



## VIRTUAL FESTIVAL VIABILITY

Holding a Festival in 2021 is certainly viable for all local festivals. It may take a little ingenuity and planning on your part and it will probably not have the same footprint as past festivals but you can do it. Your local festival may choose to:

- Plan for an in-person festival (depending on local/provincial/venue Covid restrictions)
- Use a virtual platform exclusively
- Use some combination of in-person and virtual (i.e. piano and strings in-person; voice and brass and winds virtual)

You may also choose to offer certain disciplines and not offer others. Or, you may decide that you will offer only one class in each discipline (divided into age groups) which will have competitors perform two diverse selections, own choice (to ensure competitors have enough rep for a provincial recommendation). Whichever way you decide to go, please remember that to be sent on to the Provincial Festival (whether held in-person or virtual), competitors must still receive a provincial recommendation. If straying from the AMFA Syllabus (such as the situation we describe above), please be in contact with Wendy regarding how to deal with provincial recommendations. We know that the 2021 festival season might be unlike any we have planned for before and we are committed to working with the locals to allow provincial recommendations as much as possible (provided repertoire selections are suitable for the provincial festival).

If you are planning a full or partial in-person festival, please set an internal review date (“last day to change”) to determine whether having an in-person festival is still viable at that point. AMFA Recommends that you set this date PRIOR to your entry deadline so that, if you have to move to a virtual format, you can still inform competitors before they enter and outline the new requirements for entry submissions (competitors need time to prepare videos if you go with some sort of video delivery). **And remember, if you hold any in-person classes, you must keep within all guidelines issued by the Alberta Government, your local municipality, and your venue/s.** We have not listed these guidelines as they are constantly changing and could be totally different by the time your “last day to change” deadline comes. As well, rules are different from city to city and venue to venue so please be in early and regular contact with your venues and local government.

Below, we have listed the virtual platforms that we think would be the best options for virtual delivery. Of course, there are other options so feel free to explore everything available.

### RECOMMENDED VIRTUAL OPTIONS

1. Live Delivery through ZOOM Video Conferencing
  - a. Schedule the Festival like you normally would with classes and sessions.
  - b. Send participants & adjudicator the Zoom link for that class/session.
  - c. Each participant would compete from their own home.
  - d. After the performances, the adjudicator would give each competitor a spoken adjudication.
  - e. Marks would be awarded either at that time or sent to them with a written adjudication sheet later.

#### PROS:

- Classes are live performances.
- Competitors receive immediate feedback regarding their performance.

- Each competitor gets to see other performances in their class (possibly creating some comradery with other competitors).

#### CONS:

- Internet connections can be slow and can affect the performance. This could be a problem on the side of the competitor/s, the adjudicator, or the moderator. Ideally, everyone in the class would have reliable, high-speed internet connections and that is just not likely.
- All competitors may have to have a knowledge of how to adjust ZOOM settings to account for sounds produced by their instrument (Default Zoom settings are not great for musical performances but they can be changed).
- Your festival (or someone in your area) will have to have a Zoom Pro account for the period you will be using it. Accounts are \$20.00 per month (as of this writing in August 2020).
- Some competitors may forget to mute while in session.
- Everyone competing will be in a different room, on a different instrument, and on different devices (phones, tablets, computers, etc.) which could benefit competitors with access to better facilities and equipment.

## 2. Pre-Recorded Delivery through YouTube or Facebook

### a. YouTube

- i. Participant will pre-record the performance on any device (phone, tablet, computer).
- ii. Competitor must then create or have a YouTube channel (no cost for this) and upload the video to the channel.
- iii. Video must be marked as public or unlisted (unlisted means that the video will be publically assessable but you can only access it with the link). This link (either public or unlisted) is sent to your local festival at a set deadline date.
- iv. The Local Festival compiles the links into classes and sends these to the adjudicator along with the adjudicator forms. Give your adjudicator a deadline that you want them returned to you. This deadline might be different for different adjudicators depending upon number of entries for certain disciplines.
- v. After receiving marks and adjudication sheets, you will send these to the competitors. You will also notify competitors of results and post them where you normally would (website, social media, etc.)

#### PROS:

- YouTube is a freely assessable tool – anyone can sign up for this.
- Internet connection is not as much of an issue as the competitor will have time to upload.
- Many of your competitors will already know how to use this tool (probably better than you do).
- Gives a lot of flexibility to your adjudicator/s.

#### CONS

- Everyone competing will be in a different room, on a different instrument, and on different devices (phones, tablets, computers, etc.) which could benefit competitors with access to better facilities and equipment.
- Competitors will not see other performances unless you send them the links to other performers. This would involve a release form that the competitor/parent has to sign (so you can distribute their private link).
- Competitors do not receive immediate results (and may not for weeks/months).

- Competitors can re-record as many times as they want before they upload. It is not a first time scenario. You can dictate rules for this but they would be nearly impossible to enforce.

b. Facebook

- i. Participant will pre-record the performance on any device (phone, tablet, computer).
- ii. Competitor must then create or have a Facebook page (no cost for this) and upload the video.
- iii. Privacy settings on the video must be marked as public. The link for this performance is sent to your local festival at a set deadline date.
- iv. The Local Festival compiles the links into classes and sends these to the adjudicator along with the adjudicator forms. Give your adjudicator a deadline that you want them returned to you. This deadline might be different for different adjudicators depending upon number of entries for certain disciplines.
- v. After receiving marks and adjudication sheets, you will send these to the competitors. You will also notify competitors of results and post them where you normally would (website, social media, etc.)

PROS:

- Facebook is a freely assessable tool – anyone can sign up for this.
- Internet connection is not as much of an issue as the competitor will have time to upload.
- Many of your competitors will already know how to use this tool (probably better than you do).
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- Everyone competing will be in a different room, on a different instrument, and on different devices (phones, tablets, computers, etc.) which could benefit competitors with access to better facilities and equipment.
- Competitors will not see other performances unless you send them the links to other performers. This would involve a release form that the competitor/parent has to sign (so you can distribute their private link).
- Competitors do not receive immediate results (and may not for weeks/months).
- Competitors can re-record as many times as they want before they upload. It is not a first time scenario. You can dictate rules for this but they would be nearly impossible to enforce.
- Some adjudicators may not have a Facebook account and would not be able to see all of the videos or be comfortable using their personal Facebook account for such a purpose.
- Some competitor/s may refuse to use Facebook due to Facebook's privacy policies.
- Facebook's privacy settings could cause problems for the adjudicator when trying to access the performance depending on the competitor's page settings.
- Facebook only allows users 13 years-old and older. Younger users could use a family member's account but this could restrict those of younger age.

At the Fall Conference, we will deliver a presentation showing how to use some of these tools. Additionally, we will prepare a user guide for the tools mentioned above to distribute in advance of the Fall Conference. We want you to be as successful as possible as you consider (or prepare for) a virtual festival.

While this year may be different and scary, it also provides opportunities many of us have not had in the past. For example, if you have not yet hired adjudicators and are choosing to go virtual, you now have adjudicator options all over

the world! Since there would be no adjudicator travel costs with a virtual festival, it opens up the door to “bring in” someone from far away. And, since “sessions” may not look the same, you might be able to be creative on how you structure pay agreements with adjudicators. For example, if running a festival with pre-recorded delivery, you might pay your adjudicator a set fee per song/entry. In the Spring, the Ontario Music Festival experimented with such a model and reported decent success (and made money). For example, maybe each song entered is a \$20 entry fee and the adjudicator is paid \$10 for each song they adjudicate (these are completely random numbers just to illustrate the structure).

Also, this is an ideal year to make changes to your entry processes or fees. You might change your fee structure a bit this year and then set the new policies and fees you want in the future when we return to in-person delivery. Or, maybe you won't have as many scholarships this year. Or, maybe instead of a \$500 scholarship, you give out five \$100 scholarships to spread money around to multiple competitors in a class/discipline (this could also help your adjudicator deal with differences in technology/equipment for virtual delivery). Since so much is different right now, it is easier to make changes. Of course, if making payment models that are outside of what festivals usually do, make sure to discuss with your adjudicators in detail before you set those plans in stone.

Good luck with your planning. If you have any questions, please contact RJ or Wendy. We do not have the answer to every question but will do what we can to find the answers you are looking for and support you as you host your festival – whether it be in-person or virtual.

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