

JULY 13, 2020

COVID-19 RESPONSE REPORT

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Summary

The following is a summary of ideas taken from the CODA member survey that sought information as to how collegiate orchestra directors might rehearse and perform in four modified educational scenarios: On-Campus Instruction with Social Distancing, Blended Instruction, Modular Instruction, and Fully Remote Instruction. The survey also included several supplemental questions regarding travel for tours, plans for graduate conducting students, modifications to rehearsal procedures, and resources that could be shared with other CODA members. The survey was conducted from June 5-12, 2020. Additionally, CODA is a co-sponsor of two studies examining how SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, might be spread while playing a wind instrument. A link to preliminary results from one of these studies is included in Appendix B.

Introduction

During this unprecedented time in which the routine of our daily lives has been so drastically changed, many activities on college campuses have been curtailed because of the threat to public health. This will pass; our scientific community is working at an extraordinary pace to find a treatment and a vaccine. Our country will get back to a “new normal” and our campuses will welcome back students and faculty. This may happen as soon as August or it may take a bit longer. Either way, CODA joins its colleagues in CBDNA, ACDA, NCCO, NBA, and NAFME in the belief that large ensembles, specifically orchestras, at colleges/universities of all sizes provide an “invaluable and irreplaceable experience.”

It is essential that our “new normal” include large ensembles as they provide space for innovation, critical thinking, and an opportunity for exploration of diversity and creativity. University/College orchestras provide the only experiential ensemble training opportunity for students seeking to become professional orchestral musicians. Students involved in orchestral programs at colleges and institutions work collaboratively to study, realize, recreate, and give life to great works of sonic art.

Additionally, large ensembles provide students/community members an opportunity to be part of something greater than themselves and in many cases act as the foundation for community outreach, university/department recruiting and alumni engagement. Large ensembles contribute to the greater university by providing music for graduation activities, athletics, and special ceremonies; they also offer students the opportunity to travel and they create outreach opportunities. Our large ensembles are often the public “face” of our school, department or college, one of the most tangible and identifiable examples of a cohesive and representative student body.

Orchestras and other large ensembles are an integral part of music on college and university campuses nationwide, and are essential components of the collegiate experience as we move to a post pandemic “new normal.” The orchestral ensemble, by its very nature, comprises a more diverse instrumental make-up than for example, choral ensembles, bands and wind ensembles, and as such, presents its own unique set of circumstances.

CODA is an organization representing a range of constituents. Our membership includes orchestra directors leading programs in liberal arts colleges, schools of music, conservatories, and departments of music throughout the United States and further afield. CODA is very much a member-driven association, and the results and information presented in this document are a direct result of input from CODA members.

In June 2020 CODA membership was surveyed regarding plans for collegiate orchestral instruction in Fall 2020, taking into account the current COVID crisis. We recognize that the COVID crisis is continuing to evolve and has the potential to change rapidly. As leaders of collegiate orchestral programs in this time, the need for flexibility regarding concert programming and performance activities, as well as modifications to rehearsal structure and schedules, is paramount.

This current document represents a summary of some of the plans of our membership as of June 2020. We recognize the limitations of scientific knowledge and studies to date, and make it clear this document is not advocating for any specific approach to orchestral study. Rather, we present the information herein at face value, offering suggestions from within the CODA membership which may be of value to colleagues in similar collegiate settings.

CODA has joined a coalition of arts organizations supporting two studies involving the potential spread of COVID-19 for performing arts groups being conducted at the University of Colorado at Boulder and Colorado State University. We are following the development of knowledge and a consensus about how to make music safely, and will update our members as that information becomes available.

A large number of articles have been published about the spread of COVID-19 in both scientific journals and in the media. Newspapers of record, including *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal*, have been regularly summarizing scientific conclusions and publishing articles detailing the most up to date recommendations about mitigating the risk of contracting COVID-19 for the general public, as well as for a variety of work and social situations.

There is a broad consensus among scientists that the most common method for transmission of COVID-19 is “close-up, person-to-person interactions for extended periods.” According to the Centers for Disease Control, prolonged exposure as it relates to COVID-19 is defined as “15 minutes or more of unprotected contact with someone less than 6 feet away.” A consensus among scientists is that it is uncommon for people to contract COVID-19 from contaminated surfaces or brief outdoor encounters.

One area where a clear consensus has not yet emerged is the extent to which aerosols are a risk factor in the transmission of COVID-19. (Aerosols are microscopic airborne particles that may stay in the air for long periods of time and be carried around a room through the air, as opposed to the heavier droplets that fall quickly to the ground.) The answer to the question of whether these small aerosols are an important transmission danger for COVID-19 has important implications for all indoor activities, including music-making.

On July 6th both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* published articles about the debate about whether aerosols are infectious, reporting that a group of 239 scientists has written an open letter maintaining that the aerosols are dangerous, while the World Health Organization “maintains that the research is still inconclusive.” The group of scientists writing the letter believes that even though “scientists have not been able to grow the coronavirus from aerosols in the lab, that doesn’t mean aerosols are not infective.” If the virus is significantly infectious through aerosols, as the group of scientists maintains, then “ventilation systems in schools, nursing homes, residences and businesses may need to minimize recirculating air and add powerful new filters. Ultraviolet lights may be needed to kill viral particles floating in tiny droplets indoors.” On the other hand, according to *The New York Times*, “The World Health Organization has long held that the coronavirus is spread primarily by large respiratory droplets that, once expelled by infected people in coughs and sneezes, fall quickly to the floor...In its latest update on the coronavirus, released June 29, the W.H.O. said airborne transmission of the virus is possible only after medical procedures that produce aerosols.”

According to an article published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, SARS-CoV-2, the virus causing COVID-19, is present and viable in aerosols, and aerosol transmission is “plausible.” But *The Wall Street Journal* notes that there is disagreement among scientists about whether these aerosols represent a significant risk in the transmission of COVID-19, reporting this week that “some scientists say while aerosol transmission does occur, it doesn’t explain most infections. In addition, the virus doesn’t appear to spread widely through the air.” John Brooks, a spokesman for the Centers for Disease Control, was quoted in the article as saying “if this were transmitted mainly like measles or tuberculosis, where infectious virus lingered in the airspace for a long time, or spread across large airspaces or through air-handling systems, I think you would be seeing a lot more people infected.”

Specific information and a consensus about the risks of making music have been slower to emerge than recommendations for the general public, especially in the United States, where the spread of the virus has not been contained or effectively controlled. Orchestras in Germany and Austria have been proactive in commissioning guidelines from research hospitals about how to safely hold orchestra rehearsals and give performances. These papers agree that the droplets that transmit COVID-19 do not travel further than 2-3 feet, regardless of the instrument being played; as a result, the guidelines for orchestral playing in Germany have social distancing as a principal recommendation. The recommendations in these papers do not try to mitigate transmission via aerosols, since information about the importance of that mechanism of transmission has not yet been established. Many European orchestras resumed rehearsal and concert activities utilizing these guidelines as soon as the second week of May, and as of July 1st, we are not aware of any illnesses within these orchestras as a result of these concert activities. In the United States, some professional orchestras have had limited performances of chamber works for streaming or online platforms, but none have yet met as complete ensembles. Some performing arts associations, such as the Percussive Arts Society and the Performing Arts Center Consortium, have released very specific guidelines within their specialties, and college music schools and departments are currently developing their own protocols, within the guidelines set by their schools and local and state governments.

Ideas for Modified Instruction

Scenario 1: On-Campus Instruction with Social Distancing

In this scenario, on-campus instruction takes place with class size limitations and/or social distancing guidelines implemented. Regarding rehearsal plans, numerous CODA members anticipate dividing their orchestras into two or more smaller orchestras/ensembles. Others are considering a strings-only orchestra or performing only repertoire that features the string sections with minimal woodwind, brass, and percussion parts. A few members anticipate either rehearsing one orchestra in a larger and/or outdoor space or possibly rehearsing each section of the orchestra separately. Some members are waiting for university policies and the results of COVID-19 studies to inform their rehearsal decisions.

Most of the members anticipate live-streaming their orchestra concerts with little or no audiences. Other popular options include virtual/pre-recorded projects (individual student recordings compiled, synced, and edited into one group recording) and performing concerts with social distancing guidelines implemented for the audience. While several members are waiting for university policies and the results of COVID-19 studies before they make any decisions about performances, a few members anticipate performing in alternative, larger, or outdoor venues. It should be noted that some members anticipate reducing the number of orchestra concerts they will perform and the length of said concerts, and some institutions have decided to cancel performances for the upcoming semester.

Rehearsal Plans

- Divide the orchestra into multiple small ensembles
- Split into two smaller chamber orchestras
- Strings-only orchestra or string-heavy repertoire
- Rehearse sections of the orchestra separately
- Rehearse in larger and/or outdoor spaces

Performance Plans

- Live-streaming concerts with little or no audiences
- Virtual/pre-recorded projects
- Perform traditional concerts with social distancing guidelines implemented for orchestra onstage and audience in performance space
- Alternative, outdoor, and/or larger venues
- Perform fewer and shorter concerts
- Cancel all performances

Scenario 2: Blended Instruction

The blended scenario would involve in-person and remote instruction occurring concurrently. A likely configuration under this scenario would include a portion of the orchestra in the rehearsal or performance space in person while the other members are participating through a platform like Zoom. Survey respondents anticipated dividing up their ensembles in a variety of ways. Some indicated they would rotate from rehearsal to rehearsal which students would participate remotely and which would be in person, while others stated they would maintain the same students as remote for the full semester or concert cycle.

It seems that most ensembles, in a blended scenario, will focus on smaller or chamber orchestra pieces. Most will utilize instrumentation that can be done in person while distanced, but will supplement with some type of remote component (individual lessons, sectionals, practice tracks, etc.). Very few ensembles expect to do traditional in-person concerts, and most plan to either livestream in-person concerts with no audience, or develop a virtual concert.

Rehearsal Plans

- Divide the orchestra into multiple small ensembles in person with some remote component (sectionals, research on background of pieces, score study, critical listening assignments, guest artist presentation, skills/orchestral excerpts lab)
- Practice help from faculty/guest artists including live and recorded tracks
- Phased chamber music in collaboration with audio recording department
- Rehearse individually remotely early quarter, sectionals only mid-quarter, then finally altogether near performance
- Ensemble boot camp for Freshmen, combined with community-building work remotely with all orchestra members (guest speakers, musical diary, repertoire discussion)
- Group rehearsal over Zoom playing along with a recording

Performance Plans

- Virtual concerts (This includes full group recordings as well as each player remotely recording their part to a click track and then synchronizing the individual recordings into a final recording.)
- Live-streamed concerts
- No performances
- Fewer concerts
- Research presentation as part of a livestream concert
- Livestream performance from students on campus with video presentation from students working remotely
- Small chamber events with interview segments
- Creating a sound installation
- A performance project exploring source texts on historically informed performance practices

Scenario 3: Modular Instruction

Modular approaches involve dividing the semester into smaller, self-contained units with plans for both in-person and remote learning. This approach builds in flexibility to shift if necessary from in-person to remote or vice versa, while accomplishing smaller performance or learning goals over the semester.

Most respondents indicated that they plan to rehearse in person, generally with smaller groups or with strings only. One response cited a specific module length of seven weeks. Those anticipating a possible transition to remote work plan to have sectionals on Zoom, with some including individual playing tests. Other remote plans included experiential topics (audition techniques, orchestral skills and technique) and content focused on repertoire, score study and analysis.

Most respondents indicated they are planning for live performance, with a limited audience and/or live-streaming. Several indicated they planned to have smaller ensembles. A wide range of responses emerged regarding frequency of performance – from a single performance at the end of the semester, at the end of each module, to rescheduling a live performance if necessary. One plans to record a “performance” in rehearsal and upload the video to an online platform. Another mentioned using the Acapella app for recording chamber ensembles. Notably absent were mentions of video compilations.

The most common response under repertoire and ensembles was to divide the strings and non-strings, or to have strings only. Chamber ensembles were also frequently mentioned, including larger chamber ensemble repertoire for eight or more parts, serenades, concerti grossi, etc.

Rehearsal Plans

- **Live/in person**
 - Small groups/sectionals with distancing
 - 7-week modules
 - Split orchestra
 - String orchestra only
- **Live rehearse then transition to remote**
 - Sectionals: technical work, fingerings/bowings etc.; one person playing, others muted
 - Individual practice and playing tests
- **Remote**
 - Experiential projects
 - Audition techniques
 - Orchestral skills/technique, part preparation
 - Orchestral excerpts assignments
 - Musicianship
 - Additional Content
 - Study literature
 - Score study/repertory/analysis project
 - Guest speakers
 - Make practice videos for sections, modules in remote education platform for additional repertoire

Performance Plans

- **Live (limited audience)**
 - Livestream
 - Performance frequency:
 - at the end of each module
 - one concert at end of semester
 - reschedule live performance if necessary/possible
 - Smaller ensembles:
 - Large chamber pieces
 - Separate winds (spaced apart), strings, brass
 - Shared performances (with other ensembles or a group of smaller ensembles)
- **Remote**
 - Record rehearsal sessions or a ‘performance,’ upload to a remote learning platform
 - For chamber groups – use Acapella app to compile individual audio and video recordings

Scenario 4: Fully Remote Instruction

The prospect of a fully virtual, remotely-held semester presents evident challenges for college orchestra directors. About half of CODA members who submitted plans for the fall indicated that either this scenario did not apply to them, or that in the event it occurs, orchestra will not be offered. The other half of respondents outlined possible activities that broke down into three categories: music making (practicum), non-music making (theoretical), or a combination of the two (see select list of ideas below). Performance formatting suggestions included virtual orchestras or preparing repertoire to perform in person at a later date. Respondents generally indicated they would focus on standard orchestral repertoire, orchestral excerpts, and/or chamber music.

Practicum activities

- Learning orchestral excerpts
- Chamber ensembles
- Sectionals
- Individual lessons
- Remotely held masterclasses

Theoretical activities

- Guest speakers
- Active listening
- Score analysis
- Musicianship assignments
- Research-based or reflective written assignments
 - ex. Research the life of a great performer
- Discussion topics
 - ex. Musical styles, Physicality of playing, Psychology of the ear, Personal development

Course formats/tools/strategies

- Designating assignments based on students' major (performance, music ed, BA, non-major, etc)
- Webinars
- Zoom meetings/discussions
- Google Docs (for students to share ideas about practicing, listening reflections, etc)

Supplemental Questions

1. Do you have plans to travel or tour? How?

The large majority of respondents do not plan to travel or tour this coming year, and noted that traveling and touring are not possible under the current circumstances.

All of the respondents who indicated that they do have plans to travel qualified their plans by noting that the trips may not be possible, or may not be permitted. Most of the existing plans for trips were for short local or regional tours; only one respondent indicated plans for an international tour, in June of 2021.

2. What plans do you have with your graduate conducting students in terms of recitals, podium time, etc?

Almost all of the members who supervise graduate conducting students feel that these students will have their normal opportunities, within the limitations on class size and social distancing for the orchestra and campus as a whole. Many respondents expect their graduate conducting students to have the same amount of podium time, or more, but with smaller ensembles. Several respondents also indicated that their students would have added responsibilities, because the plans for the orchestra involved breaking the group into smaller ensembles which rehearse at the same time.

Rehearsal Plans

- Divide the orchestra into multiple small ensembles in person, including smaller orchestras, chamber groups, divided ensembles, strings only.
- Alternate repertoire

Performance Plans

- Recitals expected to be recorded during rehearsal times or live streamed, rather than performed for an audience.

3. Do you have plans or anticipate the need to adjust rehearsal times, length, frequency, scheduling, spaces, etc? If so, briefly describe them.

Many are waiting to hear from university administration regarding directives relating to maximum class sizes, maximum class length, additional time in between classes, and other factors effecting rehearsals.

- Breaking ensembles into smaller groups may necessitate:
 - needing extra rehearsal spaces
 - adding additional class sections for rehearsals
 - needing additional faculty to lead sections that meet at the same time
- Larger rehearsal venues may be needed
- Shorter rehearsal times, and/or fewer rehearsals are anticipated by some

4. Would you be willing to share resources (music, instruments, etc) with CODA members? If yes, what would you be willing to share, and how would you be willing to share it?

Almost all CODA members were open to the possibility of sharing resources, though the majority of these responses suggested that sharing would likely be limited to music library items and resources that could be shared digitally. Respondents noted that sharing instruments, protective equipment, or similar items might not be permitted by their school administrations.

CODA COVID-19 Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee Members

This report was prepared by the following members of the CODA COVID-19 Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee. The committee was commissioned by CODA National President Kimcherie Lloyd in May 2020 to collect and distribute information to CODA members for the purpose of assisting them in planning their individual pedagogical response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Appendix A: Suggested Repertoire

- Adams: Shaker Loops for Seven Strings
Bach, JC: Symphonies
Bach, JS: Brandenburg Concertos; Orchestral Suites
Barber: Adagio for Strings
Barker: Adoramus Te
Beethoven: Coriolan Overture; early works
Bergsma: Dances from a New England Album
Bloch: Concerto Grosso Nos. 1 and 2
Bonis: Bourree
Borodin/Sargent: Nocturne
Brahms: Symphony No. 1, IV
Britten: Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings; Simple Symphony
Carter: Flute Concerto
Copland – Appalachian Spring Suite for 13 Instruments; “Hoe Down” from Rodeo (strings version); Nonet
Corelli: Concerti grossi
Daugherty: Flamingo
Debussy: Danse sacrée et profane for harp and strings; Prelude to the Afternoon a Faun
Dillon: Amadeus ex machina
Dvorak: String Serenade; Symphony No. 6
Elgar: Chanson de Matin; Chanson de Nuit; Introduction and Allegro; Serenade for Strings
Enescu: Chamber Symphony
Esmail, Reena: Teen Murti
Estrella de Mescoli, Blanca: Ballet Miniatura
Finzi: A Severn Rhapsody
Gabrieli: Canzona for Two String Orchestras; Sonata Pian’ e forte
Garrop: Postcards from Wyoming; Thunderwalker
Giannini: Prelude & Fugue
Ginastera: “Danza Final from” Estancia arranged for strings & percussion
Gould: Spirituals for Strings
Gounod: Petit Symphonie for Winds
Grieg: Lyric Pieces
Handel: Concerti grossi
Haydn: Symphony Nos. 6, 20, 30, 70, and 100
Higdon: Wind Shear
Hindemith: Trauermusik for Viola and Strings
Holst: Brook Green Suite; St. Paul’s Suite
Honegger: Fantasio
Husa: Pastoral for Strings
Ives: The Unanswered Question
Krasa: Overture for Small Orchestra
Lutoslawski: Chain 1
Mahler: Adagietto from Symphony No. 5; Symphony No. 4 (chamber version); Das Lied von der Erde (chamber version)
McTee: Adagio for String Orchestra
Mendelssohn: String Symphonies
Meyer: Ildylls of Pegasus
Montgomery: Source Code
Mozart: Divertimenti; Gran Partita; Overture to La finta giardiniera; Serenades; Symphony Nos. 22, 27, 29, 30, and 41
Newbold: Ghosts of Brandenburg; Perseus
Nielsen: Little Suite for Strings
Pärt: Fratres; Cantus in Memory of Britten
Piazzolla: Milonga en Re
Puccini: Chrysanthemums
Purcell: Chacony in G Minor
Ravel: Mother Goose Suite
Respighi: Ancient Airs and Dances Suite 1
Rimsky-Korsakov: Sextet (arr. for 18 players)
Saint-Saens: Carnival of the Animals
Schnittke: Polyphonic Tango
Schoenberg: Chamber Symphony Nos. 1 and 2
Schreker: Chamber Symphony
Schubert: Piano Quartets; Piano Quintets;
Shaw, Caroline: Entr’acte
Symphony No. 5; Death and the Maiden
Seeger, Ruth Crawford: Music for Small Orchestra
Sibelius: Andante festive; Valse Triste
Standridge: Danza Oscura
Still: Danzas de Panama; “In Memoriam: The Colored Soldiers Who Died for Democracy
Strauss: Vienna Philharmonic Fanfare
Stravinsky: Dances Concertantes; Dumbarton Oaks; Octet for Winds; Suites
Strelau: Concerto Grosso; Four Miniatures
Tchaikovsky: Nutcracker Suite; Serenade for Strings; String Sextet in D Minor, Op. 70 (“Souvenir de Florence”)
Telemann: TWV 55:g:44 for mixed ensembles
Thomson: Cantabile for Strings
Vaughan Williams: Five Variants on Dives and Lazarus
Villa Lobos: Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5
Wagner: Siegfried Idyll
Walker: Lyric for Strings
Warlock: Capriol Suite (strings or full orchestra)
Whitacre: October
Williams: A Prayer for Peace
Zwilich: Chamber Symphony for 6 Players
- Various strings-only or string-heavy music by Barber, Bartok, Bates, Brant, Ellington, Foss, Honegger, Hovhaness, Locatelli, Lutoslawski, Penderecki, Rameau, Respighi, Satie, Suk, Vaughan Williams, and Vivaldi
- Some respondents encouraged conductors to look for works by composers of color and women composers. Additionally, commissioning new pieces from university student and resident composers, specifically in memory of George Floyd, was also suggested.

Appendix B: Links to Relevant Studies and Reports

Please note that this appendix will be updated in the version of this report on the CODA website as more studies are completed.

Performing Arts Aerosol Study, Preliminary Results
University of Colorado, Boulder and University of Maryland

<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/unprecedented-international-coalition-led-by-performing-arts-organizations-to-commission-covid-19-study/>