

Fiddler on the Roof

Artwork Background & Design Rationale

by David Occhino - March 20, 2005

Background

"Fiddler on the Roof" has an established visual vocabulary that many people recognize. The artwork created for the Pittsford Musicals production breaks no new ground; rather, it taps into the existing symbols that have been used in "Fiddler on the Roof" marketing materials for years. This is done to create immediate recognition in those that view the artwork. However, while this artwork is based on established motifs, it presents them in a fresh, artistic manner that evokes the feel of a high-quality theater production.

Design Rationale

Layout

A clean, uncluttered layout was chosen for this design. The sky and titling dominate the artwork. The silhouetted figure draws the eye into the scene and onto the shingled and thatched rooftops. The skyline is balanced by the figure and the two steeples on each side. The artwork gradually descends into shadow, providing a dark background for the type. The rooftops were brought in close together to create a caricature of the village of Anatevka.

Color

Warm hues of gold capture the essence of "Sunrise, Sunset," Muted browns, steel grey and black provide the texture and shading for the buildings.

Typography

Two typefaces are used in this design. The titling was created with a customized version of Koch Antiqua Heavy. The remainder of the type is executed in Post Antiqua in various weights. Both typefaces lend a clean, calligraphic feel, in harmony with the illustration.

Illustration Style

The lines and textures evoke a natural feeling. While the layout is simple, closer examination reveals a greater level of detail, inviting the eye to linger a moment longer on the artwork. The illustration was done in pencil, then digitally enhanced. All artwork is original material created by David Occhino.

Symbology

The silhouetted figure represents both Tevye and the Fiddler, with arms reaching upward. The large sun represents God, life. The two tallest buildings - the church and the temple -- represent the two distinct cultures living in Anatevka. The gold colors represent the joy in Tevye's life, while the darker tones symbolize the struggles he faces. Tevye is positioned between these two colors, rising out from the dark and drawn into the light by heaven.

Finishing

Finishes for the artwork might include a semi-metallic ink for the typography, and/or the use of spot varnish to accent the typography and textures.