roadway actor/singer Tituss Burgess will share his success story and offer tips to emerging performers at the 2010 SETC Convention in Lexington, KY.

In addition to serving as Friday’s keynote speaker, he also will present a musical theatre master class on Friday and will perform either Thursday or Friday night.

Less than a decade ago, it was Tituss Burgess who was in the audience watching keynote speakers and awaiting his turn to audition at an SETC convention.

“SETC gave me my start,” he said in an e-mail interview. “It was there that I would learn what the audition process was like and what it would ‘feel’ like. I learned the importance of preparation. I have to be honest, though. Everyone didn’t say ‘yes’ to me. SETC is where I learned how to process professional rejections…. My skin got tougher there, which would prove to be invaluable when I got to New York.”

A native of Athens, GA, Burgess attended his first SETC audition between his junior and senior years at the University of Georgia, where he earned a BA in music in 2001. As a result of his second trip to the SETC auditions, he scored a job at Disney World that earned him his Equity card. His move to New York came after he won his second silver medal at the American Traditions vocal competition in Savannah, GA. After his win there, Burgess was approached by a woman who, upon learning he was moving to New York, passed along the number of her best friend, who owned a talent agency there.

“I was taking the 5 grand I had won and heading up to New York the next week…. I

2009 Auditionee J. Michael Beech Cruises to Dream Job

At age 41, J. Michael Beech has worked as a performer from Florida to L.A. to New York City to North Carolina. He’s also worked for Actor’s Equity Association’s contracts department and, most recently, as a performing arts teacher in the Triangle area of North Carolina.

Last spring, after leaving his teaching job, he decided to seek work at the SETC Auditions — having scored several acting jobs through them while earning a musical theatre degree from Florida State University.

Now, thanks to an offer he received as a result of his 2009 audition, Beech is back at work, traveling the high seas, performing on an Australian cruise ship.

“I thank you for giving me the opportunity, (Continued on Page 4)
Does SETC offer any online resume posting services to help me find an offstage job?

Yes! This month, SETC will launch a new online service for people seeking offstage theatre jobs called SORT (SETC Online Resumes for Theatre). Prospective employees will be able to post their resumes online for viewing by prospective employers. Potential theatre employers, namely SETC’s professional theatre and organizational members, will be able to search and sort through the resumes to find potential hires. This new service will provide SETC companies and potential employees with an additional tool for connecting to opportunities. Here’s how it will work:

**Job Seekers:** For a $15 monthly fee (paid quarterly), you can post your resume online. (NOTE: Did you participate in Job Contact Service in Birmingham? If so, then you will receive this new service free for two months! After that, you need to renew at the above rate.)

**Hiring Companies:** SETC member organizations that attend the convention will have free access to employee resumes posted online. Any other organization wishing to use this service will need to become a member and pay a nominal yearly fee.

For more information or to find out how you can post your resume or browse existing postings, visit our website: [www.setc.org/resume/](http://www.setc.org/resume/)

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**High School Teachers: Why Should You...**

**...Nominate a Student to Attend the SETC Convention on a KEAP Award?**

Being a KEAP kid ... gave me the finances I needed to represent my organization at SETC and meet great colleges, some of which I received scholarships from since my KEAP experience. I’m thankful for the program and what it does for kids like me who want to REALLY get the full benefit of the SETC experience.

– Liz Kerlin, 2008 KEAP Award Recipient

I found it an honor to be one of just five KEAP kids in the entire southeastern region. It provided me with funds that allowed me to have a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

– Ricky Johnson, 2008 KEAP Award Recipient

**...Encourage a Student to Enter SETC’s High School New Play Contest?**

Seeing my play read was the equivalent of writing a piece of music and listening to musicians perform it. The actors brought the play to life. As a result of my winning, it inspired me to enter more local contests and develop the play itself. I am now adapting the play Gavino into a semi-historical screenplay. As well, my mentor through the conference, Mr. Todd Ristau, honored me with reading the play at his studio theatre in Roanoke, VA. I think all students should enter. The contest is a great opportunity.

– Jonathan Van Gils, 2009 winner, SETC High School New Play Award

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**SETC OFFERS SCHOLARSHIPS, AWARDS**

**Need Money to Attend Undergraduate School?**

Each year SETC accepts applications from high school students for the following scholarships and awards:

- **SETC Secondary School Scholarship**
  - $2,100 to a high school student upon entering a college or university in the SETC region to major in theatre.
  - Deadline: January 15, 2010

- **Polly Holliday Award**
  - $1,000 to a student entering undergraduate school to study theatre.
  - Deadline: January 5, 2010

**Need Money to Attend Graduate School?**

Each year SETC accepts applications for the following scholarships and awards, which are given to qualified students pursuing master’s degrees:

- **Leighton M. Ballew Award**
  - $3,300 to a student pursuing a graduate degree in directing.
  - Deadline: January 15, 2010
  - Info: [www.setc.org/scholarship/ballew.php](http://www.setc.org/scholarship/ballew.php)

- **Robert Porterfield Award**
  - $3,400 to a student entering graduate school for the first time to pursue a degree in theatre.
  - Deadline: January 15, 2010

- **Marian A. Smith Award**
  - $2,300 to a student pursuing a graduate degree in costume design and/or technology.
  - Deadline: January 15, 2010

- **William E. Wilson Award**
  - $6,500 to a high school educator pursuing a graduate degree in theatre or speech and theatre.
  - Deadline: January 15, 2010

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The **Keynote Emerging Artists of Promise (KEAP) Award** is presented annually to high school students who show promise in theatre and would benefit from receiving a grant to attend the SETC Convention. Nomination deadline: Jan. 15, 2010. More Info: [www.setc.org/awards/keap.php](http://www.setc.org/awards/keap.php)

ETC is embarking on a new stage in its growth this fall, as we begin work on a strategic plan for the organization.

After extensive research and interviews, SETC has engaged Bill “Mitch” Mitchell, president of MITCHELLworks LLC, to lead us through a timely, critical examination of our organization. Mitch, who has more than 25 years’ experience in arts management and arts education, replaces Angelina Corbet, who was initially hired as our consultant but was unable to fulfill the responsibilities within the required timeline.

Mitch’s expertise in strategic planning, board development and management will help us as we examine with fresh eyes our mission, goals and organizational structure.

Although Mitch will provide structure and leadership, it is our organization (including Board of Directors members, committee chairs, Central Office staff and you) that will do the hard work – asking questions, gathering cumulative insights and making decisions on future goals and courses of action to support and advance SETC’s mission.

Our work begins at the fall Board meeting in Charlotte. At next year’s March convention, the Board will share the results of the process to that point. All members will have the opportunity to discuss the results, ask questions and provide feedback on the findings that flow from the strategic planning process.

We begin our close look at where we are and where we want to go from a position of strength and excitement about the future. Taking a fresh look at our mission, goals and structure is essential if we are to continue to build on the momentum of our dynamic membership, stay sensitized to the needs of our constituency, and continue to nurture the art form we all love.

If you have questions about this process, please come to the meeting noted in the box at right. Of course, please feel free to contact me any time if you have questions or input. We’ll continue to keep you posted.

Questions? Ideas?
Do you have questions about our strategic planning process? Or do you have convention program ideas? Members attending SETC’s Fall Meetings in Charlotte are invited to talk with President Beth Harvey and Program Chair Alan Litsey on Sunday, September 13, from 10 a.m. until noon. The meeting will be held in the Omni Hotel; room location will be announced at Friday’s Advisory Council meeting and Saturday’s Board of Directors meeting.

FALL GRADUATE SCHOOL AUDITIONS & INTERVIEWS
Saturday, September 12, 2009 Charlotte, NC

Who should attend? Actors, designers and techies seeking Fall 2010 grad school admission who would like to connect early with school representatives from theatre graduate programs.

SCHOOLS ATTENDING (as of August 24, 2009):
- Florida Atlantic University
- George Washington University
- Louisiana State University
- Louisiana Tech University
- New York Conservatory for Dramatic Arts
- Rutgers University
- Southern Illinois University Carbondale
- Stella Adler Studio
- University of Central Florida
- University of Louisville
- University of North Carolina at Greensboro
- University of North Carolina School of the Arts
- University of Southern Mississippi

WANT TO WALK-IN?
Registration closes Sept. 1. However, walk-ins may be accepted at the auditions if spaces become available. Visit www.setc.org/auditions/fallgraduate.php on Thursday, Sept. 10 for information on walk-in availability. Questions: Contact Hardy Koenig at hardy@setc.org or 336-272-3645.
Tituss Burgess  
(Continued from Page 1)

got to the city and called the agency. She had already been briefed on me. She signed me on the spot,” Burgess says. He is quick to add that such instant success in securing an agent is not the norm. “THIS DOES NOT HAPPEN,” he notes in capital letters.

Within a year and a half, he had landed his first Broadway show, the Beach Boys musical Good Vibrations in 2005. Most recently, he portrayed Nicely-Nicely Johnson in Guys and Dolls on Broadway. “That was the first classical musical theatre piece I had ever done,” he says. “I learned a great deal.”

J. Michael Beech  
(Continued from Page 1)

and I am proud to be a member of the SETC success community!” he wrote in an e-mail. When he arrived to audition at the SETC Convention in Birmingham last spring, Beech says he felt a bit of deja vu.

“When I walked through the doors at the convention center in Alabama, tons of memories came flooding back,” he says. “Wow. Things have changed and yet stayed the same. I thought the process was so well-organized, and it was so easy to go through the registration process.”

Beech, who previously appeared in the national tour of Forever Plaid and earned his Equity card from work at Surflight Theatre in New Jersey, thought his audition went well. But he got only seven callbacks. He worried that his Equity status might have hurt him in a time when hiring by Equity companies is down due to the economy. He had all but given up on a job when his phone rang in June.

“It was Peter Grey Terhune Entertainment, the last company I had a callback for at SETC,” Beech wrote in an e-mail. “I had gone in to sing for them at 11:30 p.m.…They were offering me a job as a guest entertainer on board one of the Princess ships out of Sydney, Australia! How awesome is that?!”

I will be performing as a guest entertainer, which means that I will primarily be singing and dancing, and will not have to do the other duties involved with cruise ship work (no cruise staff duties). I get my own cabin, a nice salary, and passenger status, which means I can come and go as I please in the different ports of call. I will be learning six different revue-type shows, and there is an opportunity to perform my own cabaret as well.”

After rehearsals in Florida in August, Beech has now joined the ship. For updates, check out his blog at www.downunderjmi-chael.blogspot.com.
STATE NEWS

ALABAMA
College/University Event: University of Montevallo
Montevallo, AL
Convention Festival: Oct. 16-17, 2009
Auditions: Oct. 17, 2009

High School Festival:
Troy University, Troy, AL
Dec. 3-5, 2009

Community Theatre Festival
Pell City Center, Pell City, AL
Oct. 24-25, 2009

Auditions Coordinator:
Jen Nelson Lane
University of Montevallo
Montevallo, AL
W: 646-270-8268
E-mail: mnelson@alamo.edu

SETC State Representative:
Michael Howley
Alabama State University
Montgomery, AL
W: 334-229-4278
E-mail: mhowley@alasu.edu

GEORGIA
Convention/Auditions:
Columbus State University
Columbus, GA
Auditions: Oct. 16-17, 2009

Auditions Coordinator:
Kimberly Garcia
Columbus State University
W: 706-507-8406
E-mail: garcia_kimberly@columbusstate.edu

SETC State Representative:
Kathy E.B. Ellis
Kentucky Alliance for Arts Education
Louisville, KY
H: 502-897-3314
E-mail: theatrekate@gmail.com

MISSISSIPPI
Convention:
Tupelo Community Theatre
Tupelo, MS
Jan. 14-17, 2010

Auditions:
Hinds Community College, Raymond, MS
In-State: Dec. 5, 2009
Out-of-Region: Dec. 6, 2009

Auditions Coordinator:
Alison Stafford
Hinds Community College
Tupelo, MS
W: 601-857-3267
E-mail: a Stafford@hindsc.edu

SETC State Representative:
Tom Booth
Tupelo Community Theatre
Tupelo, MS
W: 662-844-1935
E-mail: 1tb@bellsouth.net

NORTH CAROLINA
Convention/Auditions:
Greensboro College
Greensboro, NC
Convention: Nov. 19-21, 2009
Auditions: Nov. 20, 2009

Auditions Coordinator/
SETC State Representative:
David Schram
Greensboro College
Greensboro, NC
W: 336-272-7102 x243
E-mail: schramd@greensboro.college.edu

SOUTH CAROLINA
Convention/Auditions:
Coastal Carolina University
Conway, SC
Auditions: Nov. 14, 2009

Auditions Coordinator:
Dale Savidge
North Greenville University
Tigerville, SC
W: 864-977-2081
E-mail: dsavidge@ngu.edu

SETC State Representative:
April Daras
Davis and Elkins College
Elkins, WV
W: 304-637-1360
E-mail: darasa@davisandelkins.edu

Do You Live or Go to School Outside the Region?
If you are located outside SETC’s 10-state region and wish to audition, check the chart below for your audition location. The state where you go to school (students) or reside (non-students) determines your audition site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audition Site</th>
<th>Out-Of-State States Auditioning At This Site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>Arizona, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td>Ohio, Pennsylvania</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More Info: www.setc.org/auditions/screening.php

FLORIDA
Convention/Auditions:
Lakeland Center, Lakeland, FL
Convention: Nov. 11-14, 2009
Auditions: Nov. 13-14, 2009

Auditions Coordinator:
Des Gallant
Florida Atlantic University
Boca Raton, FL
W: 561-297-3872
E-mail: dgallant@fau.edu

SETC State Representative:
Steve Bayless
Gibbs High School
St. Petersburg, FL
W: 727-893-5452
E-mail: baylesss727@aol.com

KENTUCKY
Convention/Auditions:
Morehead State University
Morehead, KY

Auditions Coordinator:
Tim Davis
Bluegrass Community and Technical College
Lexington, KY
W: 859-246-6672
E-mail: woundedeagle8@yahoo.com

SETC State Representative:
H.Duke Guthrie
Valdosta State University
Valdosta, GA
W: 229-333-5820
E-mail: d guthrie@valdosta.edu

MISSOURI
Convention/Auditions:
University of Missouri
Columbia, MO
Convention: Nov. 16-21, 2009
Auditions: Nov. 18-20, 2009

Auditions Coordinator:
Krista Wiser
University of Missouri
Columbia, MO
W: 573-882-4561
E-mail: k wiser@missouri.edu

SETC State Representative:
Bobbie Beddow
Missouri State University
Cape Girardeau, MO
H: 573-651-5874
E-mail: b b eddow@missouri.edu

TENNESSEE
Convention/Auditions:
Wesley Theatre, Tennessee Tech
 Cookeville, TN
Convention: Oct. 22-25, 2009
In-State Auditions: Oct. 24, 2009
Out-of-Region Auditions: Oct. 25, 2009

Auditions Coordinator:
Meleia Lewis
Austin Peay State University
Clarksville, TN
W: 931-221-6297
E-mail: michaela@apsu.edu

VIRGINIA
Convention/Auditions:
Reston Hyatt
Reston, VA
Convention: Oct. 30-Nov. 1, 2009
Auditions: Oct. 30-31, 2009

Auditions Coordinator:
Wesley Young
Radford University
Radford, VA
W: 540-831-5484
E-mail: wyoung@radford.edu

SETC State Representative:
Kimberly Kemp
Massaponax High School
Fredericksburg, VA
W: 540-710-0419
E-mail: kemkiperm@yahoo.com

WEST VIRGINIA
Convention/Auditions:
West Virginia University
Morgantown, WV
Convention: Nov. 6-7, 2009
Auditions: Nov. 7, 2009

Auditions Coordinator:
Jeff Ingman
Fairmont State University
Fairmont, WV
W: 304-367-4741
E-mail: jingman@fairmontstate.edu

SETC State Representative:
Leslie Dellinger
Lexington High School
Lexington, SC
H: 803-957-9863
E-mail: lgdellinger@aol.com
MTI Launches New Website Dedicated to Musical Theatre Networking

Music Theatre International has launched a new web site called MTI ShowSpace (www.mtishowspace.com), with the tagline “Where Theatre People Click.” In announcing the new site, Allison Ravenscroft, a spokesperson for MTI, noted that people in bands congregate on www.myspace.com, those wanting to network can click on www.linkedin.com and those searching for old friends can click on www.facebook.com. MTI ShowSpace is a “new free networking site dedicated to those who love and live musical theatre.”

Cutting Costs by Cutting Colleagues: Legal Can’s and Cannot’s

There probably isn’t a single theatre in the country that has not taken a red pencil to its budget and cut some expenses this year. Staffing costs, one of the biggest budget items, are usually among the first areas to see cutbacks.

As you grapple with layoffs, reductions-in-force, furloughs, cutting employee benefits and perquisites, you’ll be brushing up against at least three areas of the law: contract, discrimination (especially age), and unemployment compensation.

To keep yourself on the right side of the law, you need to consider three key questions:

**IS THERE A CONTRACT?**

Before you can change the terms of a person’s employment, you need to determine if there is an employment contract in place that specifies the length of employment or other terms.

In general, an employment contract must be in writing. In addition to the information spelled out in a document titled “contract,” there may be enforceable terms in a job offer letter or in a personnel manual. You have to abide by the terms of any such contract – but remember that contracts can be modified by mutual agreement. If an employee agrees to a change in terms, be sure to have him or her sign an agreement to that effect.

What if there is no contract? When employees are “at will” (no contract is in place), you can terminate them for good reason, no reason or even for a bad reason (although I wouldn’t recommend bad reasons) as long as you aren’t violating a specific law or regulation.

Dan Ellison is a Durham, NC-based attorney who has concentrated on arts-related law and nonprofit law for 15 years. He is a past president and the current executive director of the North Carolina Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts. Have a question? E-mail him at: artandmuseumlaw@aol.com.

**THE WEB, THE LAW AND PEOPLE**

Arnold Breman has been named as the new managing director of the Orlando Shakespeare Festival.

SETC region individuals and plays won a number of awards at the American Association for Community Theatre’s AACTFest ’09 in Tacoma, WA, in June. Catfish Moon, produced by Starkville Community Theatre (MS), received the Outstanding Ensemble Award and the Backstage Award. Krista Vowell received the Outstanding Supporting Actress award. Lauren Antista received the Outstanding Featured Actress award for her role in Theatre A La Carte’s (Tallahassee, FL) production of Nine. Murray Chase was named a fellow of AACT, and his theatre, Venice Theatre (FL) received the Twink Lynch Award. Ginger Heath of Monroe, NC, was named vice president of marketing for AACT.

**MTI Launches New Website Dedicated to Musical Theatre Networking**

I wanted to know more about the site. Jason Cocovinis, MTI’s director of marketing, sent me five pages of information, including a well-developed mission statement: “Our goal was to create a place where people from the amateur and professional markets around the world actively engaged in producing live theatre could support and encourage each other.” In addition, Cocovinis says, “we want to encourage people who like theatre to support productions in their area.” Now everyone’s aboard.

MTI Showspace utilizes the www’s social networking revolution not only to give theatre people a place to communicate with each other but also to make MTI’s vast resources available to members. It may be good for business, but it is also very good for everyone from producers to techies.

On the site, you’ll find “Forums” where members can share information and ideas. You will also find “Community Rentals” where groups can advertise scenery or props available for rent or purchase. Likewise, members can advertise their need for specialty props and other items. Features also include places to ask questions (and you may answer if you know the information) about selecting or putting on a MTI show.

“Users can connect with educators for best practices on producing the school musical and using your show to enhance your classroom curriculum,” notes Cocovinis. Community theatres also can brainstorm needs and issues.

Really, there is too much on MTI’s vibrant site to cover in the small space of this column. Do visit the site and see for yourself.

Don Wolfe can be reached at wolfe@waketon.edu.
Boost the Value of the Arts in America? Try These Innovative ‘Imports’ from Europe

I have just returned from a sabbatical to France and England where I found some interesting cultural differences. In those countries, the arts are considered a necessity of life. People place value on the arts and focus on fully integrating art into the culture.

Some examples I would like to share:
• Discounts for young adults. In Paris, senior citizens don’t get discounts. Instead, reduced prices are offered at some museums for people 26 years and younger.
• Free admission for the unemployed. A fellow U.S. citizen working in Paris shared another amazing story: In France, if you are on unemployment, part of your package is FREE admission to the museums. I was not able to confirm what he told me, so I don’t know if what he said is accurate.
• Even if it isn’t correct, isn’t it an innovative idea worth investigating in this country, whether the free admission was offered by the government or by arts organizations themselves?

Embrace Life to Become a Well-Rounded Theatre Professional

I have always loved the diversity that theatre provides. It is what I studied in college and have continued to pursue for the past 26 years. I’ve worked in various roles including stage manager, technician, and producing artistic director.

The University of North Carolina School of the Arts (UNCSA) Southeastern Regional Entertainment Technology Technology Conference will be held on the campus in Winston-Salem Oct. 8-10. The conference will include presentations of Cirque du Soleil techniques and systems. More info: http://faculty.uncsa.edu/techconference

Difficult economic times have prompted the Hayes Performing Arts Center and Blowing Rock Stage Company in North Carolina to suspend operations temporarily. Kenneth Kay resigned, effective September 8, as interim executive director and producing artistic director.

Cumberland County Playhouse in Tennessee received a $50,000 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) grant via the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Engaging audiences in the lobby.
At the Picasso Museum in Paris, artist Daniel Buren has created an installation that puts you, the viewer, into a “cubism” painting. I’ve included a photo link here to show the exquisite architecture of the mansion-turned-art-museum and another link here to show what one views when looking at the installation of metallic, mirrored walls. It was about an integrated experience.

It makes me wonder, how we might alter our lobbies to engage the audience before they enter the “theatre.”

Involving audiences in creating theatre.
At Stratford-on-the-Avon in England, we toured the Courtyard Theatre (since the Swan is under reconstruction until 2010). At the end of the docent’s tour, a notable theatre employee engages the group of 25 in a dialogue. We were lucky enough to get Flip Tanner, the technical project coordinator who acts as a liaison between the theatre staff and the architects/builders of the Swan.

He described for us how the Courtyard was built temporarily to the specs of what the new Swan would follow. Then, based on 18 months of feedback from interested parties (ranging from audience members to actors), alterations were made in the Swan’s design. From minutia to large shifts, the living model informed the new theatre. Changes included decreasing the space between the auditorium side walls and the stage to improve the acoustics (no mics anywhere). The actors weighed in to determine the color of dressing rooms and whether beds would be helpful or not. Talk about engaging all stakeholders!

We can’t necessarily build new theatres by creating life-size models – but the Swan example is inspiring and raises the question: How can we make our audiences part of decision-making, thus engaging them beyond the occasional show? You can find a couple of photos of the Swan under construction and the Courtyard from the stage here.

So how does marathon running connect with my work in theatre?
First, a good actor fully commits to achieving an objective, acknowledges the obstacles, and chooses tactics to overcome the obstacles. So, too, does a marathon runner.

Second, running, like acting, demands that you pay attention to and live only in the present. The only thing that matters while running is now. How do my legs feel now? How is my breathing now? How does my foot hit the ground now? I modify the “now” in order to affect the future. I do not end-game and think about the two hills that I have yet to tackle, not when I am running by a small stream; I don’t alter this strategy.

Finally, the unpredictability of the exotic places where I travel keeps me open to new experiences and in a constant state of wonder and curiosity – necessary qualities of an actor.

What do you do in addition to theatre? Explore and expand your repertoire. Remember: Your life off stage helps prepare you for life on stage.
Is Your Theatre Ready for the Wireless Microphone Changes?

by James Palmarini
National Arts Education Policy Liaison Editor, Teaching Theatre Educational Theatre Association

The Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC) 2008 White Space Order will spell big changes for wireless microphone users – including those working in professional, educational and community theatre.

The order, which refers to the radio frequencies used by wireless microphones, was part of the transition to digital broadcasting that was implemented for television stations in June. Older microphones operate in the 700 MHz bandwidth; new ones work in the 470 to 698 MHz range.

Most manufacturers began to recalibrate their new microphones in 2007, when it became clear what the FCC’s plans were, and virtually all U.S. manufacturers and audio rental houses have converted to the new systems.

The 700 MHz frequency range was purchased by several commercial electronic firms who intend to market a new generation of handheld wireless devices that will operate in the bandwidth.

Many theatres, however, are continuing to use older wireless microphone systems in the 700 MHz bandwidth. Although a coalition of performing arts and professional sports organizations has challenged the White Space Order in court, the expectation is that wireless microphones operating in the 700 MHz bandwidth will be illegal in the near future. If your theatre still uses the 700 MHz bandwidth, you will need to upgrade your equipment at that time. (See box above for information on rebates available on purchases of new wireless microphones.)

Performing arts groups remain concerned about the new bandwidth. This new frequency is also occupied by television stations and unlicensed handheld devices (such as PDAs and cell phones). The concern among wireless microphone users is that the increased number of devices in this frequency, especially in heavy-use markets, raises the potential for audio interference during public performance. Currently, the FCC has put aside two channels for wireless devices, but has not made provisions to license wireless microphone users and, therefore, make them eligible for a proposed geo-tracking database that will allow for tracking frequency availability in a channel.

In July, a coalition of representatives involved in the court petition objecting to the FCC ruling met with FCC attorneys and the Commission’s technical personnel in an attempt to resolve concerns about the new bandwidth. The group reiterated its petition position that millions of wireless microphone users would have no protection from interference if they were not granted licenses and made eligible for registration in a database.

One of those that attended the meeting was Henry Cohen, who operates Production Radio Rentals in New York. He said afterward: “I hope this gets worked out to everyone’s satisfaction, but the fact is, the manufacturers bought the band space and have the legal right to demand that wireless mic users stop operating there. What they don’t get is that audio interference is a lot bigger deal for a theatre show than it is for some guy on his cell phone.”


2010 Theatre Symposium Examines Relationship Between Theatre and Film

Can we enrich our understanding of theatre by examining the related art of film? Has the greater popularity of film made theatre scholars and practitioners overly defensive in asserting the unique aspects of live theatrical performance? Given the exact reproducibility of film, along with transferability to video, DVD and the Internet, movies are widely available. Beyond ease of access, do theatre and film make significantly different demands on audiences?


Theatre Symposium is a scholarly meeting held annually by SETC. Selected papers from the event are published in the journal Theatre Symposium. The 2010 event, to be held April 9-11 at Agnes Scott College in Decatur, GA, is being planned by J.K. Curry, chair of the Department of Theatre and Dance at Wake Forest University. Curry will also serve as editor of the volume of Theatre Symposium devoted to theatre and film.

Watch for the call for papers in the next issue of SETC News. If you have questions, e-mail Curry at curryjk@wfu.edu.

Endowment Contributions
Thanks to Don Loeffler for a contribution to the SETC Endowment Fund.