

The Show Design Process

The following information is but one way to design a show. This is not suggesting that this is the only way or right way you do it. There are many organizations out there that take a different approach.

Choosing the Program

- A. What comes first, the music or the concept? Simply go with your strongest ideas. Sometimes the idea can generate the selection of the music and vice versa.
- B. Who is my audience? Are we designing for our home crowd? Competition crowd? Judges?
- C. What is the skill level of my performers?
- D. How many ideas, thoughts and concepts do I have for my presentation?
- E. Is this a program that will engage and involve my community or one that will alienate my community?
- F. How much will it cost and do the expenses still allow me to maintain a balanced program throughout the year?
- G. Am I inspired and interested by these ideas and concepts?

Having Chosen My Concept and Music, Now What?

- A. I have lots of ideas and no music or I have music and no ideas? (Don't worry, keep moving forward.)
- B. What is a "Story Board" and how do I use it?
- C. Who should be involved in developing the "story board." (Generally, your staff.)

How Do I Fill Up My Story Board?

- A. On individual note cards, write down as many visual and musical ideas that support one another as you possibly can think of; stretch your imagination and don't worry about logistics. Go into this thinking anything is possible!
- B. Now go back and see what ideas or music needs the most attention and then repeat step A.
- C. Color code the note cards, based on section (winds, percussion, guard, visual, prop)

Now, I Have My Ideas and I'm Ready to Write My Show – WRONG!

- A. Go back to your note cards, and do not go past this point until you consider the following questions:
 - I. How many different levels of emotions does my show explore?
 - II. Does this program and musical ideas allow the audience to be intrigued:
Laugh, Cry, Sing, Dance, Think, and Be Inspired?
 - III. If your program lacks these characteristics or a variety of emotional appeal, then STOP!
 - IV. Too much of any kind of effect becomes less effective and very redundant!

I've Collected Many Visual and Musical Possibilities, Where Do I Go from Here?

- A. Begin sorting through your cards and decide which effects will make it into the show.
- B. Begin placing them in a logical order that will keep your audience's interest.
- C. While considering your order of events, keep similar effect ideas away from each other.

Begin Pacing!

- A. Attach a 7-8-foot length of rope to a wall, with a piece of tape every foot. Each foot represents one minute of time in your show.
- B. Begin to clip the note cards to the rope, either based on the music you've already selected, or based off of your visual story that you plan to write music to.
- C. Continue to step back, look at the ENTIRE timeline, and make sure effects are varied, well spread out, and are laid out like a good roller coaster. Not too many ups, plunges, loops, etc. But a good variety of all these, usually apart from one another.

Now Time for You to Pull Out Your Needle and Thread! Ask Yourself the Following Questions:

- A. What is the Main objective of my program?
- B. When the show ends, how do I want the audience to feel?
- C. Is there a musical selection from my ideas that could serve as the center piece which I build my presentation around? if not, what visual motif or idea could I use to connect the presentation?
- D. Do I have a definitive beginning, that will set up my journey for the audience and "let them in" to what we're about to present?
- E. Now go to the end and select what will best conclude the presentation and give you the complete visual and musical picture of the program.
- F. Now that you have your program organized, before you begin charting this out, field test your program. Call and discuss your presentation from beginning to end with people from a variety of age groups and backgrounds. This is where you will find out whether or not your program has emotional appeal. You will learn a lot from this. Seek a master designer! You will be amazed how willing most people are help!

Begin to write your program!

- A. Make sure your music arranger, percussion arranger, and your color guard designer are all on the same page. An online resource like airtable.com lets everyone see the same living document and keeps everyone accountable to the story board.
- B. HAVE FUN! Marching Band is the one area of our profession where you get to truly create something that did not exist before. We are not just trying to sound like the UNT Wind Ensemble but creating and performing that which did not exist until we brought it to life!