built thousands of projects over the years. On the near term horizon we are launching the largest advancement in the history of wireless DMX (SHoW DMX Multiverse™), a great advancement in DMX test gear (DMXcat™) and a new LED pixel control system (QolorPIX™). After that, we'll have more products that lighting users need, and that make their jobs easier, and more artistic.



QolorPIX™ LED Tape



We've included a lot of photos of our friends from over the years, and we extend our thanks to all of our friends in the industry, colleagues, co-workers past and present, vendors, customers, press, and even our competitors. You all have helped make the last 30 years a thrilling and unforgettable experience for all of us at City Theatrical.