

Cast of cancelled Carousel at UMHB share finale online

May 18, 2020

BELTON—The stage was set, the cast was prepared, and the Carousel was ready to turn. Then a global pandemic broke out, and the show could not go on.

Last week, the cast of the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor's cancelled spring musical, "Carousel," released an online [recording](#) of the show's finale "You'll Never Walk Alone," produced via the Zoom meeting app.

Students were cast for this spring's production of Carousel during the fall. Before spring break, they had been rehearsing multiple days a week. Each of the show's musical numbers had been choreographed, and every scene had been blocked.

"All of the preparation was really paying off," said Isabelle Smith, a senior cast in the role of Nettie. "We were getting ready to start running the show before everything hit with COVID-19."

The cast was devastated to learn the premiere they had been envisioning never would occur.

"I was really heartbroken when I heard it was being cancelled," freshman Kyle Parsons said. "It felt like all the efforts my cohorts and I had put in were wasted."

The show's director, Michelle Haché, was just as upset.

"It's going to take a while to get over the pain of not getting to do the show," Haché said.

‘Comfort some people during this strange time’

Haché was committed to finding a way to make something of the show. Inspired by artists around the world who were producing content online, she sent a message to the cast with a plan. She asked the students to record a portion of the show’s final song, “You’ll Never Walk Alone,” and send it to her.

Erik Vose, director of operations and technical director of the Sue & Frank Mayborn Performing Arts Center at UMHB, was serving as Carousel’s technical director and set designer before the cancellation.

Haché asked him to take the individual videos and make something special. It was a serious undertaking, requiring him to cut together clips that had been recorded at differing tempos, sometimes with a delay, but Vose was motivated.

“My hope is that the finished product can help comfort some people during this strange time,” Vose said. “I know a lot of people out there are feeling isolated, and this particular song is actually very fitting.”

‘I felt a sense of peace’

Haché shares his hope.

“It’s not just for our own local area,” she said. “It’s for the world.”

For Smith, who opens the recording, the choice of song was perfect.

“Carousel is a show about redemption,” Smith said. “Times of hardship come in life, and you get to decide how you handle them. The song encompasses that message, and I believe it’s perfect for the world we’re

living in today.”

Watching the finished video was a special moment for Smith, who recently graduated.

“Honestly, I felt a sense of peace,” she said. “It felt like things were resolved. Even though we didn’t get to put on a physical production, we were still able to reach people with that song.”

Haché said she learned a great deal from the process of creating the video, and she hopes to tackle similar but more ambitious projects in the future.