

Fall 2020 Session — FAQs

There are two things that make this fall's offerings confusing, we think — first, because we are mostly doing it via Zoom, there are automatically differences; and, second, because we are mostly doing it via Zoom, we made some changes that we think will take advantage of the differences (i.e., not just trying to translate our usual program onto an online program, but trying to take advantage of some of the things that can be done online better than in person). Anyway, here are some answers — if you don't see your question below, email us!!!

Swing Band and Woodwind Choir are at the same time on the same nights — do I have to choose? And who is teaching each?

Yes, these two groups have always met at the same time and are continuing to do so, so you do have to choose. Linda is doing Woodwind Choir and either Jamie or Diane will be doing Swing Band.

What are Special Ensembles and why doesn't the first one — the Fireworks Overture -- include all instruments?

Special Ensembles are one of the things we added to take advantage of more flexibility online. Different ones will be offered during the session and we will try to include opportunities for all instruments at least once during the session. Each special ensemble will have two or three rehearsals and then will do a virtual recording. We thought trying the Fireworks Overture in its original instrumentation (although with fewer than 24 oboes and 12 bassoons) would be of interest to people. Later special ensembles may include a flute/clarinet choir, a brass ensemble, or one of the wind divertimentos.

How many pieces will the groups be working on and will each piece include doing a virtual performance?

The band will be working on the three pieces that have been sent out, the string ensemble will also be working on two or three pieces, and woodwind choir and swing band will each be working on one or two pieces. Each special ensemble will be working on one specific piece. There will be a virtual performance opportunity for each piece, each will be posted on our YouTube channel when finished, and there will be an end-of-session "concert" to share all pieces with each other.

What if I want to participate in rehearsals but don't want to do the virtual performances?

That's fine — you are welcome to do that! Just don't sign up to do any solos on the recording if you are not going to do the recording!

What are the "parking lot" (band) or "socially distanced" (strings) rehearsals and why won't they be on Wednesday evenings?

These are opportunities for people who feel comfortable with it to come together and rehearse in person. They are not on Wednesday evenings because we want to make sure that everyone is able to attend all the Wednesday evening rehearsals and some (many) people may not be comfortable with in-person rehearsals, even outdoors. We will try to stream these rehearsals via Zoom, though, if we are able to do that.

What happened to the Monday afternoon band rehearsals and what are the “Tech Help” Sessions for?

As you know, our theme for this fall is working with and taking advantage of technology to improve our skills as musicians. That involves a LOT of learning for most people, so we decided that having sessions specifically to help people with using the different technological tools that are available was more important than adding another virtual session, and we moved them to Monday evenings so that more people could attend them. There will be different sessions offered at different times, depending on what people are working on, but they will include such topics as Amazing Slow-Downer (this coming Monday evening), Acapella, iMovie, Audacity, BandLab, and of course help on each step of creating a video for a virtual performance.

What is “John’s Levels Program”??

A complete description is beyond the scope of this FAQ, but it is a WONDERFUL experience in working to improve your musical skills through using computer technology, expertly guided by John every step of the way. We can re-send the email about it for anyone who wants more information or you can get in touch with John.

How will the virtual rehearsals work??

Generally, the way it works is that the conductor picks out a section in one of the pieces. We show you things in the score, like how one part sometimes echos the other and sometimes answers the other. We listen to it and watch the score a couple of times; we speak the parts if the rhythm is tricky; and then everyone mutes themselves and perhaps practices the section a bit; then we put on the recording (usually at a slower tempo with the Amazing Slow Downer or other software) and everyone (muted) plays along. Sometimes an individual or the conductor can also play something or one part as an example or for others to play along with. (We can’t play all together due to the sound lag (listening to what is going on, everyone is at a different place in the music even though they are playing with the same recording! Different Internet speeds and distance make it impossible without a huge amount of special equipment.) Swing band may be using BandLab, which will work a little differently, and strings will mostly work with Dorcas or Oliver demonstrating.

What about the Zoomsoirées?

The Zoomsoirées will be continuing every week, alternating between Thursday and Friday evenings. We have loved being able to have a regular performance opportunity for people — an example of one advantage of computer technology!!

Any other questions?

Email us and ask! No question is “stupid,” and if you have a question there are probably several other people with the same question!