NCCO Webinars

Part 4

Series 1, Webinar 4 - 2 April 2020: Now What?

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Hanawalt

So much of what we do requires interpersonal interaction in ensembles, conducting classes, etc. If anything, I hope this will highlight the unique nature of what we do and how important it is to have people time. So much is being said about virtual choirs, but choir at its essence is a bunch of people in a room listening to each other and reacting in the moment to what they hear going on around them. I would hope that it will make what we do even more special to those who are making decisions.

Dower

We will come back different. For instance, adopting cleaning protocols for the areas where the choir and band meet -- we're thinking differently about how to keep those spaces clean and how rehearsals might look different.

Swanson

What is happening with study away and summer programs at your universities?

Hanawalt

We have a 3-year summer masters program, the third summer of which is spent at our campus in England. FSU has cancelled all semester abroad programs for this year. We are involved in conversations about how we will handle that -- do we double up next summer? Do we give people an alternative through independent study or online substitution? What about students who planned to finish the masters this summer and enter a DMA program in the fall? There are a lot of issues to consider, but we're all in agreement that the London experience can't be replicated. We're hoping many will be able to defer until next summer.

A lot of our summer camps have been cancelled, and that's a recruitment pipeline. So we're looking for ways to fill the gap there as well.

Dilworth

We've cancelled summer courses on campus, and moved online.

Swanson

Any final thoughts on how communities are being impacted?

Farah

I think next year will be a wonderful opportunity to step up and center our work in collaboration and community engagement, reaching out to our colleagues in local schools and churches to be a resource. Also,

we should not be afraid to ask for help as we face decreased budgets. So much of what we do is collaborative, and this will be an opportunity to collaborate even more.

Swanson

Another question from an attendee -- "Would the panel view a move to another institution with pre-tenure status as ill-advised in the era of CARONA?"

Farah

If you are in a good position, I would stay.

Swanson

Final thoughts from our other panelists?

Hanawalt

There is fear that changes we make now might be a slippery slope. This is a temporary situation. Yes, it will have long-term ramifications on operations, but to a large extent we will get back to the way we used to do things. So we shouldn't be afraid to make needed accommodations now in order to make this situation work.

Dower

Things happen for a reason, and this has forced me to think a lot about my "why." Conducting is "what" we do, but when you know your "why" your "what" has more value. Use this time to focus in on why you do what you do and your "what" will become more meaningful.

Dilworth

I teach a choral pedagogy seminar, and the first day of class we talk about what kind of conductor will you be -- one who focuses on people, on process, or on product. We are usually told to engage on all three of those concepts simultaneously. But as we become more advanced, we begin to think more about the product. This is an opportunity to think more about the people we are serving, and understanding that choral music is a tool to bring people together and lift them, educate them, and inspire them.