

Chamber Singers and Singcopation 2020 Fall Semester Proposal

COVID-19 Choral Ensemble Framework:

The following are possible scenarios for holding choral ensemble classes at Mt. San Antonio College during the 2020 Fall semester. As is the case with our sporting team's practices and games, this guidance is not perfect; it should nonetheless provide opportunity for student-musicians to experience the many benefits of singing in a choir. With that thought in mind, it is important to note that one of the primary guiding themes of this effort has been to ensure we have "in person" ensembles for the Fall semester regardless of whether or not we ultimately have live concert performances. The worst-case scenario would be that we have choirs full of young men and women that still need our guidance musically, academically, and socially and having choirs provides them with the motivation and structure to enroll and excel in higher education. Our collective objective must be about more the individual student than the performance. In accordance with our system's Vision for Success and most of our missions, it must be about student success, retention, and equity!

Guiding Principles

1. Health, Safety and Mitigation

The health and safety of all Mt. SAC student-singers, music faculty and our audiences, as well as assisting in the mitigation of the spread of the disease are paramount in all recommendations made by the choral program.

2. Student Opportunity

As aligned with mission of California's community colleges, the WG strives to preserve the opportunities for our student-musicians to transfer and continue to improve their social and economic mobility. Many of our choral music majors receive scholarship money from the universities to which they transfer. They receive these scholarships based on what they have learned performing in choral ensembles at Mt. SAC.

3. Budget and Financial Consideration

Given the Governor's May revised budget, the choral program recognizes the fact that each individual district and/or institution is facing budget pressure for the upcoming fiscal year.

4. Other

Choral ensembles are a vital part of this institution and the choral program is working to reinforce that foundation as much as possible. Singing provides the opportunity for healing through music, easing mental health anxiety, and provides the Mt. SAC community with ambassadors of hope and unity.

Compromises

- Mt. SAC choral ensembles will have a class rehearsal plan that follows all guidelines set forth by the Governor of California, the State Chancellor's office, Local County and city guidelines, as well as local district and/or Mt. SAC decisions on following all governing bodies' edicts on COVID-19.
 - Plans A, B and C will be used in accordance with the mandates given from the county, district and Mt. SAC.
 - Plans A & B offer student-musicians an opportunity for a meaningful musical experience and a chance to transfer to a four-year institution.
 - All performances and competitions will fall within the district and/or Mt. SAC's travel guidelines.
 - All "in person" rehearsals will alter protocols to fit social distancing and any other practices where necessary.
 - It is strongly recommended that only essential personnel are permitted in the rehearsal classroom until the state is in Stage 4. However, districts and/or Mt. SAC may make their own decisions as permitted by the county and their own policies as it relates to others at rehearsals and performances
-

Plan A would be implemented in the scenario that it is deemed safe for choral ensembles to meet "in person" rehearsals, convening either in an indoor classroom or in an outdoor situation. If, at some point during the semester, it is determined to be unsafe to hold regular in-person rehearsals within Plan A's framework, ensembles would then move to Plan B.

Plan B is a synchronous hybrid proposal, which is in place in case it is deemed unsafe to use Plan A. If, at some point during the semester, it is determined to be unsafe to hold regular in-person rehearsals within Plan B's framework, ensembles would then move to Plan C.

Plan C is a completely online format. If it were determined by the choral director that moving to an online format is not feasible, ensembles would then need to move to Plan D.

Plan D would be to cancel the ensemble classes for the Fall of 2020. This scenario should be used only as a last resort scenario.

It is imperative that we continue to hold ensemble classes. If ensemble classes are canceled for the Fall semester or longer, the results could prove disastrous for the future of the Mt. SAC choral program. It took years to build this program from two choirs to seven choirs, and to attract the quality of singer that

we currently draw to Mt. SAC to participate in our groups. If we stop holding live rehearsals, it will take years for us to recover and have the same numbers and quality that currently exists.

I am in touch with leadership from national professional choral organizations, receiving and giving guidance for teaching, scholarship, and service. Teachers of applied lessons and ensembles have responded to the challenge of social distancing with creativity and determination. These choral ensemble classes are essential to our students who are planning to transfer to a 4-year institution as a Music Major.

Chamber Singers (38 singers) / Singcopation (12 Singers)

PLAN A (In person, on campus rehearsals):

- Choirs would rehearse at Mt. SAC during their normal assigned days and times (M/W, 3:00 – 4:10 / and Fri. 8:30 – 11:20).
- Choirs would meet in either a socially distanced classroom, the Fedderson Recital Hall, the Clarke Theater, the Food Services Cafeteria, or outdoors (an outdoor space would probably need to be around 80' by 24'). Possible outdoor venues could be a parking lot, a sports field, the grassy area in front of the library, the area between Building 12 & Building 13, the outside space west of the Starbucks.
- All chairs would be spaced out using the current recommended social distancing information for singing.
- If the students rehearsed in one of the above-mentioned indoor venues, the ensemble director would be in charge of sanitizing the room and wiping down chairs before rehearsals. Possible plastic coverings could be used on each of chairs where students will be sitting.
- If rehearsals are held in an outdoor venue, the ensemble director would be responsible for having volunteers or assigned Mt. SAC personnel, help to assemble pop-up tents, if needed.
- If rehearsals were held indoors, all of the doors to the classroom or theater would remain opened for increased air ventilation.
- If rehearsals were held in an outdoor venue, the students would be responsible setting their own chair in an assigned socially distant spot, and they would not touch anything else in the outdoor rehearsal space except their own personal music folder.
- The outdoor rehearsal venue would need to be within walking distance of restrooms.

- Students would bring their own personal music folders to rehearsal and none of the students would touch anything in the classroom except their own personal music and their chair.
- The door would be wiped down and propped open before each rehearsal, so that three students never need to touch the door handle.
- At the conclusion of each rehearsal, the ensemble director and/or volunteers would help to wipe down the chairs.
- At the conclusion of each rehearsal, the plastic chair coverings (if used) would be thrown in the trash by the student that was sitting on that particular chair cover.
- Masks would always be worn on the way into the rehearsal space and on the way out of the rehearsal space. Masks could also be worn at times during the rehearsal session.
- Every student's temperature will be taken as they arrive to the rehearsal space. If their temperature is within the accepted range, they will then be asked how they are feeling. If the student either has a fever or says he or she has been sick, or is feeling sick, they will then be sent home and asked to quarantine for 14 days.
- Small group sectional rehearsals (9-10 people) would be held in the Recital Hall or in room M2-108 periodically throughout the semester. We could possibly put in some inexpensive Plexiglas walls between each of the 9-10 singers to help separate them in an indoor space, if deemed necessary. This could also be used for Singcopation rehearsals.
- If by November, audiences are still not allowed to gather in theaters, the students would live-stream a concert performance over the internet (either from an outdoor or indoor venue). If small gatherings are allowed, we could accommodate the maximum amount of live audience members allowed by the county or Mt.SAC and still live-stream to a larger audience.
- Performances could be held in the Fedderson Recital Hall, an off-campus theater or at an outdoor theater venue.
- Performances could also be recorded or done virtually.

PLAN B (Synchronous Hybrid rehearsals)

- Choir ensembles would sometimes convene in a socially distanced classroom, either inside or outdoors; with additional lectures, projects and assignments occurring online.
- Funding would need to be made available to ensure that all students had access to an appropriate laptop computer, appropriate apps and software, a USB microphone, a headset, internet access connection to modem which would provide connectivity with fewer latency issues, wireless hotspot, digital recorder, and access to zoom and canvas.
- Students who cannot feasibly sing out loud at their homes or apartments (due to a crowded home situation, apartments with thin walls, homes that are not conducive to online learning, poor wifi connections, etc.) will need to have a space on the Mt. SAC campus where they can work on their online projects.
- “In Person” rehearsals could meet once a week or possibly once every other week throughout the Fall semester.
- All of the above social distancing, sanitizing and safety measures stated in Plan A would also occur in Plan B.
- The online portion of this hybrid class would include, but not limited to, sight singing, musicianship skills, guest artist lectures, working in small groups, listening assignments, critical writing assignments, IPA, community building projects, sectional or personal rehearsals.
- Vocal Jazz ensembles could also incorporate the following into their online meetings: recording projects, improve. assignments, and small group projects and performances.
- If at some point during the Fall semester it is deemed safe to have the ensembles meet their classes full-time on campus, all rehearsals will at that time move on campus full-time, continuing to use all of the social distancing, sanitation and safety measures stated above.
- Concert performance options would be the same as stated in Plan A

PLAN C (Exclusively holding a synchronous class online)

- Choir ensembles would meet exclusively online.
- This would be the most expensive option for our college.

- Funding would need to be made available to ensure that all students had access to an appropriate laptop computer, appropriate apps and software, a USB microphone, a headset, internet access connection to modem which would provide connectivity with fewer latency issues, wireless hotspot, digital recorder, and access to zoom and canvas.
- Students who cannot feasibly sing out loud at their homes or apartments (due to a crowded home situation, apartments with thin walls, homes that are not conducive to online learning, poor wifi connections, etc.) will need to have a space on the Mt. SAC campus where they can work on their online projects.
- Topics covered online would include, but not limited to, sight singing, musicianship skills, guest artist lectures, working in small groups, listening assignments, critical writing assignments, IPA, community building projects, sectional or personal rehearsals, and virtual choir assignments.
- A performance at the end of the Fall semester would include a few virtual choir projects (with the help of the Mt. SAC video engineering and digital art programs) and possible small group or solo performances by individual students.
- There would be no live performances for the entire semester; including no Wassail performance.

PLAN D

- All choral ensemble classes and performances are cancelled for the Fall semester. This could potentially be devastating to the Mt. SAC choral program and could take years for the program to recover.

Optional On Campus Rehearsal Scenario for Vocal Jazz Ensembles

- **Isolated hard-wired synchronous rehearsal on campus**
 - This must be done in accordance with CDC and institution guidelines for social distancing
 - Individuals, or socially distant groups of six, sing in separate rooms to form larger group
 - Each singer has their own microphone
 - Sound cables are laid to/from each room to mixing board
 - Mixing board sends audio in/out to each room
 - Video monitor of director provides visual cues
 - Singers sing simultaneously with conductor in real time with no lag

COVID-19 Response

Instructional Models

Basic Needs for Distance Learning:

General Consensus across the internet: No confirmed solution exists that incorporates audio, video, low latency, and large ensemble performance for online instruction. Options are available for audio only, which require an investment in hardware and internet connection for the best results. Most options are for small ensembles (10 or fewer).

- Internet Access
 - Ethernet connection to modem provides connectivity with fewer latency issues
 - Wireless hotspot
- Computer (tablets do not have full capabilities necessary for music majors)
 - 500 MB RAM, 8 GB Memory minimum preferred.
- Digital Recorder
 - Zoom (Not the conferencing app) Model H1N HandiRecorder, can double as USB microphone
 - Voice memo on smartphone can suffice
- USB MIDI keyboard
 - M-Audio Keystation 49 MK3 (49-key), Cost: \$100-120
 - Upgrade: M-Audio Keystation 61 MK3 (61-key), Cost: \$229
 - Downgrade: Rollup keyboard USB, MIDI out only, Cost: \$54 – 98
 - <https://piano-keyboard-reviews.com/buyers-guides/best-roll-up-piano-keyboard-review/>
- USB microphone
 - Yeti Blue, \$130
 - Zoom H1N (see above), \$120
 - Audio-Technica ATR2100x USB Cardioid Dynamic USB/XLR, \$99
 - Shure MV5, \$99
- Headphones
 - Over-ear, noise-cancelling preferable
 - In-ear headphones acceptable
- A MIDI input device is helpful, but maybe not necessary

Platforms, Apps & Software to Improve Sound

- Cleanfeed <https://cleanfeed.net> Cost: **FREE**
 - Use in conjunction with Zoom, etc. Provides higher quality audio signal during meetings
- Soundjack <https://www.soundjack.eu> Cost: **FREE**
 - Allows for low latency audio connection. Requires high speed internet

connection and low latency audio interface.

- Jamulus <http://lcon.sourceforge.net> Cost:
 - Supplies faster connection for live audio for remote student rehearsals. May only allow up to 3 connections at a time. No video connection.

Platforms, Apps & Software for Recording & Editing

- Flipgrid <https://info.flipgrid.com>
- Screencastify (FREE Chrome app): Download using Google Chrome browser
 - Recording Tutorial: https://www.youtube.com/embed/ZTzLEAg_kYY?
- DAW: Digital Audio Workstation for recording and editing recordings
 - Audacity <https://www.audacityteam.org> Cost: **FREE**
 - Reaper <https://www.reaper.fm> Cost: **\$60, but unlimited FREE trial**
 - Logic ProX <https://apple.com/logic-pro> Cost: **\$200**
 - ProApps for Education \$199 includes Final Cut (video) for Virtual Choir editing purposes
- Soundtrap <https://www.soundtrap.com/edu/> (Multi-track recording) 90 day free trial
- Music Notation Software
 - MuseScore <https://musescore.org/en> Cost: **FREE**
 - An online composing platform that will allow students to upload learning tracks of songs and create scrolling YouTube score videos with audio part tracks, [Example Playlist](#)
 - MusicXML - <https://www.musicxml.com/>

Optional Platforms, Apps & Software to Consider

- JamKazam <https://www.jamkazam.com> Cost: **FREE**
 - Ideal with seven or fewer performers. Audio-only, improves latency
 - The Platform is a hosting service. Registered users may submit, upload and post text, photos, pictures, comments, and other content, data or information, and may perform, stream, broadcast, and record.
- Internet MIDI **Cost: \$69.00**
<https://timewarptech.com/shop/music-software-apps/software/internet-midi/?v=7516fd43adaa> or <https://bit.ly/3ejrUI7>
 - Enables connection of any 2 MIDI instruments together over the Internet, for Mac and PC. When you play notes on your MIDI piano, those same notes are simultaneously played on the remote keyboard

Equip singers with resources for self-directed learning

- Additional Instructional resources for learning tracks, musicianship aids
 - Music Prodigy: <http://www.musicprodigy.com/> provides a software solution for music assessment. Can provide real-time assessment for multiple parts for vocalists. Music must be input to MusisXML format and pages of music scanned in png format. Labor intensive but functional.
 - Music Notation Software
 - Sibelius First <https://www.avid.com/sibelius> Cost: **FREE**
 - Upgrade: Sibelius Ultimate Cost: \$299 or \$9.99/mo
 - Noteflight Basic <https://www.noteflight.com> Cost: **FREE**

- Upgrade: Noteflight Learn Cost: \$69 to \$1000 depending on number of users and access to libraries of genre-specific sheet music for students
- Finale - <https://www.finalemusic.com/> \$600.00
- The Choral Window - <https://thechoralwindow.com/> rehearsal information/materials
Cost: FREE
- **ChorAmor:** <https://www.choramor.com> resources and training for choral conductors
Cost: FREE

Additional Software/Apps:

- <https://www.Voicelessons.com> (needs a midi recorder) – technology released 6/24
- Internet Midi - <https://bit.ly/3ejrUI7> (connects any two MIDI instruments together)
- App Accompanist <https://www.appcompanionist.com/>
- PianoTrax <https://www.pianotrax.com/>
- BandLab – collaborate on recordings <https://www.bandlab.com/>
- Adobe Premiere Pro <https://www.adobe.com/products/premiere.html>
- My Choral Coach (Steve Freeman, GIA and ACDA) \$50.00 for 6 months – students are free
<https://matchmysound.com/my-choral-coach/> or <https://acda.org/my-choral-coach/>
- Musescore <https://musescore.org/en> or XML <https://www.musicxml.com/> (printed music to use with My Choral Coach)
- Digital-Stage.org (new software from Germany is being developed)
https://digital-stage.org/?page_id=674
- Whats App – Iphone (Free)
- Sight Reading Factory App <https://www.sightreadingfactory.com/> - \$183.00
- LOLA Music Studios (latency free and expensive) <https://www.lolamusicstudios.com/>
- A Digital Audio Workspace (DAW) such as ProTools, Logic, Audacity, Melodyne, Cakewalk, etc.
- Video editing software such as iMovie, Final Cut Pro, Adobe Premier, Movavi, Lightworks, **DaVinci Resolve**, etc.