

## Remote activities for chamber groups

With in-person chamber music rehearsals impossible at the moment, there are some wonderful activities we can do to continue learning and enjoying chamber music, and improve our ensemble skills and knowledge. Below is a list of suggestions for how to facilitate continued study of chamber music using the tools we currently have available to us. These are just a jumping off point for coaches—feel free to come up with your own ideas as well.

Rather than try to recreate the coaching experience at a specific day and time, my best recommendation is for coaches to think in terms of weekly assignments for your chamber groups to complete. For instance, if your chamber group has been receiving 45 minute coachings, you can assign a score study or a listening activity that you think will take the student roughly 45 minutes to complete during the week.

As it may take some time to become fluent in some of the technological options, you can begin with some of the score study and listening assignments options and transition into recording assignments as we move through the next few weeks.

### **Use Zoom to check in your group**

While we can't rehearse over Zoom, chamber groups can get together to say hello, discuss listening and score study assignments, and receive new assignments from coaches.

### **Videos**

Coaches can record videos of themselves saying hello to their groups and explaining their assignment for the week. It's wonderful and important for your students to have a chance to see your face and feel connected to you.

### **Score study**

- Listen to the music while looking at the score
- Play through your part from the score

Go through the score and indicate

- Who has the melody?
- Circle parts of the music where instruments are "rhythm buddies" who have the same rhythm as you for at least 3 beats.
- You can write "rhythm cues" in your part. If you have rests, write in the rhythm of the melody during your rests so that you know what to listen for

### **Listening assignments**

- find 3 recordings of your piece on youtube and listen to them. Compare what you hear. What is different about the recordings? What do you like and dislike about each one?

-Listen to 3 other pieces by the same composer as your piece. Write down some things that sound the same and some things that sound different from your piece.

### **Online Masterclasses**

There are a number of masterclasses online that are really valuable to watch. Youtube has many recordings of masterclasses that could be assigned to chamber groups.

### **Bandlab.com**

Bandlab.com is a great tool for layering recordings on top of one another. You can use the website, or an app version. To use it, everyone in your group and you will need to create an account. Once logged in, go to the top right corner and click on "+create". You will be given the option to add a new track. Pick "Voice/Mic". An idea for rehearsing with Bandlab is to pick a section of your piece and have the person with the melody record first. They should leave about 10 seconds of silence at the beginning of their recording, and then count themselves in. Then they share their recording. The next person can create a new track. They should listen to the first player with one headphone in, by pressing play and then pressing record on their new track. Then they can record their part along with the melody. Then the third player can do the same thing.

I recommend trying this for short sections of the piece and seeing how it goes, and perhaps making weekly assignments. It may take a few tries for the students to line up their parts with each other, but that gives them a chance for extra practice.

### **Acapella**

Acapella is an app that allows you to layer videos on top of each other, similar to bandlab. Bandlab has better sound quality, but Acapella is fun because you can see each other.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions, or if you would like help troubleshooting any of these technological options.