THE 2018 NAMM SHOW at the Anaheim Convention Center, January 25 – 28, was ESTA’s first official foray into the NAMM world. Over the past 12 months the leadership of both ESTA and NAMM have worked many long hours to help bring the entertainment technology sector and the music world together. This was made possible by the expansion of the Anaheim Convention Center, allowing NAMM’s perennially sold out show to accommodate a new sector. ESTA had a sizable presence, not only on the trade show floor, but also in the classrooms of NAMM U.

NAMM U this year occupied five floors of the Hilton Hotel adjacent to the convention center. For the price of admission to the floor, almost all of the classes offered were free of charge. With the ESTA registration discount that came to $25! Where else can you get four days of training and education for that little? Nowhere else that I am aware.

Most [ESTA curated] classes qualified for continuing education credits for ETCP . . . at one place for $25. This was a real service to our community.

ESTA curated four tracks of training—Rigging, Lighting, Lighting Networking, and Safety—filling 94 hours over four days taught by some of the best-known instructors in the entertainment technology fields. Most classes qualified for continuing education credits for ETCP certificants, allowing them to fulfill their professional development renewal credit obligations at one place for $25. This was a real service to our community.

The Safety track looked into many areas that people in production need to consider. Day 1 began with safety for those working at height who may not be trained up-riggers, taught by Kent Jorgensen and myself. It was followed by Electrical Safety for the Stage and Set taught by Richard Cadena and Alan Rowe. The first day ended with Steve Adelman of the Event Safety Alliance discussing the Artist’s (Very Limited) Role in Emergency Planning. Day 2 began with Steve talking about Ingress and Egress in Entertainment Venues, followed by a discussion of standards as tools for safety by Karl Ruling, Richard Nix, and Mike Garl. The day ended with Steve talking about weather events and outdoor shows entitled “A Little Rain Never Killed Anyone.”

Days 3 and 4 in the Safety Track comprised the two-day OSHA 10 for the Entertainment Industry taught by members of the IATSE’s ICAP committee, Joe Aldridge, Alan Rowe, Kent Jorgensen, and myself. We have taught this class throughout the US, and it was inspiring to see fresh sectors represented in the class, all engaged and interested in improving the culture of safety.

Day 1 of the Rigging Track, curated by Bill Sapsis, consisted of Rigging Math taught by Eric Rouse and Education in Automation in Performer Flying taught by Paul Sapsis. Day 2 was an all-day affair on “Working at Height Safely” taught by Bill Sapsis and Eric Rouse. Day 3 was an all-day class on “Truss and Ground Support Systems” taught by Elmer Veith.

The Lighting Track, curated by Alan Rowe, was two days followed by two days of “Control Protocols” education curated by Michael Lay. The lighting classes began with “LED Technology: From Diode to Light” taught by Mike Wood, next was a class on “Sustainability and Cost Savings in Event Lighting” where Mike Wood was joined by Richard Cadena. Day 1 ended with “Video Production: LEDS, Fluorescents, Automated Lighting and Lighting Design” taught by Matt Ardine, Richard Cadena, Kieran Illes, David Kane, and Mike Wood.

Day 2 began with “Video Production: Power on a Shoestring” taught by Kiernan Illes, Richard Cadena, and Alan Rowe, which turned out to be very popular with the DIY music video crowd. This was followed by “Console Programming Workflow” taught by
Richard Cadena and then “Media Server Programming and Pixel Mapping,” taught by Matt Ardine and Michael Kane with a great case study of a car commercial shot for the holidays.

The first day of the Lighting Networking track started with “An Introduction to DMX512” taught by Milton Davis that segued nicely into “An Introduction to Show Networking” presented by John Huntington. The afternoon began with a session on analog control subtitled “History Repeats Itself.” The final Lighting Networking class of the day was presented by Paul Kleissler who introduced “Wireless DMX512 Networking for Lighting Techs.”

The final day of Lighting Networking upped the ante a bit with “Intermediate DMX512 and Ethernet Networking” taught by Kevin Loewen followed by “Media Server Madness” presented by Andrew Atienza. The final two classes for the day were “Advanced Ethernet Networking” presented by Scott Blair, John Huntington, and Kevin Loewen, and wrapping up a head-warping day was Scott Blair leading “Control Protocol Soup for the Soul RDM and sACN.”

As if all that wasn’t enough to satisfy, we presented the “USITT Electrical Workshop” on Sunday taught by Mitch Hefter, Jerry Gorrell, and Steve Terry.

As you can see, it was a very busy and intense four days of training and learning!

There were some registration bugs this year that we will address for next year; all of the ESTA-curated classes were filled with waiting lists a week after registration opened, but most of those people did not show up. Because those who registered later were told that the classes were full we turned people away who would have filled our classes. We are working to solve that mystery; chalk it up to trying something new and learning what works and doesn’t.

If you’ve never been to a NAMM show before, it is unique in this country. Originally for music merchants, the event has grown into a celebration of music by everyone involved. This year’s attendance was upward of 115,000 registered people, certainly one of the largest in the US. The vibe there is palpable as was noticed by many of our members in attendance. There are musical performances everywhere you turn; some scheduled so that professionals can demonstrate instruments and gear, and many more impromptu by attendees showing off their licks as they take instruments for a test ride. There was a constant energy of expectation and wonder in the attendees that was noticeable by all, including the 24 ESTA member companies who chose to exhibit.

The ESTA members exhibiting came away with an extremely positive feeling about the show, commenting about how almost all the attendees were people they have never seen before at any other show. Many of the exhibitors have not only already booked for next year, but have expanded the size of their booths as well.

Many of ESTA’s members attending the show took advantage of educational opportunities offered at the NAMM Breakfast sessions or in the Idea Center. Sessions on marketing, social media, business development, sales, and a host of other topics provided free opportunities for professional development that are simply not available at any other show.

NAMM 2019—don’t miss it!

Eddie Raymond is the immediate past President of ESTA and the retired Vice President/Training Director of IATSE Local 16 in San Francisco. Eddie currently sits on the IATSE Craft Advancement Program committee teaching the OSHA 10 General Industry Safety curriculum nationally and advising the International’s Training Trust Program on training and curricula.