

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 13, 2006

Contact: Joan Bolen
Wybron, Inc.
(719) 548-9774
joan@wybron.com

Wybron Reaches Out to Lighting Students

If you ever want to hear an interesting story, ask a lighting professional how they first got started in the industry. There are dozens of ways for young people today to discover the art of lighting, but learning from the pros is one of the best methods. Wybron recently discussed this topic with both professionals and students in an effort to help advance the future of the industry.

March 30-April 1 marked the 46th USITT Annual Conference & Stage Expo, at which

Wybron is a regular exhibitor. The United States Institute for Theatre Technology is the association of design, production, and technology professionals in the performing arts and entertainment industry and the Expo is hugely popular with the college crowd. In addition to a variety of educational sessions and award programs, students get the chance to discuss graduate programs, internships and job opportunities with representatives from dozens of colleges, universities, and theatre groups. Many exhibitors include hands-on demonstrations of their products to acquaint this crowd with various technologies.

In preparation for the Expo, Wybron researched the topic of education and professional training in its monthly online survey. The idea was to learn from industry professionals what they feel is the key to their success, and use that information to help lighting students prepare for their career. Topics ranged from the necessity of a college degree to the importance of practical experience.



Wybron showcased their new 19°-26° Profile NexeraLX at USITT. Visitors were invited to work with a console and mix their own colors.

Not surprisingly, most lighting professionals consider the experience they've gotten on the job their most valuable training. It's also what they recommend most for people starting out in the industry.

While very few said that you *can't* succeed in the lighting industry without a college degree, the vast majority agreed that college is helpful or will present more opportunities. Nearly half suggested taking non-degree lighting courses and/or obtaining an internship with someone in the industry. More than 70% feel that it is somewhat or very important to get some type of industry certification. Joining organizations like USITT and attending industry trade shows are also great ways to learn more and meet the right people. Basically, a well-rounded approach is considered the best route.

There is little consensus on what college is best for someone who wants a career in lighting. The 101 survey respondents volunteered almost 50 different schools. Yale and NYU were mentioned most frequently, followed by Carnegie Mellon and SUNY Purchase. They were more in agreement when it came to recommended majors. Lighting design, engineering, and theater got over 70% of the votes. Other suggested areas of study ranged from art to business to physics.

Whether or not a degree paved their way, a school experience did provide an important turning point for a large number of respondents. 42% said they got their first exposure to lighting during either high school or college, usually by being part of a theatre production. Some started earlier, even as young as the 2nd grade.

Responses to the question, "How did you first become involved in the lighting industry?" provide a glimpse into what makes our industry so special.

Some of the replies:

"Needed a job and a friend needed help. Kismet."

"Electrical projects in the 2nd grade"

"From a very young age, my parents were involved in amateur theatre and my uncle was a lighting operator."

“In high school, a friend had a band that was gigging so I started running their lights,
the rest is history as they say....”

“Loading trucks!”

“[I] was in a band”

“My parents were both Royal Academy painters. I couldn't draw a stick man. I needed
an expression of colour and form. I loved showbusiness and so.....”

More responses are posted at www.wybron.com.

No matter how people got started in this industry, one feeling is mutual: everyone seems to
be hooked for life. Proof enough that it's a career worth exploring.

A special thank you to those who participated in the research. The April survey is now
posted. To share your opinions and enter for a chance to win a new 30GB Apple iPod™, visit
www.wybron.com/research/.