

Sam Landess

### Event Story

Most people have no idea how much it takes to create a top-notch Sing performance. People have no idea how far in advance Sing chairs have to work to make the act complete.

“We start on next years Sing act as soon as we can after we finish up with our current Sing performance. We start brainstorming almost immediately after Sing and into spring break. We have to submit our theme ideas to Student Production in May,” Brandon Cook said, Sing chair of Kappa Omega Tau Fraternity. From the very beginning stages to the final production, it takes about 10 months to prepare a Sing act.

For the most part every organization starts their sing production this way. “Pen to the paper” brainstorming everyday until they find a theme that will entertain the audience and tell a story at the same time. Groups will have a rough idea of their Sing production going into the summer, which includes a theme, songs, backdrop, props and costumes. Students continue working on the act during the summer coming up with ideas.

As soon as school starts up in the fall, the Sing chairs get back to work. “We have multiple meetings with Student Production over the semester whether its submitting props, backdrop, or costumes ideas and we meet with them over realistic goals we set for ourselves,” Kate Warren said, Sing chair for Delta Delta Delta Sorority.

For costume ideas, most groups will have an idea of what they want before meeting with a professional seamstress. Costumes can play a significant role in the story telling. A lot of it depends on the theme they are using. Costumes are based on the theme. Some themes are self explanatory therefore the costumes don’t have to be. Others, the costumes help tell the story.

Props are a little different depending on the organizations. It might be easier for male organizations to have bigger and in-depth props than female organizations. That is usually the case because sororities will hire someone to build the props while fraternities usually build the props themselves.

When dealing with creating the backdrop, groups usually hire someone to paint a masterpiece. The Sing chairs draw up a rough sketch to give to the artist. Then the artist re-sketches what they ask for and they take it from there. Backdrops are usually done in less than a week with help from the organizations.

One of the most important aspects of a Sing act is the music. Music takes up most of the time when creating the act. One of the hardest things to do is figure out which songs to use and how to incorporate them into the act. Once the songs are selected, organizations will meet with a music arranger to help make the music flow and make sense.

“We meet with Jason Young. He is our music arranger and composer for our production,” Cook said. They travel to Young’s home in Austin to receive help from him. “He does everything from changing the tune of a song to fit the need of our singers, to adding certain elements to a song to make it better for the overall performance.”

Composers have an integral part in every organizations act. They are arguably the most important person besides the Sing chairs for getting the act made. For some of the composers, Sing is one of their favorite times of the year.

“I love making every act I’m involved in, the best I can possibly make it,” Young said. “I look forward to having them [sing chairs] over for dinner and working on their music for Sing.”

Over the course of the fall semester, ideas for all aspects of the production have to be submitted for approval by Student Productions. That includes submissions for costumes, music, props, and backdrops. Student Productions have to approve everything before November then the organizations can move on to the choreography.

Most groups get outside help for creating the choreography for the performance. Over the years they usually work with the same people every year so contacting a choreographer is not too difficult.

“Most groups hire a choreographer, but we create all the dancing ourselves,” Cook said. “We call it ‘Sing week’, where we come a week early before school starts and create every move in our act.”

After the choreography is complete all that is left is practice, practice and more practice. Times vary when each group practices, but it’s usually Sunday through Thursday. Practice consists of dancing for six weeks straight along with group sing and showcases, which is a specific type of dance with smaller groups.

In the two weeks before the actual performance, every group participates in open stage practices. They receive two to eight practices at Waco Hall to be able to perfect the act. Among those open stages will be light tech, audio tech and full tech practices. This is where groups are given opportunities to practice setting up light effects, practice singing with actual audio, as well as practice setting up backdrop and props. These practices are crucial to making the act exactly what Sing chairs expect it to be.

All that’s left are the final performances. Baylor’s All-University Sing this year is scheduled for the last two weeks of February on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Every single

Sing chair has put their heart and soul into these performances. Ten months later, a full production is displayed, all this after just starting with a couple ideas, a pen and a pad.