

CARRY ON

FMP 2020

Overall Thoughts—the original client’s ideas are very good but are a little small scale and too specific. I think that the best approach here is to ‘scale up’ the basic concept pretty much as they had it so that it will read better in a large stadium and work better for larger ensembles as well, as well as to make the plot more general and open to interpretation. I think that the narration should be simplified to quotes from the original pop tunes as much as possible with a minimal amount of added narration. In a perfect world, sequenced, sung vocals from the pop tunes could be used, but that isn’t legal in every competitive circuit. If legal, however, that would feel most ‘modern’ and on trend with WGI and BOA right now.

The general emotional arc of the show is about learning to deal with loss and seeing the bigger picture. I see each movement like this:

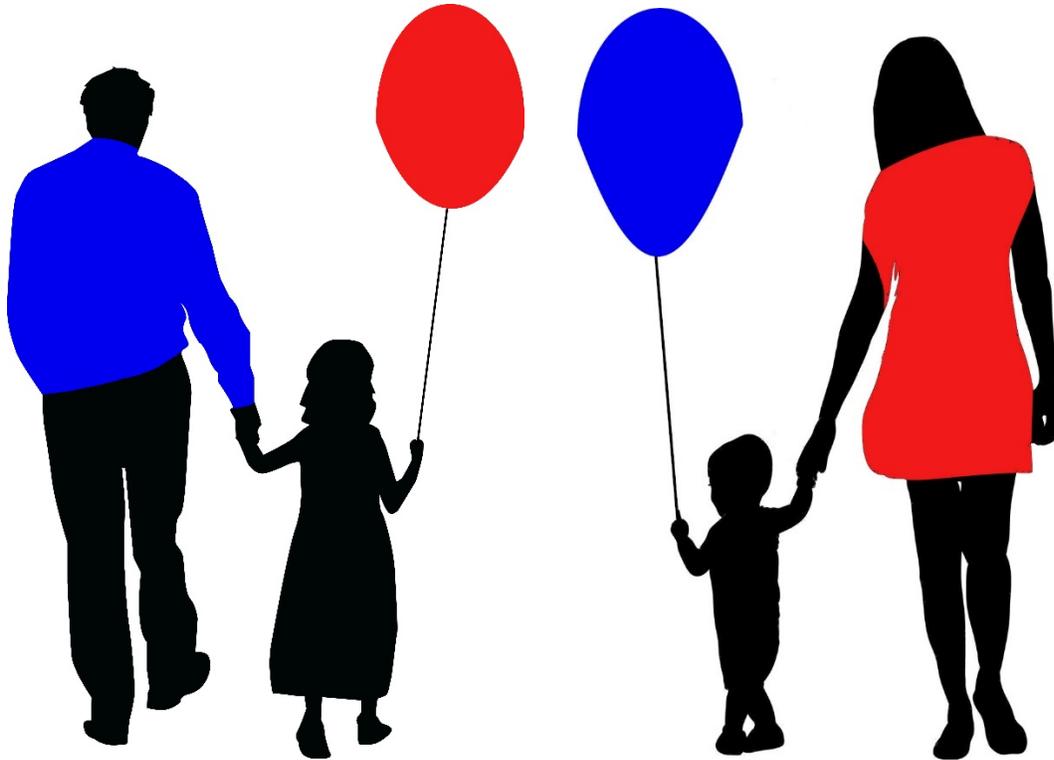
- First half of the Opener [0:00-1:36] is the idyllic innocence of childhood before you’ve lost someone—pretty colors, upbeat emotion
- Second half of Mvt. 1 is the pain and anger of loss [1:37-end of Mvt. 1]—darker palette
- Mvt. 2 is grief and acceptance of loss
- Mvt 3. Is learning to see the larger picture and, as the show title says, ‘Carry On’



Props—the show needs a way to symbolize the changing stages of grief, and I suggest using double-sided backdrops which are pushed together in pairs. The number of pairs could be adjusted depending on the size and budget of ensemble. [These from Corps Design](#) adjusted to their tallest/skinniest dimensions [4’ wide by 10’ tall’ would be ideal].

On one side, each pair would have silhouettes of a girl holding a balloon and holding hands with a man [*the graphics below are an extremely rough idea, I would put together something more polished*]. The father is on one backdrop, the girl on the other, that way they can be pulled apart to represent loss. Then, on the other side we see the girl as an adult woman holding hands with a boy who has a balloon.

The colors of the balloons, the man’s shirt, and the adult woman’s dress mark them as the same characters, but at different stages, showing how things have come full circle. The simplicity of the red and blue make things as clear as possible to the viewer without the need for extraneous narration.



Another prop element would be the use of ‘balloon on a stick’ props, red at the beginning of the show and blue at the end, for characterization. Sturdy reusable ones [are available online](#), but simple balloons attached to dowel rods would also work for next to no cost.

Guard Costuming/Silks—the guard represents the little girl growing up, overcoming loss, and becoming an adult woman who ‘carries on.’ Ideally, this would call for a uniform capable of transforming from more youthful to more adult as the show progresses, though that can be expensive so a non-transforming option for clients with a lower budget would be good to have as well. The guard uniform should be in shades of red, ideally, to communicate that they represent the little girl character.



The color silks should be in shades of the red and blue in various combinations and values. Perhaps something like the palette to the right.

If budget allows, this show calls for 4 silks:

- Mvt 1A: oversized, bright, red balloon graphic
- Mvt 1B: standard sized, darker, angrier red
- Mvt 2: oversized swing, swirling red and blue
- Mvt 3: standard, bright, blue balloon graphic

If using weapons, I would suggest using them in the second section of Movement 1 [Danse Macabre]

MOVEMENT 1

The show begins with the musical ensemble in a standard parade block on Side A, backfield, facing diagonally onto the main stage which is occupied by the color guard. The guard would begin their show with the uniform [if transforming] in its 'youngest' look and performing with red 'balloon on a stick' props. If a client's guard is inexperienced or not fully comfortable with characterization, then a single guard member chosen for that skill could take center stage here for a solo moment.

For the first musical phrase, the band proper moves towards center stage at a slow march [$\frac{1}{2}$ or even $\frac{1}{4}$ time] in their parade block, then speeds up the feet to single time as the main melody begins [0:13]. Over the main melody in the pit, this is where a sampled, sequenced vocal could be used, or alternatively where the spoken narration could be inserted: '**When I was, a young girl, my father, took me into the city, to see a marching band...**' For the next phrase or two, the band continues its stylized parade style marching while the guard reacts to their entrance with childlike happiness, moving towards their first flag silk while in character. Over the top of this, add a spoken narration in an adult woman's voice: '**...you never know which moments spent with a person will stick with you...**' At the woodwind entrance [0:38] the parade block begins to open up into more traditional drill, moving towards the first impact set. Build the impact set around a single guard member who will remain on the balloon prop, dancing and/or in character. Spread the field front stage for the largest musical impact possible with guard revealing the first silk [oversized, bright red, balloon graphic] at this point [0:58]. More skilled guards could experiment with doing work that incorporated the 'balloon on a stick' props at the same time, or perhaps partner work in which the prop and the flag are passed back and forth. Less experienced guards should probably put the balloons down while spinning.

In the Grand Pause at 1:29, insert the lyric '**...because one day, I'll leave you...**' preferably sung but otherwise as a simple narration. Then, 1:30-1:45 is a restage in which some guard will transition to new equipment and others to the paired backdrop props, while the band proper will restage towards a second, more condensed impact form for the following musical phrase. Insert another spoken narration here over the pit transition: '**...and sadly... you never know which of those moments might be the last...**' Then, at 1:46-1:57, the paired props come apart to symbolize the loss of a loved one while the hornline performs lower body choreography to emphasize the impact of the musical/emotional moment.

As the *Danse Macabre* themes take over the Movement, the guard layers in on new equipment, either all on the second silk or some on that silk and others on weapon, if applicable. The remainder of the Movement is straightforward drill and guard work to interpret the musical ideas, moving towards the final set which reconnects with one of the now split apart backdrop pairs. After the final horn release, body choreography reaches out for the lost loved one, then reacts dramatically on the final pit note at 3:31.

MOVEMENT 2

The opening, transitional pit material [0:00-0:17] serves as a restage in which the hornline form clumped groupings around the paired backdrop props. The color guard, meanwhile, layers out towards new equipment leaving some on stage to cover the transition, most likely the weapons if you used them in the Opener. Then, as the new melodic idea enters, [0:18-0:28] musician choreography reaches up towards the lost loved one silhouette on the backdrops, then freezes in a sad, pensive pose which allows the musical soloist to step out of their clump and become the visual focus at 0:29. During the solo, each

clump breaks up as the musical ideas layer in, the other musicians continuing to hold in the pose. Simultaneously, the color guard slowly begins to introduce the next silk.

By 0:58 the entire ensemble is back out and in a single, unified form which moves at first in single time, then accelerates to double time as the impact moment approaches. The form expands to fill the field for the major musical moment at 1:22.

At 1:54 the hornline form slowly dissolves, leaving the musical soloist by themselves center stage. A few guard members remain with the soloist to keep the eye while the remainder move towards the next equipment exchange. At 2:04, insert the vocal quote: **'...it's been a long day, without you my friend, and I'll tell you all about it when I see you again...'** either sung or spoken, preferably sung.

Movement 3

During the opening pit transition, [0:00-0:13] restage the hornline into woodwind and brass groupings with the woodwinds near one of the backdrop pairs close to the front and close to the first guard members to transition to the final silk. Overlay a spoken narration: **'...we'll carry on... believe me... your memory will carry on...'**

During the woodwind feature moment [0:13-0:21] the backdrop pair behind them is turned and pushed back together, revealing the adult woman with young boy to symbolize the ongoing healing and perspective gaining process. The first group of color guard to have the new silk should be staged near them, introducing that equipment. Similarly, the brass entrance at 0:24 should take place in front of a second backdrop pair who do the same on their melody, and the remainder of the guard should join the flag phrase while staged near the brass. Continue to turn and push together the backdrop pairs with exact timing dependent on their number until 0:47 at which point all should be turned and together. In the meantime, the drill should develop towards a unified arrival at that moment, drumline centered behind.

At 0:47 push forward, at first in half time, then single time after a phrase, into a version of the same parade block that the show began in by 0:58. Hold in the form for a moment, then turn slowly and begin to march out of center stage towards Side B in the same manner that the parade block entered at the beginning of the program. The color guard will take center stage, focused around a single member who brings out a blue 'balloon on a stick' prop in reference to the red one which we began the program with. Overlay the moment with a reprised of the narration: **'When I was, a young girl, my father, took me into the city, to see a marching band...'** For the final look of the show, freeze the guard in a posed group around the soloist with the blue balloon while the band continues to parade off the field.

Fin.