

Q&A for CMS "Coping..." Webinar April 24, 2020

Questions received from CMS members and others before the webinar:

Q: As academia rapidly packed-up and moved to the cloud for 8 weeks, many of my colleagues and I sought to rescue some fundamental elements of our courses, looking for Course Objectives that could be pursued in web-based projects. This was reasonable as we were all simply doing the very best we could with courses that were already at their midpoint. Now, as we all consider a fall semester that is 100% online, we aren't scrambling, we aren't simply hoping to pull through. Indeed, our task is new and we have to fashion courses that are built from scratch *and* authentically web-based. With that in mind, I don't see a place for ensembles, at least not ensembles as we understand them. But still there is the need for a course that lives in between musicology, diction, theory, applied lessons, performance practice, etc. What is the new choir of the Virtual U?

Q: My question is about opera instruction. The first part of our process is purely music for half the semester and then half is staging, and I'm curious as to what distancing measures could be taken and still have live rehearsals. Also, my class is primarily elective, so how do I convince students to voluntarily participate in "opera" in a 100% online format (if that's what happens) when it's not the normal musical/staging experience they've come to expect? What possible online option is there that can come close to being anything like rehearsing an opera in person?

Q: [note from BP: this question suggest a subsequent health-related webinar for us]

There have been many studies/experiments regarding the distance COVID-19 droplets can be carried through the air when an individual coughs or sneezes. However, have there been any studies/experiments conducted that would reveal the distance COVID-19 droplets could be carried through the air when an individual blows air through an instrument (I'm guessing this would vary by instrument and thinking particularly about brass instrumentalists who have to regularly use their spit valves) or from a vocalist singing in a choir (with or without a mask)?

Q: [note from BP: this question suggest a subsequent health-related webinar for us] I

have read about many different scenarios regarding what the academic year could look like next year at institutions of higher education. However, with the exception of moving to online teaching for both fall and spring, the hybrid scenarios with students coming back to campus at various points without a viable and proven COVID-19 vaccine in place do not seem to take into account either students who may have underlying health conditions that would increase their risks if they contracted COVID-19 or of faculty who also may be in a high risk category. How do these faculty and students navigate this situation without having to withdraw or potentially lose their jobs?

Q: I have taught collaborative piano and opera workshop online for five weeks so far. I have changed the focus of instructions from performance-based to mainly knowledge/information-based, making assignments of watching videos, reading articles,

analyzing arias, etc. As I have heard about the possibility of keeping online teaching in fall, I would like to find how to give students hands-on collaborative performance experiences, even if we have to teach online. Currently, Zoom does not allow us to sing or play together remotely, since we hear beats at different timings. It sounds disorganized and confusing. In the opera class, we had to give up on staging as well as singing ensembles. Without working on staging for opera scenes, opera education is incomplete. Similarly, the important aspects of collaborative piano cannot be taught without actual collaborative performances. These are the biggest problems I have been facing.

Q: Our piano students are currently practicing on keyboards, since the music building has been closed. We have been working on a very advanced piano duo repertoire and found that all notes sound the same, with no differences in tone colors. It seems that we cannot work on more than correct notes and rhythms. If anyone has an idea on how we might be able to move on to artistic discussion even under this circumstance, I would appreciate the input.

Q: As we all rapidly packed-up and moved to the cloud, I suspect many of us sought to salvage fundamental elements of our courses, looking for Objectives that could be pursued online. This was reasonable as we were all doing the best we could with courses that were already at their midpoint. Now, as we all consider a semester 100% online, we aren't scrambling or simply hoping to pull through. Indeed, our task is new and we have to fashion courses from scratch that are authentically web-based. With that in mind, I don't see a place for ensembles, at least not ensembles as we understand them. Nevertheless, ensembles fulfill an important role at the very core of students' experience, connecting them to various repertoires and styles; connecting the various courses they take (musicology, diction, theory, applied lessons, performance practice, etc.); and connecting them to each other. As we look to fall, what would be missing in a college curriculum without ensembles and what can we design to help fill that gap?

Q: How do you make the midi click track?

Q: How can we do this in a formal educational setting? How can we prepare pieces as we would during a normal semester?

Copyright Question #1: I am very interested to know about copyright as it pertains to these digital performances. How is this managed? **CQ #2:** Permission to arrange, mechanical license, sync license? Is this something her institution helped with? Is this "on behalf" of the institution (is the institution on the hook if any issues)? **CQ #3:** Are there any copyright issues with Shelbie creating her own arrangement of this piece and would there be issues if I made

arrangements of music protected by copyright laws? **CQ #4:** If it's for educational purposes that shouldn't be an issue though, right?

DiOrio, answers to copyright questions: (Disclaimer, I am not a lawyer, so this is not legal advice!) Anytime you wish to use copyrighted content in a public form (for instance, for live performance, for streaming online, etc.), you must have a license to do so. Many people do not realize it, but when you purchase hard copies of sheet music you are *a/so* purchasing a license to perform that music publicly in the number of copies you have purchased. (This is why it's actually illegal, for instance, to loan 80 copies of Stravinsky's Symphony of Psalms from one chorus to another: the first chorus purchased the license to perform from those copies but the second did not.) For online streaming, if the material (music and/or text) is under copyright, you must receive a license and/or permission from the copyright holder(s) to post the work online.

This applies also to arrangements of copyrighted material. You cannot just choose to arrange a song under copyright and post it online in your arrangement (as nearly all pop songs from the last 70+ years are). You must receive permission from the copyright holder(s) to create a new derivative work using pre-existing copyrighted material.

For a good explanation of this, I recommend you seek out the Hal Leonard website, here: <https://www.halleonard.com/licensing/index.action> -- This is an incredible resources that deals with many, many scenarios in which you might be wishing to use copyrighted material. Don't be foolish: there can be severe legal consequences for using copyrighted material without permission, so always seek out the appropriate permissions and/or licenses before doing so.

A note about educational use: this applies to classroom and virtual/remote instruction, but NOT to publicly accessible material. (You can't claim that uploading a video of a complete copyrighted work to YouTube is "fair use" or "educational use," especially if the video is public.) Read here for a great primer on "fair use": <https://fairuse.stanford.edu/overview/academic-and-educational-permissions/non-coursepack/>

Q: How will auditions be handled for ensembles at your institutions?

Kilburn, answer to audition questions: There is definitely the possibility of virtual auditions. A list of excerpts would be made available ahead of time, and then if there is a sight-reading element, that could be sent to the student immediately before their audition time. However, in person auditions might still be possible depending on how things progress this summer. Taking precautions and sufficient distance would make that scenario safe and feasible, although the chair/stand would have to be cleaned between every audition.

Q: Virtual Ensemble Projects: what projects would benefit and be appropriate for ensembles with a mix of major and non-majors?

Q: I wonder how many institutions already have a firm plan in place for the Fall? Perhaps we can recognize those institutions and reach out their respective music departments/schools to see what plans they have in place. My guess is the most institutions are in the same boat: "not really sure what we're doing yet".

Questions regarding virtual performances:

Q: Were there any issues with intonation in particular sections (i.e., flutes, French horns, etc.)? Or did you adjust intonation in Logic?

Q: Do you recommend musicians sharing the audio and video in one recording file, or in separate files for audio and video?

Kilburn, response to recording question: Here are the very specific tips we sent out to the students in our orchestra in terms of making the best video performance possible. They were written by the student who will be mixing the video and audio tracks.

1. Choice of microphone.

If you have an actual microphone (i.e. not a webcam or smartphone), use that. If you don't, use the best smartphone mic that you have access to. In my experience, the microphones on newer smartphones are generally pretty decent, and tend to be better than webcam mics because they're way easier to move around. You can just take a video and use the audio from that, or you could download a recording app like easy voice recorder (has a free version) or Audio evolution mobile studio (if you're willing to spend 6 bucks). Though I guess we want videos so maybe just taking a video would be better...if you use an actual microphone, take a video anyways and either replace the sound yourself or send me both files. If you need recording software on your computer, just download audacity. It's good, user-friendly, and, most importantly, free. I would test more than one type of mic if you lack a "real" one, i.e. see if your computer webcam actually just sounds better than your smartphone, or if a parent/sibling/roommate has a better one; ask them if you can use it.

2. Microphone placement.

The same rules will generally apply no matter what microphone you're using, although smartphone and computer microphones may be more prone to distortion with sound that's

too loud so you may have to put it slightly farther away. Just play with it and see what works.

For strings, generally you'll want it 2-3 feet away from your instrument, depending on the space you're playing and the register of your instrument. Generally, closer will pick up more bass and more bow scratchiness, further away and you'll start to pick up more background noise. Make sure you know where the microphone is on your phone and you don't point the wrong end towards the instrument or cover it up or something. Try your best to point it towards where the bow contacts the strings, positioned out and up from the instrument. This means literally above the face of the instrument for violin and viola, and like straight out from the bridge at the angle of the bridge for cello and bass. That may be hard with a smartphone, but you'll still want to do your best to position it to pick up in the direction that the instrument is projecting.

For brass, you'll want the microphone further out, maybe 4-6 feet. You'll also want to position it below the line of sight of the bell (or for horns, just towards the middle of the instrument). If that's hard, or if it's still too loud, turn around and play into the wall.

For reed instruments, the distance is about the same (4-6 feet), and you'll want the mic about level with the top half of the instrument (or I guess just the middle of it with bassoon).

Likewise, with flute you'll want to aim your microphone towards the center of the instrument, although you can get away with closer mic placement (maybe 3 feet). You can aim it more towards the mouthpiece if you deliberately want a more "breathy" sound, but I don't think we want that for this piece.

3. Choice of space

When in doubt, record in the bathroom. Well, maybe it would be overwhelming for trumpet, but otherwise it's generally not a bad option. If possible, pick a room that is lacking in a ton of soft furniture and carpets that will just absorb all your sound. However, much more important is that you pick a space as free of background noise as possible. If we're going to add 70 people's videos together and yours has a dying cat or Leeroy Jenkins in the background, your recording will be featured at a considerably decreased volume to everyone else's. Avoiding distortion is also important; if your microphone is bad and you're getting a lot of distortion, you could turn the mic sensitivity down on your computer or phone and/or put it further away.

4. Recording with the piano/conductor.

Everyone will have to figure out a way to have the conducting/piano recording playing through headphones, while simultaneously recording yourself. Probably the best option for most people would be to play the video through your computer and record with your phone. Obviously, if you have a real microphone and interface, everything can be done through the computer. The most important things are being in time and being in tune. You're still a section player (usually), so just follow the same rules you would in actual orchestra. Sometimes it works to have the pre-recording (i.e. piano track) in just one ear so you can

listen to yourself better. Even if you have an actual recording setup where you can hear yourself with headphones through your audio interface, I still find that having one ear open to your instrument will allow you to hear your own playing much better.

Q: Besides motivating your students, how do you deal with being inspiring to your students when as an educator you are lacking motivation and inspiration?

Q: What is the state of the art now with new technology and platforms (i.e. better sound, speed, latency issues) and what in particular electronic music people are thinking of this specific time?

Q: What do we say to students who feel like this extra ensemble work is busy work?
(See Aaron's comment at 1:02:27)

Q: Anyone with good experiences with Garage Band? Do you recommend it?

Q: Is there any software that can allow conducting a large ensemble session live?

Q: Virtual recording projects develop studio recording skills, but are limited in its inability for musicians to respond to each other in the movement. Any thought on addressing this element in a virtual setting?

Q: One thing lost in virtual ensembles is the immeasurable, incalculable adjustments each musician makes when performing beside another. Singers, for example, modify vowels, delay a consonant, take an early breath, modify vibrato, temper tuning, etc. All these things—the awareness, compromise, and peer-driven growth unique to performing in shared space—are important to acknowledge. The act of making music with others teaches skills we must acknowledge and consider in the new, virtual environment. (None of this is to say that the emphasis on individual improvement and achievement inherent in the virtual ensemble isn't valuable too!)

Kilburn: This is exactly what we are striving to adjust to, and the question I wish I had an answer to.

Q: I'd like to hear some ideas for skill building over time with non-auditioned ensembles, students of average musical ability, rural students who come to college with less musical experience, or with a mix of music majors and non-majors. I think many colleges spend time teaching these skills at the beginning of the year to new students, and would love to hear ideas for doing this online.

Q: Question especially for panelists who serve suburban/rural communities: how do you accommodate students who may not have access to high bandwidth internet? In academic

classes this is negotiable via message boards, etc., but what can be done about it in an ensembles environment?

Kilburn response to internet question: Write letters to your school district/University about prioritizing accessibility for all students. See what things they can do like providing chromebooks for students or parking busses with wifi in specific neighborhoods.

Q: Yes I agree w/ Miguel and Dominick and added to the nuance of what singers must do in real time and when present with one another in the way of adjusting vowels, tone, etc, how does any of the work in classical music. Do you all think this works better with a more popular style of singing? Wondering about thoughts about that.

Q: One concern we are wondering what recruitment might look like for the fall? Our university has several ensembles comprised of community members and non-music majors - how are alternative ways we can recruit for our ensembles?

Q: The larger the ensemble the more time-intensive a virtual project becomes. It limits the amount of music covered in a semester. I am currently doing these projects at the University of West Florida with my jazz combo, but the demands expand exponentially for big band, symphonic band, choir, or orchestra. I am interested in options for large ensemble musical approaches. Please share thoughts and comments.

Q: This is a bit off topic, but I do think we need to be careful about implying that any of this is easy for academic music faculty (history, theory, etc.). Those classes, too, have important social components that are tough to duplicate online. Our faculty have been working tirelessly to make these classes a mere shadow of what they should be.

Q: How are our panelists handling student burn-out? Have our panelists had any drop-off in participation as we have moved from one week to the next of virtual learning? If so, how have they addressed that? Thanks one and all for this helpful discussion today!

Kilburn response to burn-out: I believe someone answered this a little bit during the panel, but I think it's tremendously important to take into consideration that everyone has a unique experience of this pandemic and quarantine. Empathy, understanding, and flexibility are key to helping our students stay mentally strong. They are often being overwhelmed by other classes and coursework, and many of my students have told me that although the work load is similar to what they had before Covid-19 it *feels like so much more*. The screen time alone is enough to give us headaches, and loss of concentration and focus. Try to stay positive in your interactions with students, smile, ask them how they are doing, make yourself available for office hours in which students can come talk to you about their own experiences and how they are doing. I

have found that office hours yield positive results in keeping students engaged. Be understanding if they need to have their video off; they might be sharing a space with other people and not want to be distracting to others.

Q: Will plexiglass shields be necessary between players/sections, alongside distancing....

Kilburn response to plexiglass: I'm fairly certain that if someone is blowing into a trumpet plexiglass will not stop droplets from going right over, under, and or around that plexiglass...

Q: Hello from Texas Tech! @Dominick DiOrio or @Rebecca Phillips... what ideas and/or suggestions do you have for collegiate ensembles that include non-majors? I have struggled with the balance of continuing "musicing" in some way without adding too many "extra things" to their already very full plate of navigating this new remote/online learning format. (Make the best of their "time, dollars, heart..." this is a great quote!)

Q: I am doing virtual projects with and without video (I add still photos to the non video projects). Any comments on the value of having video of the playing as opposed to using (animated) still photos?

Q: Have any institutions/music departments considered UV light sterilization HVAC/lighting products to provide germ free rehearsal areas? <https://sterilray.com/landing-page/products/>

Q: I would be interested in hearing about the potential 8 week/8 week idea as my personal opinion was that is one of the most likely scenarios floating in higher ed. apursell@ucmo.edu

Q: I wonder if we will be able to return to chamber rehearsals earlier than large ensembles?

Q: How does one hear detail in performance (ex: private lessons and/or ensembles) via online platforms and address the finer points of an artistic performance? This is my biggest frustration - not being able to really hear the subtle nuances and details. Thoughts?

Q: Has NASM offered any guidance on approaches to continue to offer content that meet accreditation guidelines?

DiOrio: NASM has posted a number of resources for this COVID-19 time:
<https://nasm.arts-accredit.org/about/current-notices/>

Q: What is your preferred platform to work with the ensembles in real time? Zoom? Skype? FaceTime? A mix of all of that? Anything else? Did anyone hear about Polycom platform?

Here's an interesting article about virtual rehearsals, if anyone is interested: <https://why.org/articles/choirs-make-the-most-of-virtual-rehearsals-during-coronavirus-pandemic/>

Have any institutions/music departments discussed how they will navigate music scholarships that are attached to large group participation?

Also, resources from the ACDA (American Choral Directors Association) website: <https://acda.org/resources-for-choral-professionals-during-a-pandemic/>

Q: How are we/you creating spaces for healthy mourning... I have felt and experienced an urgency to move forward, and subsequently ignore what people/students/faculty/friends/colleagues are going through. Obviously this is a slippery slope, but several of my students and colleagues have expressed the frustration to "push through" and "stay busy" and not have the opportunity to mourn together about these changes. Has anyone found a healthy and positive way to do this ?

Feedback after the webinar:

I hope another event can be organized as this situation may possibly be extended for the long term! I'd be interested in more detailed use of various platforms for ensembles. Which ones are appropriate for small ensemble, up to 8 maybe and which ones are better for very large.

Also perhaps a discussion on ways to advocate for our endangered music programs at this difficult time! This will be a precarious time for many programs as administrators look to save money and reallocate as college enrollment declines.

Please, organize a follow up webinar in July/August when the webinar leaders will be able to share more concrete plans and ideas about their organization of Fall 2020 ensemble classes.

All webinar presenters hail from foremost music schools that have highly selected group of students, arguably the best in the country. What are some strategies for ensemble conductors in small liberal arts college ensembles with predominantly non-music majors in their ranks?

I believe we need to re-evaluate the purpose of educational ensembles. In the past, we were concerned with teaching repertoire and developing ensemble technique. If we are to adequately address the current challenges, we need to examine the role of live music in our society, especially if audiences are less inclined to sit in a concert hall with 300 other people. What skills

will help musicians connect with audiences of the 21st-century? This might be an interesting discussion to have.

I believe the place of live music in our culture has changed dramatically in the past 20 years, yet we have not changed the way we teach ensemble practices. I believe ensemble experience can (should) teach students how to make music collaboratively. Plain and simple. But not necessarily live, in-person and simultaneously. They should learn to use online conferencing, video editing, and social media platforms to create exciting, riveting musical performances that demand attention. This is what I would love to discuss with others, and learn from other experts in the field, in a webinar. Thank you for presenting a very interesting and worthwhile opening discussion to this topic. I hope more will follow.

It was a very heartening webinar. It helped me feel supported in this anxious time.