

CarnEVIL

FMP/SK 2021

The Concept

A traditional feeling (look/sound) circus that appears to be normal but is not what is expected. As the show progresses, the colorguard (main characters), reveal a much darker culture that lures in the musicians systematically transforming each section of the band to be one of their own. By the end, there is a celebration of this metamorphosis in a “horror film meets Bollywood” sort of way. If you like dark movies in the style of Tim Burton, this “fair” is for you!

Background and Research

[Movies About Dark Carnivals and Circuses](#)

[Imagery for a Dark Circus Look](#)

Special Circus Talents

To create a true “circus” atmosphere, you might survey the guard AND musicians to look for special talents such as gymnasts, jugglers, magicians, experienced singers and actors (to act as ringmasters), etc.. You might also recruit student body members outside of your program that possess any special talents appropriate for this production. The unique performers available can inspire visual focus for each segment of the show, highlight musical solos/solis and be a wonderful additional design layer.

[List of Typical Circus Skills](#) - Those listed below could be the easiest to find and include provided costuming reads as “dark”:

- Acrobatics
- Balancing/balance beam
- Baton twirling
- Chinese yo-yo - *could be easy to learn*
- Clown - *Someone with theater background and confidence*
- Devil sticks - *another prop that may be easy to learn*
- Diabolo - *same as a Chinese yo-yo*
- Flag spinning - *great way to feature individuals, small groups and the entire guard*
- Hand walking gymnast
- Hooping - *Hula hoop*
- Juggling
- Jump rope
- Lasso
- Mime - *theater person, clown, uninhibited student*
- Pogo sticking
- Poi spinning - *could be easy to learn*
- Ringmaster - *perhaps a drum major could serve as this character?*

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- Stilt walking - *may need a spotter*
- Tumbling - *most bands have members with some gymnastics background*
- Twirling - *your best weapons, small flags or equipment and those with baton background*
- Unicycle
- [Additional Sideshow Ideas](#) - *Those listed below could be easiest to include*

Pageantry Examples For Inspiration

[Cavaliers Indoor Percussion 2015](#) - *“Send in the Clowns”*

[Music City Mystique Indoor Percussion 2006](#) - *“Freakshow”*

[Bluestars 2012](#) - *“Carnival”*

[Glassmen 2008](#) - *“Kar-ne-val”*

[Cavaliers 2014](#) - *“Immortal”*

[Infinity Percussion 2019](#) - *“The Greatest Showman”*

The Overall Mood/Feel or Aesthetic

- The look might be established through the use of stages, rings or defined areas of the field
 - Grounded guard equipment could serve as a way to outline or mark these areas...perhaps to create a circus “ring” look?
 - PVC pipe could also work
- Potential backdrops, screens, scrim, etc. can help identify each field area.
 - Perhaps a decorated circus tent...
 - Or, smaller ones to highlight the theme of the “act” that will be portrayed in that portion of the field?
 - This could be created with frames and digitally printed vinyl? See examples of the vintage sideshow banners below.
 - Perhaps they are “retractable” and pulled up/extended to highlight certain events/staged areas but then brought down/closed up to ensure the backdrops do not “mask” the line of sight behind them during other parts of the show?

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Broad Staging Possibilities

- Each of the three (3) show segments could use one of the three (3) stage areas/rings with the solos/solis and section features taking place in/around that staged area..
 - During these show segments, a guard voice/piece of equipment, dancers or circus character could be featured/highlighted in those areas as well.
- The specific section/choirs featured during each main portion of the show could have some sort of easy uniform/costume change to make it obvious to the audience that section is one of the “dark characters” now?”
 - This could simply be done by removing their headgear prior to or immediately after their featured moments with the hats remaining off for the rest of the show?
 - There are plenty of other ways to portray this transformation including:
 - Perhaps when the hats are removed a bandana, a “scary” mask or even theatrical make-up is revealed?
 - If removing the headgear is not an option to signify the transformation to the “darkside”, then perhaps the musicians could add or remove something from the costume ala a fabric drop or sash?
 - It is possible that a pocket could be constructed inside the uniform/costumes to store something such as fabric or colorful streamers removed from the musicians as the conversion to the “dark side” occurs (reference [Cavaliers 2014](#))

Potential Story and Horizontal Flow of the Show

Pre-show

- Set up the look and feel of a traditional circus
 - Audience should not suspect anything other than an ordinary circus to start the show
 - Narration - (sampled or live) incorporating a “ringmaster” character during this pre-show
 - Welcome audience, introduce the band name, the show name, performance location, etc.
 - While this is occurring, a few colorguard (in their various characters) could be performing some subtle circus acts
- A pre-show soundscape in the style of traditional circus music sounding could be “looped” and dovetailed into the opening impact (count one) of the judged portion of the show?
 - Beginning prior to any narration that is used

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- The guard (appropriately costumed) could be staged reminiscent of “traditional” looking circus entry of the field

Traditional Circus Introduction

- [Entry of the Gladiators](#) (public domain) is the basis for the opening, traditional sounding fanfare/opening
 - The guard could be on all flags (brightly colored?)
- The end of this fanfare turns dark, minor, ominous and creates a good bit of tension and suspense
- Through costuming and characterization, it should be obvious that the guard (the main characters of the show), are not what they appear, introducing an appropriately looking performer(s) that lets the audience know “trouble is ahead”
- From here, the guard will work to change to influence and transform the musicians to one of their own.
 - Part 1 = Woodwinds and perhaps t-bone soloist
 - Part 2 = Brass
 - Part 3 Percussion Intro = percussion
 - The remainder of Part 3 being a celebration/party of the entire band now part of the “EVIL” cast

Part 1

- This is a somewhat dark scherzo show segment in the style of a circus galop
- The woodwinds are featured and eventually transformed to the “dark side” during this portion of the show
 - Some of the guard (perhaps weapons?) should highlight those musicians appropriately
- A trombone soloist (or soloist of your choice) is also featured in this portion of the show. Make sure there is visual support for this soloist with at least a guard soloist or even a circus act character
- You might also use an area of the field where a stage (one of three ala a traditional circus)
 - Perhaps there are ramps/stage levels to allow performers to go up on to it or, up and over etc.
- If stages are not feasible, creating circus rings can be incorporated to accentuate the feature soloist and section moments.
 - Could be achieved with grounded guard equipment or PVC pipe ([FMP images](#))
- The group that commissioned the show had an outstanding t-bone soloist but that solo can be adapted by the Fannin Music folks if desired.