Teaching Music in the Virtual World

Some items to consider
Let’s hear from you…

• What do you teach and what grades?
• What have you been doing for your remote learning?
• What were some of your successes?
• What were some of your challenges?
Relationships
(What teaching is really all about)

• Show you care:
  • Contact students who are MIA.
  • Reach out to parents.
  • How do you deal with students who are disengaged?
We must be flexible and empathetic

- We don’t know every student’s home situation
  - Living situation, family stability
  - Support of family
  - Adequate space
  - Instrument
  - Device(s)
  - Internet access/speed

Being flexible with students (accepting late work, etc.)

Empathy goes a long way!
Be willing to experiment

- Can aspects of face-to-face instruction be replicated? (Should they be?)
- Try new things
- Don’t be afraid to think outside the box
- Experiment with new technology
- Survey students to find out about their likes/dislikes, preferences

- It is VERY EASY to get overwhelmed with all of the resources available!
Remember:

• What works for others may not work for you
• Some people may be more tech savvy than you, but that doesn’t mean you can’t do a great job teaching remotely
• You can’t really do live ensemble playing virtually
• You do not need to create a “virtual orchestra” video!! (more on this later, time permitting)
• We have to understand that virtual teaching of orchestra is NOT going to be “the way it was”
• We must be patient and vigilant! TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS TIME!!
Communication

- Virtual meetings
  - Zoom
  - Microsoft Teams
  - Google Meet
  - Important: Do not publicly share meeting join/login information. Check the security features of the software and use them!
- Email
- Remind
Types of Virtual Assignments

• Playing Tests
• Practice “Vlogs”
• Listen and Reflect
• Play-alongs
• Music Theory
• Music Careers/Pathways

• Music History
• Exploration
• Essential Elements Interactive
• SmartMusic
• Sight-reading Factory
• Music First
• Other??
Playing Tests & Practice “Vlogs”

- Standard excerpt or technique exercise students submit

- Practice Vlog
  - Two parts:
    - Google Doc with directions and reflection items
    - Students upload a 5 minute practice sample video
    - Should be “vlog style” where student speaks to camera to explain what they are working on.
Listen & Reflect

- Create a listening playlist and allow students to choose a recording to listen to.
- Create prompts for students to answer.
- You can target a specific element of music (melody, timbre, etc.), have likes/dislikes, ask students to write a persuasive piece.

Possible Topics:
- Orchestral
- Instrument specific
- Conductors
- Musical style/genre
- Alternative Styles
Compare & Contrast

• Have students find two different performances of the same piece.
• Create prompts for students to answer.
• Can use Google Forms to collect data

Possible Topics:
• Student Orchestras
• Professional Orchestras
• Improvisations
• Arrangements of the same piece
Play-alongs

• Student record video of themselves playing along, or complete a record of their playing

• Students can play along:
  • with teacher
  • with other professionals
  • With tracks, recordings, etc.

• **Christian Howes**’ play-along series (lots of ability levels and styles)
  • Example
More assignment ideas...

- Music Theory
  - Lessons
  - Drills
- Music History
  - Projects/Papers
- Music Careers/Pathways
  - Projects/Papers
- Exploration of music
  - “Soundtrack of my life” project (thanks, Shawn Morton)

Provide options and freedom when possible!
Creating how-to or tutorial videos

- Investing in equipment
  - What do you want to do?
  - What do you have? What do you need?
- Make exercises more fun
  - Types:
    - Score screen capture with Voice Over
    - Play-along (Warm-up, accompaniment tracks, music minus one)
    - Technique
- Examples:
  - Warm-up: D-Major with Rhythmic Variations
  - Tutorial on a difficult section of music
  - Rhythm help with score
Grading

- Every school district will have their policies
- Be fair and consistent
- Be understanding of technology hurdles and challenges

- How do YOU grade?
The Future

- How will COVID-19 and future events change music education as we know it?
  - What will our classes look like?
  - How will staffing/budgeting be impacted?
  - Lots of difficult questions...

- Plan for additional distance learning
- Figure out what works (and doesn’t!) for your in your situation
Hardware I use...

- **Computer**
  - Apple 13” MacBook Pro, 16GB RAM, 1 TB SSD

- **Accessories:**
  - Samsung 1TB External SSD
  - iPad Pro 12” (with Apple Pencil)
  - iPad Pro 10”

- **Video cameras**
  - Zoom Q8, internal Mac webcam

- **Audio/Microphones**
  - Focusrite Scarlett 18i8
  - Rode NT-1A, Rode NT-5

Highly recommend a good microphone. USB mics are inexpensive and work well!
Software I use...

- Google Classroom
  - Manages all assignments, etc.
- Google Docs, Forms, Sheets, Slides, etc.
  - Easily sharable
- PDF Expert (pdf editing, annotating)
- ForScore (iPad)
- AnyTune Pro (for iPad)

- Logic Pro X (like Garageband)
- Final Cut Pro X (video editing)
- Amadeus Pro/Audacity
- Music Notation
  - Finale
  - Musescore
  - Noteflight
Resources

- Google Classroom
- Google Meet
- zoom.us
- Microsoft Teams
- YouTube - Christian Howe’s Play-along playlist
- Duck Soup - create e-documents (great for theory, etc.)
- MusicTheory.net - tons of lessons and customizable drills
- UpbeatMusicApp.com - play virtual duets (almost) in real time.
- Essential Elements Interactive - web companion to the method book
Virtual Ensembles

- **NOT** a necessity!
- More of a technical project than a musical project
- Was a way for me to provide students with something to remember the end of the year
- Difficult to complete with pieces that contain lots of tempo changes, rubato, etc.
- Need LOTS of storage space and a powerful computer
Virtual Ensembles

- Must make an audio click track for students to record to
- Students must record video with headphones to submit
- Each video is resized and put onto a grid layer in the video
- Audio is synced with each of the videos
The Star Spangled Banner
Millennium
By Richard Meyer
Special thanks...