

THURSDAY, JANUARY 11, 2007

KA Lighting Department gets ETCP certified

As we've already heard, KA will soon undergo an exciting new re-branding campaign in the coming weeks. Listen in pre-shifts tomorrow to learn more about how MGM Grand's Cirque show is set to make another grand debut. In the meantime, let's turn the spotlight on the KA Lighting Department and its newly certified employees.

- That's right. The KA Lighting Department is proud to announce that Lighting Technicians Nils Becker, Chris Kortum and John "J.T." Taylor are the first of their kind. They are ETCP certified entertainment electricians. (ETCP stands for Entertainment Technician Certification Program.)
- Last October, Nils, Chris and J.T. participated in an entertainment industry first—a certification program that proves you are a highly competent entertainment electrician. All three MGM Grand employees passed with flying colors.
- According to the ETCP website: "The intent of this [exam] is to evaluate the competency of the active field of electricians working in the entertainment industry."
- With the advent of entertainment field through cable, this certification is becoming more and more important. The intent of this exam is to ensure that the electrician has the skills and knowledge to work in the entertainment industry.

maximum Vegas. MGM GRAND.
THE CITY OF ENTERTAINMENT.

Occupancy Today:
61% (2,824 rooms)
Occupancy Tomorrow:
64% (2,997 rooms)

ENTERTAINMENT

KA
DARK through Sun., Jan. 21

HOLLYWOOD THEATRE
Hovie Mandel
(\$65 + tax & handling)
9 p.m.

LA FEMME
8 and 10:30 p.m.
\$59

GRAND GARDEN
Justin Timberlake Jan. 19
George Strait Feb. 3
Eric Clapton March 10
Rod Stewart March 17
Dave Matthews Band March 23 & 24
Josh Groban April 7
De La Hoya v. Mayweather May 5
Academy Awards May 15

STUDIO 54
10 p.m.

TABU
10 p.m.

Certification is more than a passing grade

Or, how studying can make you feel like a kid again!



WHEN THE ETCP PROGRAM WAS FIRST ANNOUNCED, my initial impression was, "It is about time!" I also wondered how a test, without a practical aspect to it, could truly measure a person's ability, and especially in such broad areas and circumstances that entertainment rigging and electricians touch. However, I decided that something was probably better than

nothing, and I certainly did not want an outside organization or the government deciding on the qualifications, so I embraced the concept wholeheartedly.

When the first rigging tests were announced I was overwhelmed with questions such as, "Do I have to know all the formulas by heart?", "How many questions do I have to get right to pass?", "What are you allowed to take in to the test, etc?" I was used to doing most rigging calculations on a laptop with a simple graphic layout. I did not need the formulas—the program did the work for me. Most of the formulas had long ago fallen through the cracks of my brain. I wondered if I had to review all the experience of over 40 years in the business. I also thought of the 150 questions on the exam. How many do I have to mark correctly to pass? Looking at it another way, how many rigging points out of 150 do I want my head rigger to get right? The answers seemed awfully obvious, but no one would speak up.

I finally decided to jump in and take the test, thinking at least then I would know where I stood. I pulled out the old books and notes and started studying. Lo and behold, I had a revelation. Even if I did not pass I had accomplished several things: I had reviewed

every aspect of rigging and felt energized. Things I had forgotten were now in the forefront of my brain again. Details I had missed learning earlier were now part of my knowledge. Even without taking the tests I was already a better rigger. At that point, I felt like a kid fresh out of college, that I knew everything. But again, a funny thing happened. When I took the tests, and was uncertain of the answers to a few questions, I immediately went searching for those answers to fill in the gaps in my knowledge. At that point, I almost did not care whether I passed the tests or not. I was ready to rig anything.

Some weeks later I received the notice that I had passed both rigging exams. I felt a sense of pride, because I knew that I deserved the certifications. Perhaps I did not know every answer to every rigging question off the top of my head. But I certainly knew what my limits might be; and I knew I would be able to recognize any situation when I might need further information, or might be concerned. And that is when it dawned on me, if nothing else, this information is what is really important about the exam—it makes you recognize the depth of your knowledge and understand your limits!

Since I am involved with all aspects of a production and with many different sizes of events, it seemed necessary to me to repeat the above process for the electrician exam. Perhaps the fact that I had passed both rigging exams empowered me. I was able, with very little studying, to pass the electrical exam as well. But again,

(above) The MGM Grand's employee newsletter highlights their staff members' earning their ETCP certification.

(above left) Don Earl has received triple certification as an ETCP Certified Arena Rigger, Theatre Rigger, and Entertainment Electrician.

ETCP Recognized Trainers

The following individuals have been awarded ETCP Recognized Trainer status. More information on the Recognized Trainer Program is available at www.etcpcsta.org/cert_recognized/training.htm.

Rigging Trainers

Mongo Andrews
Roy Bickel
David Boevers
Peter "Roche" Cathers
Olan Cottrill
Harry Donovan
Jay Glerum
Jerry Gorrell
Kelly Green
Delbert Hall

Rocky Paulson
G. Anthony Phillips
Eddie Raymond
Bill Sapsis

Electrical Trainers

Richard Cadena
Jerry Gorrell
Alan M. Rowe
Ken Vannice
Richard A. Wolpert

ETCP Exams at LDI 2007 in Orlando, FL

Electrical Exam | November 16, 2:00 p.m.

Arena Rigging | November 17, 9:00 a.m.

Theatre Rigging | November 17, 2:00 p.m.

Applications and requirements may be found at www.etcpcsta.org and must be postmarked by October 1. Call 212.244.1505 or email certification@esta.org for more information.

Major industry employers mandate ETCP certification

Two major industry employers, Live Nation and Global Spectrum, have announced the signing of collective bargaining agreements with the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) which phase in a requirement for ETCP Certified Technicians in a variety of venues operated by the two companies.

The new agreements call for IATSE to provide the venues with an ETCP Certified Rigger at any rigging call and an ETCP Certified head Electrician. Most contracts call for a one to three year phase-in of the requirement.

The existing agreements, negotiated between Live Nation and Global Spectrum and the International, are expected to serve as models for future negotiations between the two employers and individual Locals regarding the requirements for ETCP Certified Technicians. Many IATSE Locals around the country have been actively encouraging their members to become ETCP Certified in anticipation of contractual requirements.

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ESTA
Building
the BUSINESS of
show Business

“... the exam ... makes you recognize the depth of your knowledge and understand your limits!”

studying the few areas of subject matter where my knowledge was not as complete again energized me. This time I knew before I even took the test that I would pass, and I did.

My job often takes me in and out of arenas, theatres, installs, productions, lighting, sound, video, rigging, etc. Usually I am the project manager or lead for these jobs, and I feel that it would be irresponsible of me to put myself in those positions of responsibility without knowing, and showing my clients, that I am fully qualified to be there.

I interface with many technicians over the course of a year. Many have been doing their job in the same venue for 20 years. Yet I have been surprised, more often than I would like to admit, to discover a deficiency in a tech's thinking. The most common discussion I have is about load distribution. It seems many techs think that if a truss has four motors, each one shares one quarter of the load. Another deficiency I have observed is knowledge of OSHA rules. For instance, hardly anyone understands their responsibility to know and practice fall arrest rescue, a subject where we have become very knowledgeable.

The people at my company feel the only way we can make this industry safe is by embracing this ETCP program in every way possible. Eventually, this process will create a safer industry, and also make our technicians much more knowledgeable. ■

Don Earl has been active in professional technical theatre since graduating from Carnegie-Mellon University in 1968 and is the founder of Earl Girls Inc. He has experience in all aspects of the industry from concert tours to corporate work in the fields of lighting, staging, rigging, special effects, and A/V. Don is a member of ESTA, ISES, and several IATSE locals. Most recently Don received triple certification as an ETCP Certified Arena Rigger, Theatre Rigger, and Entertainment Electrician.



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The Space Needle, Seattle, WA



Architectural
EZ Glass Lens



King Tut Touring Exhibit



Fade•Not® XFilm



MacArthur Causeway, Miami, FL

Architectural EZ Glass Lens



Poly Jelly
Jar Cover

Fade•Not® Poly Sleeves

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