



The Institute of Outdoor Drama

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GRANT AWARD FOR NEW THEATRE DESIGN

East Carolina University, Greenville, N.C.

The Institute of Outdoor Drama has been awarded a \$19,000 research grant which will fund the work of a group of architects and theatre designers to re-imagine a contemporary outdoor performance facility to serve performers and audiences today and in the coming decades.

“The world has changed profoundly and at an unprecedented rate in the past several generations,” said Michael Hardy, Director of the Institute, “and audience tastes, preferences and expectations have also changed enormously. The explosion of both live and electronic entertainment options coupled with a population accustomed to indoor climate control in an era of weather extremes has created real challenges for theatres who produce their work out of doors. At the same time new technologies in stage lighting, sound reinforcement, architectural materials and systems have created opportunities in theatre design which did not exist 50 years ago.”

The design project will begin this fall and will be completed in approximately six months. Its goal is to develop a design template for two theatres with seating capacities of 500-700 seats and 1200-1500 seats, complete with recommended site plan characteristics, landscape features, support spaces, equipment lists, control systems and audience amenities. The end product will be a set of guidelines, documents, drawings and models that would be available through the Institute to assist theatres and other arts groups planning new or renovated venues. This design template will not replace the need for project architects on new theatres, but it would offer them an up-to-date set of best practices to consider as they develop the next generation of outdoor performance facilities.

The project team assembled for this work includes Barry Moore, senior architect with Gensler Architects in Houston; David Weiss, veteran outdoor theatre designer/director; Robert Long, theatre consultant and co-founder of Theatre Consultants Collaborative; and Christopher Hardy, landscape architect with SWA Group in San Francisco. Advising on the project will also be Scott Parker, Director Emeritus of the Institute of Outdoor Drama and Michael Hardy, the current director.

The research grant was made by an anonymous donor in honor of David Weiss and Scott Parker.

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The Institute of Outdoor Drama was founded in 1963 and is located at East Carolina University in the College of Fine Arts and Communication. Since its inception, the Institute's scope has grown to include a wide variety of theatrical organizations around the world who perform in outdoor settings including Shakespeare festivals, historical dramas, religious dramas, renaissance festivals, dramatic and musical theatre. These organizations are united by their dedication to producing outstanding theatre in outdoor settings and their unique roles in providing exceptional entertainment and tourism attractions for their region.