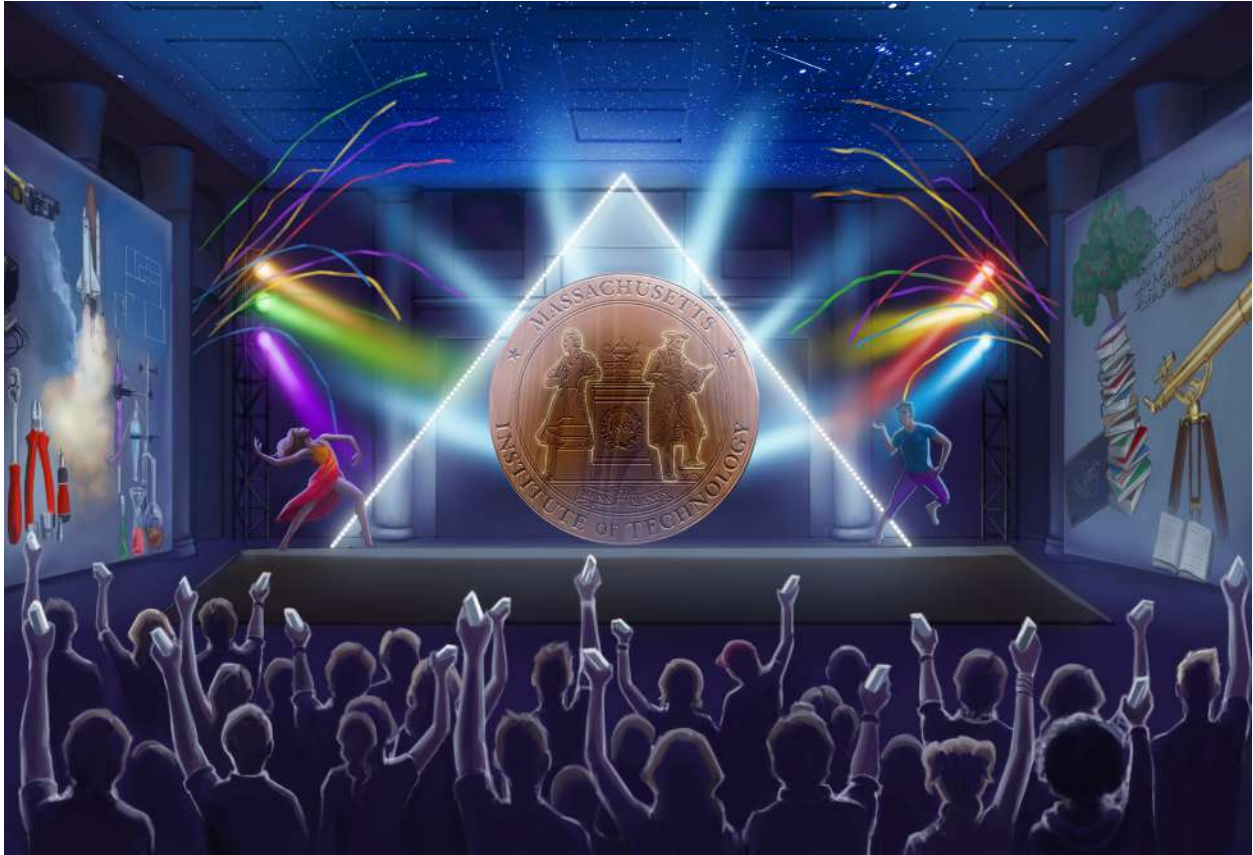


Meaning in the Making:

A Vibrant Spectacular of Mind, Hand, and Heart

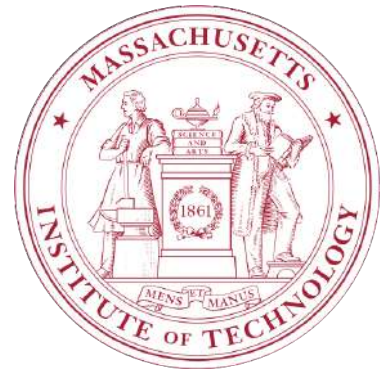


The Marvelous Synergy of Meaning and Technology

Come together as promising scientists and engineers to celebrate and examine how we can use the brilliance of our minds, the power of our hands, and the compassion of our hearts to build a bright and meaningful future.

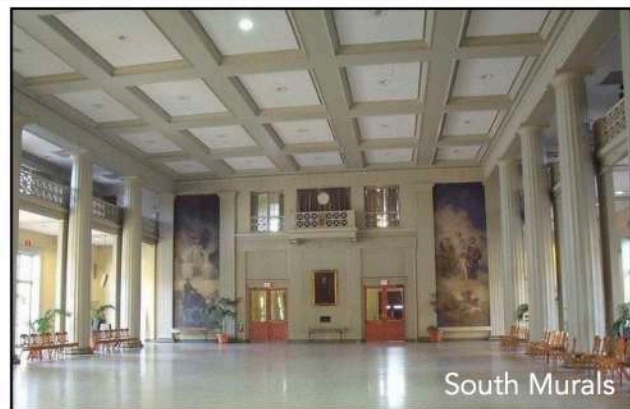
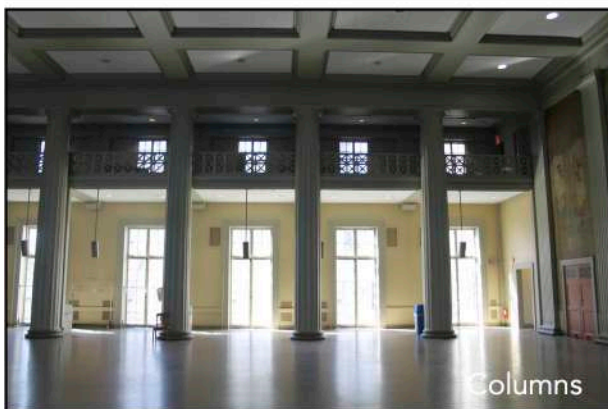
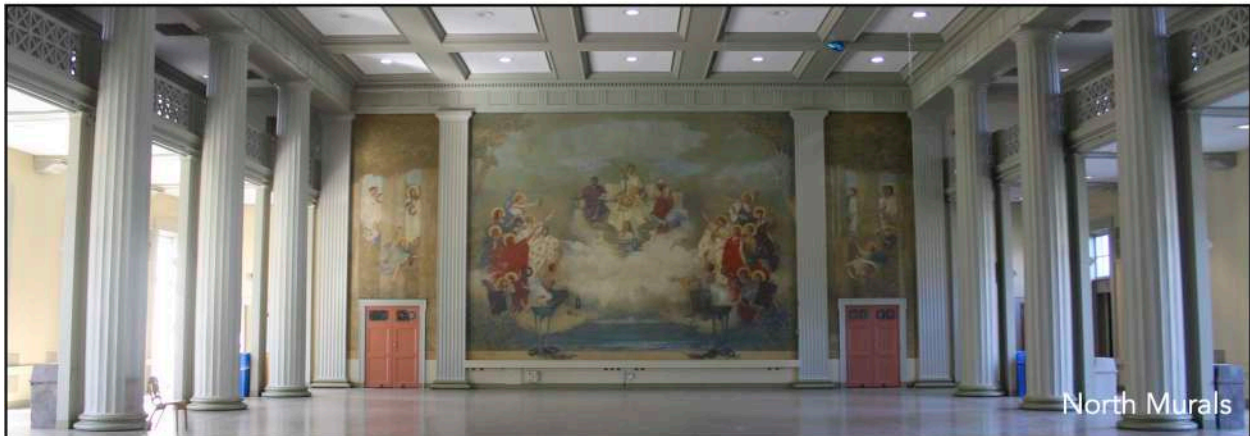
Audience Context

MIT's official motto, "Mens et Manus" ("Mind and Hand") inspired the overarching theme of the show. As someone who has already fully experienced the MIT method, I believe this motto is incomplete and should incorporate the 'heart.' The audience is intended to be MIT freshman who have likely been taught that technology results from memorizing equations, taking tests, or following instructions. The purpose of the show is to teach them, *before* they start their education at MIT, that there is a third element of the process (the 'heart') which they must always remember and incorporate into their lives and work. The show will take place on campus during orientation week.



Venue: MIT Walker Memorial, Morss Hall

Walker Memorial, Morss Hall is a 5,000 sq ft iconic event space at MIT. The venue provides an excellent location for the show, realistic production options, and a variety of unique architectural features (balconies, columns, 26' ceiling, painted murals). Important limitations are no pyrotechnics, water, flame, or heavy weights on balconies.



Thematic and Symbolic Outline

Part One: Technology as a Process

The inspiring and primeval infinity of the night sky sparkles high above to draw focus to humanity's humble beginnings. A dancer, representing mankind, approaches a large pyre of tree limbs and branches to ignite the first flame, sparking technology's birth. As the flame of human ingenuity grows and spreads, ideas and inventions plume out of the blaze to represent the unstoppable spirit of discovery. The depicted history of technology accelerates to arrive at the present day finishing with the fire burning away to reveal a glittering MIT seal, representing how time has led to the forging of a practiced process of technological innovation, "Mind and Hand." Sprightly silhouettes of mankind then bring both parts of the process to life and symbolically illustrate the process of developing the mind and practicing the hand. Following this display, the MIT seal comes alive with celebratory depictions of the process MIT has developed to educate young students.

Part Two: A Prism of Heart

Along with a reminder that technology alone is not enough, a prism of light is introduced onto the center of each posed silhouette, indicating that the prism is a metaphor for the heart. Light then refracts through the prisms to bring the silhouettes to life, symbolizing how color is what gives us our humanness. The dancers, each representing a color of the rainbow, glow with vibrance as they energetically pop up and dance to a bubbling beat and express the spectrum of human feeling. The MIT seal, representing the process of creating technology, glows and appears to be absent of color. The dancers then swirl around the seal and erect a giant glowing prism, physically representing the heart, around the seal. This symbolizes the incorporation of the heart into the technological process at all times. In a moment of silence, focused beams of light, representing reason and logic, are directed to refract through the giant prism and, as a result, splash color, representing meaning, onto the world. A triumphant tune begins as the murals come to life with examples of meaningful technology and productive collaboration, showing the positive result of combining mind, hand, and heart together.

Part Three: Our Meaning Future

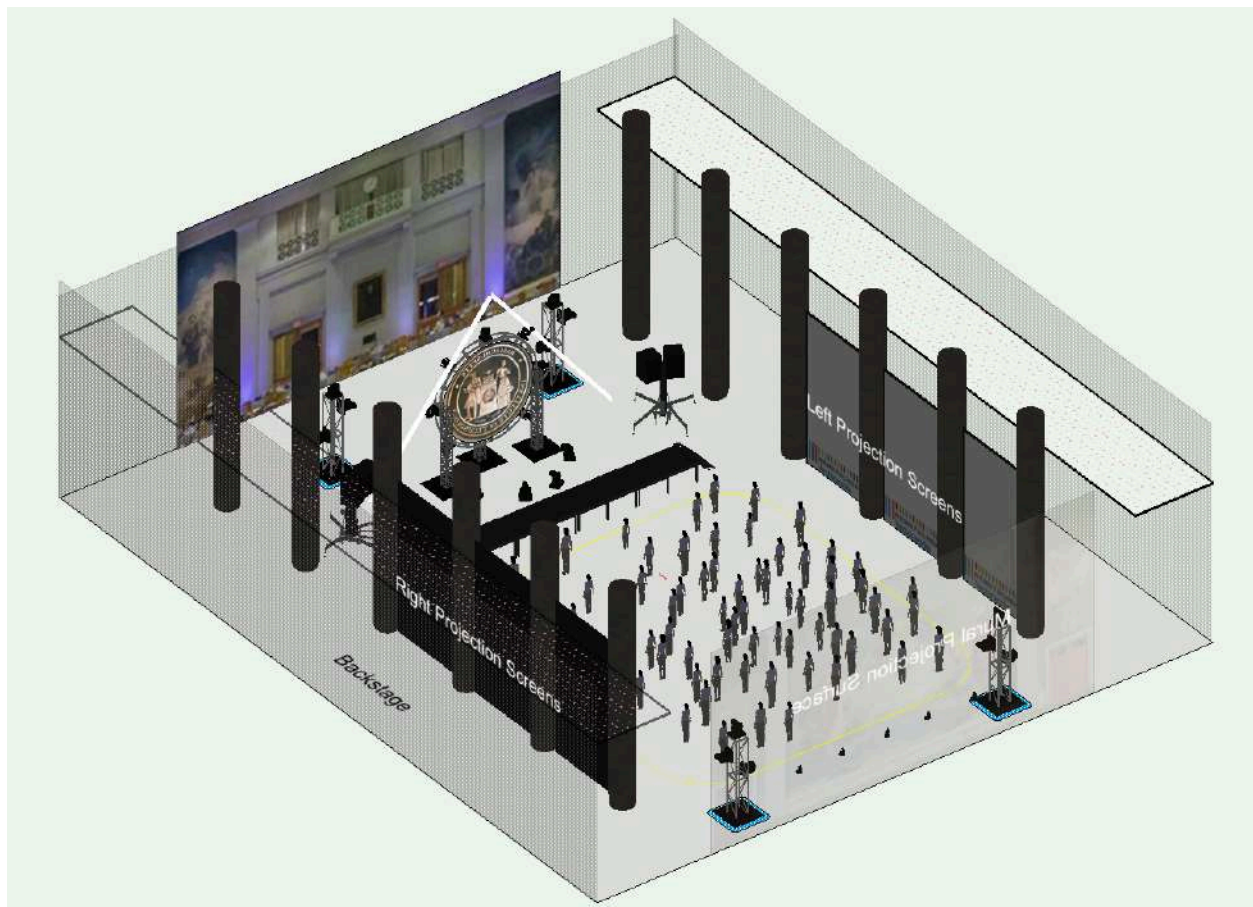
The swell of colorful meaning eventually swirls down into a multi-colored torch held by the same human figure that began the story. After a brief pause, a tune of hope begins to serenade the night as star-laden human figures encircle the audience carrying baskets of small glowing prisms to be bestowed upon the audience. The human figure carrying the multi-colored torch traverses the audience painting the architecture with colored light as they pass, representing how the flame of human ingenuity has become infused with the rainbow of the human spirit. A rising chorus accompanies sweeping visual gestures and images of the world which inspire the audience to add their own color to their life. Heavenly stars twinkle above as music swells to an ultimate focus on the mind, hand, and heart which leads to a launch of colored stars of meaning into the boundless future.

Production Elements

- 7x dancers (all-black base clothing and neon-painted shirts in the colors of the rainbow).
- Pre-existing painted-canvas murals on north and south sides of hall.
- 6x paper projection screens hung from balconies on either side between columns.
- 4x lighting/sound towers positioned at corners of hall.
- Various lights throughout space (on balconies, column bases, in front of seal etc.).
- Large circular truss structure holding 12' painted wood MIT seal embedded with LED lights.
- Raised 2' stage in front of the seal for dancers to perform on.
- Projectors: one for each set of side screens, one for seal, one for large mural.
- 2x long LED ropes/pipes and associated pulley system to build and display prism triangle.
- 4x Moving Colored CO2 Cannons/Lights.
- Collection of painted canvas strips (brown on one side, red/orange on other) to create 'pyre'.
- 4x Box fans with red/orange streamers attached, located underneath pyre.
- 400x etched acrylic 'Prisms of Heart' to be handed out to audience.

Production Layout

The general layout of the production with critical visible technical elements shown.



Pre-show:

- Dim blue, white, and brown lighting create a natural evening aesthetic around venue.
- Side projection screens depict a field on a starry night accompanied by a natural soundscape.
- Pre-existing murals on north and south sides of hall are lit with blue and orange lights.
- Seal is unable to be seen (covered in white fabric) and is encased in a 'pyre of logs' (represented by strips of painted canvas that stretch from above the seal to the floor).

Prologue:

- Gradual musical build of celestial shooting stars lead to an opening fanfare that culminates in an unexpected but dazzling sparkling of stars (projection/gobos) on the ceiling.
- A tribal drum cadence leads to a splashing of primeval orange/red light on the large mural, framing a single male dancer on riser holding their arms up towards the mural.
- Airy abstract vocals and orchestral backing accompany dancer as they turn around and walk slowly through the audience towards the large 'pyre' of logs at other end of hall.
- Female Voiceover (while dancer is walking): Introduces humanity as a character, describes process of discovering phenomena (visual: flashes lighting) and creating ways of harnessing it (visual: flashes of rock sparks), and posits that fire has since changed the world forever.
- Dancer reaches pyre, turns to face audience, and strikes flint rocks three times.

Part One: Technology as a Process

- On final flint strike, red/orange CO2 cannons explosively set the pyre aglow with light.
- Exciting Celtic musical theme of fire begins with a drum break and then proceeds to melody.
- A short, dynamic, and exciting spectacle of 'flames' accompanies the music until a slight musical modulation triggers a 'history of technology' section.
- Pleasant plumes of fire spread to side projection screens and videos and images of technological developments throughout the ages display chronological on side screens.
- Once the history reaches 2017, dancers pull off the fabric covering the MIT seal as a grand brass fanfare and panning lights introduce it to the audience for the first time.
- Female Voiceover: Introduces concept of "Mind and Hand" and describes how MIT has created this expert process of technological learning and development.
- Two short sequential sections follow: "Mind" (right side), "Hand" (left side) identical in form, different in content and each accompanied by a distinct but connected musical melody.
- Dancers, positioned behind the projection screens, are illuminated from behind, silhouetting them larger than life on the screens as they abstractly act out activities of "Mind" or "Hand."
- After both sections, silhouettes pose and a video montage of MIT faculty and students studying, working, and teaching is projected on the seal, accompanied by industrious music.
- Video montage ends with a student saying, "Mind and Hand".

Part Two: A Prism of Heart

- After a brief pause, a fun and lively baseline signals a change of tone.
- Female voiceover: Posits that our hearts give us our humanity and introduces the metaphor of a prism and how it takes the light of inspiration and refracts it into colors of meaning.

- During the voiceover, prisms are projected over the hearts of the posed silhouettes.
- White light refracts through the projected prisms to create colored swirls that bring the silhouettes to life.
- Dancers emerge from behind the projection screens and excitedly traverse the audience.
- Upon reaching the stage, lights go out and black lights turn on to reveal the performers clad in all black wearing neon-painted shirts corresponding to the colors of the rainbow.
- Dancers perform an abstract dance exemplifying the spectrum of human feeling: courage, love, fear, hope, rage, distress, and happiness. Each instinct/feeling is personified by a color through the focus on that dancer and through accompanying abstract projections/lighting.
- The MIT seal comes into focus as the dancers grab two long LED ropes beneath the stage and begin to erect them around the seal (the ropes form a triangle encasing the seal).
- Music gradually accelerates until the triangle is complete which is followed by a tense and exciting pause filled with electrical/mechanical sound effects.
- During pause, all moving lights pan towards the seal to 'focus' beams of white light through the prism while projection mapping rotates/electrifies the seal.
- Music swells as colored light whooshes across the side screens.
- The large mural on opposite wall is illuminated with a dance of colored projections, imagery, animations, and lights as a celebratory rhythmic theme takes off.
- As color spreads, videos of "meaningful" technologies fade up and spread from the mural.

Part Three: A Future of Meaning

- All video swirls into a colorful vortex that spirals into a multi-colored torch held by a dancer in the same position as the opening primeval introduction.
- A gentle musical transition leads into an inspirational song of heart, "Color your World".
- Verse 1 (you have a heart): Dancers draped in white lights and holding prisms circle audience.
- Verse 2 (it creates meaning): Dancers gesture towards walls in turn to paint them with color.
- Chorus 1 (the world needs meaning): All surfaces fill with images and videos of earth from space, diverse cultures and people, various technologies, etc.
- Chorus 2 (you will give it meaning): Chorus of voices joins soloist in hopeful build, twinkling lights on balconies ignite, dancers enter stage and dance around the seal-prism structure.
- Key change, tag: Architectural animations, continued dancing, and light choreography build.
- Final tag: Hidden LEDs outlining the "Mind" figure illuminate, then those around the "Hand" figure illuminate, then the two strips of lights making up the Prism illuminate.
- A final explosion of lights, video, and sounds crescendos to a final orchestral hit.
- Colored streamers launch into audience, lights strike final pose then majestically pan upward.

Post-show:

- Female Voiceover: Thanks audience, gives final parting message, offers prisms to audience.
- Dancers hand out 3" acrylic prisms etched with an MIT Seal (with "mens et manus" replaced with "mens et manus et cor") and the words "Put Meaning in Your Making".
- Exit music: Light, orchestral, and celestial extension of song.