

Fiddler... (cont'd)

First, the show's music director, Michelle Dannan, brainstormed an innovative way to teach and rehearse music virtually. All the music in the show was learned over Zoom, and students submitted video clips for feedback and coaching; no music was rehearsed in person.

Director/Choreographer Maya Dwyer '13 then collaborated with fellow MPH alum and brilliant sound engineer Will Maresco '15 to individually record the singing of every cast member in the show over the course of several months. The two spent countless weekend hours recording, editing, and developing a new cueing system.

To accommodate the ongoing need for masks and distancing while still conveying a story about love and family (and, of course, "*Tradition!*"), the actors worked very hard to learn an entirely new style of performance — one that engages the whole body at all times. With the audience surrounding the performance, the physicality of the actors needed to be heightened to translate from afar — and from a multitude of angles. Actors remained physically distanced, but the new choreography and staging of this show worked within those limits to tell the story and creatively convey character relationships. With such an emphasis on the visual storytelling, experienced costumer Jody Luce was tasked with bringing to life the vibrant community of Anatevka with colorful, folktale-inspired costumes.

How the Audience Watched!

Though a creative gymnasium arrangement served as an inclement-weather backup plan for the first performance, the weather cooperated for the remaining performances to take place outside. Audience members arrived in their own "pods," with tickets reserved by car slot and audience members able to sit in their pods on picnic blankets or lawn chairs within their designated zone. These six-foot-apart zones were situated around the perimeter of the large outdoor performance tent — truly the feel of "theater in the 'round," with Mother Nature playing an important role in the atmosphere of each scene. *In fact, this may have been the first show in MPH history where the actual (real-time) sunset was a part of the design.*

Gratitude:

This show wouldn't have been possible without the support of MPH's Pandemic Response Team, as well as the leadership and guidance of Producing Artistic Director Michele Koziara and Production Designer Alex Koziara, who have always been ready to try cutting-edge and innovative ideas to bring the community a uniquely MPH theatre experience.