NCCO Webinars

Part 4

Series 1, Webinar 1 - 24 Mar 2020: Running Choir Online

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[53:45] Let's consider asynchronous events. Cutting and pasting real-world activities to virtual doesn't always work. Some of us have created new ideas that live in the virtual world. Marie, what are some ideas for building community that are inherently for the virtual world?

Marie: Elisa Causey has created a "March Madness": divide the choir into groups of four or five students, each group picks one piece that they think we should do in the fall semester. These pieces are all put into a bracket to be voted on by the group. This also builds relationships within the small groups. We use a chat app called Band.

Michael: I've invited my students into my repertoire decision process by asking them each to send me two pieces with a brief explanation of why the piece struck them personally, and why it might be a good fit for us as a community.

[57:27] Elise, you mentioned a digital scrapbook. Tell us about other ways you are helping your students get to know one another over the internet.

Elise: I have a lot of students who love composition and poetry, so I have created a folder for them to upload their work and share it online. I have another folder for students to upload and share their performance videos.

[57:27] Katherine, you use asynchronous events to story-tell. What are you doing?

Katherine: I've done some research into digital storytelling. Each student creates a five-minute video that reflects upon a particular prompt, which will then be collected into a digital scrapbook. My students want to do a group story, where one person writes and videos a sentence, then hands it off to the next person who adds the second sentence.

[1:02:10] Do you have suggestions about how a community can continue to develop musical skills when we aren't in the same space?

Michael: Our skills as profession musicians are not limited only to what we do in the practice room. The soft skills we develop as we network in graduate school and at conferences is absolutely essential for success in our field. Now is the time to keep practicing those skills.

[1:03:50] **Any final thoughts? **

Katherine: One of my students asked for some meetings online with professional singers.

Elise: We have to come to terms that things will not be the same. We can't try to force a square peg into a round hole. Rather than putting that pressure on our students, let's find ways to contribute to their wellbeing, and not add stress to their lives.

Marie: Our students are looking to us for positivity. It's on us to figure out a way to make this an opportunity. Tomorrow I'm doing a scavenger hunt with a $5 coffee gift card as first prize! We haven't touched on how this situation will affect recruitment, but maintaining positive community engagement will contribute to retention.

Michael: Park on the downward slope, so that everything we do is contributing toward the time when we finally get to be back together again.