NCCO Webinars

Part 2

Series 1, Webinar 7 - 15 April 2020: Onward, We Lead

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**[43:45] More specifically, what is the morale like among those you are leading, whether singers, staff, employees, student. Are people motivated? Listless? **

INSERT POLL RESULTS HERE

Tim: I believe there is fatigue, and people are running out of steam, and wondering if we're filling people's lives with busy work so it appears we deserve a paycheck, or is it helpful content? There is also the challenge of whether we can continue to provide helpful content.

Karen: I agree. We are all trying so very hard to take the high road, but there is no routine, and our students don't either. They don't have the advantage of seeing each other and buoying each other up. We're doing our best to make things work. At Northwestern we have about 100 students on a Zoom for a vocal solo class. They send in links of their performance for all to listen, and then the chat line is filled with uplifting comments. I am more tired teaching lessons on line than I am normally, because it's a different sort of concentration.

Eileen: I'm amazed that the transition has gone as well as it has, but I agree about the fatigue.

Catherine: The nine Chorus America staff is a microcosm of the rest of the world. I have some who are not happy being isolated, and we check in frequently and they have led the way to set up [casual] touch points such as a kitchen chat like we used to have at the office to regain a sense of normalcy and routine. We have folks who are parents now teaching their young child in addition to primary care giver. We've learned a lot about flexibility, and everybody's morale is pretty good. From the field we are hearing all sorts of things, from absolute despair to choruses saying that cancelling a concert saves them money which means they're in pretty good shape, to the struggles of professional singers with cancelled gigs.

[50:00] Question from the Audience: What authority can we connect with as we consider the unique health risks of singing in a group format, and whether we can convene our groups in the fall?

**A related question from the audience: Is there a space for our organizations to provide guidance when advocating for appropriate spacing in rehearsals? **

Tim: We're all concerned about the fall. Life may go back to some normalcy, but there could be restrictions on athletics and ensembles. There are ongoing discussions with the European Choral Association and the IFCM on those questions.

Karen: We are concerned in the voice studio as well. As I play the piano [in a lesson] and then the accompanist comes in to play, there are sanitation issues. I'm hearing that six feet is not enough for singers, that 13-15 feet is better but my room is not that big. A lot of choral rooms are not that big, either. The questions are being asked now, but we are a long way from knowing the answers.

[51:45] The NCCO has asked our standing task force for ensembles in the collegiate curriculum to look at the phenomenon of "virtual choir." Recognizing it as a unique thing that is very different from choir. We are hoping to put out a statement to help on this issue, providing guidance to our membership.

Tim: Singing is one part of it, but balance and blend is about listening. Thirteen feet doesn't do much good if I'm trying to blend with my neighbors. This crisis has shown that we have to be together. This is an art form that is necessarily space sharing, and I'm afraid that the science that will come out is not going to be helpful to us.