

Grinnell Virtual Ensembles

The basic procedure that we are using is this: we create a conducting video that includes a count-in. (The participants clap at the end of the count-in, which aids in syncing the videos they submit). The conducting video and scores are then made available on the web site with instructions. The participants watch the conducting video and listen with earphones as they videotape themselves with their phone or another device. We then have a method for them to submit the videos. Once the videos are submitted, they are combined to form a virtual choir. The editing is a two-step process: first editing the audio, and then assembling the video. I use ProTools for the editing (but you could use any digital audio workstation). As the number of submissions grows, it's helpful to group the tracks so that you can control the balance. It also is often necessary to reduce the consonant sounds in the submissions because they tend to be greatly exaggerated in comparison to a normal choir singing together into a single mic or a few mics. After the audio is finished, we work on combining the videos in Final Cut Pro. –I'm familiar to Final Cut, but of course you could use another program. Here's an example of a finished video. It was a way to connect alumni with current students:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9dq6IngFDM>

Here is an example of a conducting video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kSg36H-S8Mc>

I've tended to use actual choral recordings of my own choir as the "seed" rather than using a midi file or piano. I think it's a much more pleasant experience for the participants, and it gives you something like the feeling of singing in a real choir.

This is a pretty time-intensive undertaking – but we aren't having rehearsals, so I have time for it.