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Online Exam Guide for Parents and Students Using Zoom June 2020

During the coronavirus pandemic, Conservatory Canada will be holding its practical exams online, from student's homes, for the month of June 2020. This guide will help students and parents get the most out of their exam experience, while assisting the examiner by providing the best possible audio quality. We have been relying on teachers to work with families in advance of the exam session, to prepare students for having a successful online exam experience. This guide outlines the expected protocols and considerations for hosting exams from your homes.

In order to encourage everyone involved to do their part to prevent the spread of the virus, student's exams will not be heard from their teacher's studios, only from student's own homes. CC does not provide an essential service and is fully capable of providing its exams online. The following recommendations will summarize and assist families in creating an environment enabling them to broadcast suitable audio and video online during the examination.

Examination Protocols

- Parents are encouraged to be present and act on the student's behalf where necessary to ensure that the technology is working correctly, as well as ensure that the exam proceeds in a timely manner. However, to protect the sanctity of the exam, parents are discouraged from participating actively during the exam and cannot provide any assistance during performances, coaching or encouragement in any form. Once the exam performance has begun, the parents role is expected to be entirely passive, however they may step in to address technological difficulties that can arise.
- The email address used upon registration will be the only means by which you will receive your **zoom link** to join the exam, at the scheduled date and time. Zoom conference meeting will be the only platform used to connect with an examiner.
- The examiner will send you the zoom link by email the day before the scheduled date (in some cases this may be more than one day prior). This **email invite** will also include a password to access the zoom meeting. Clicking the link and successfully entering the supplied password places students in the zoom "**waiting room**". The examiner will let

you into the meeting at the appropriate time, when they are ready. We do not anticipate any delays, but it is conceivable that exams could run behind or ahead of schedule. We suggest logging into the meeting **10 minutes prior** to your scheduled time and waiting.

- Plan ahead to have the laptop or device already positioned so that the **webcam** shows a full view of the student from the bench to the head, including a broad view of the instrument. Small adjustments can be made once the examiner opens the meeting for you.
- Also plan ahead to have your zoom **audio settings** configured to match what is commonly used for your lessons with your teacher. Detailed suggestions for zoom audio settings have been shared with teachers, and can be found on our website [here](#). This article also contains detailed information on using hardware and peripherals (external microphones). Although it may be helpful to review this article yourself, your teacher will give you the best appraisal of how you can use your equipment to broadcast the best audio.
- It is more desirable to broadcast music using “**original sound**” in zoom. When this is enabled, the toggle button at the top left of the meeting screen should read “Turn off original sound”. True original sound is only available using laptop and desktop computers. Although the option is now available using mobile devices (including tablets like iPad), we do not hear an appreciable difference in our tests. Your teacher can help recommend and test which device is best for you to use. Laptops tend to work better, but sometimes a newer iPad captures audio better than an older laptop. Certain laptops do not feature mics that are suitable for transmitting music.
- Internet **connection speed** is the most important factor to consider when connecting online to share live music. During the exam, we are advising that all internet usage within the home be dedicated solely for the device used during the exam. Anyone else streaming or using the internet simultaneously will degrade the quality of audio that the examiner hears. Your teacher can provide feedback on the audio quality you are producing and what can be done to improve it.
- Examiners will have the time and ability to quickly confirm and **adjust audio settings** with you before the exam begins. It will be especially helpful if you are familiar with these settings beforehand. These settings may be different than those you use for lessons with your teacher, as connecting with each person online presents its own unique variables.
- Please be prepared to share the student’s **repertoire list** with the examiner by copying and pasting it in the chat box at the start of the exam meeting. We suggest having it copied to the computer’s clipboard before the exam begins. Please refrain from sending the list by email in advance.
- The examiner will share the **sight reading** and keyboard **skills tests** with you by placing a pdf link in the chat box at the start of the exam. If you have a printer, be prepared to print this sheet to present to the student at the appropriate time during the exam, after repertoire and technique have been heard. The examiner will direct you at the correct time. In the absence of a printer, the tests may be shared over the screen by the examiner. If using a laptop computer (which is recommended), the parent may hold the computer close to the student while playing at the keyboard, or you may log into the

meeting using a mobile device (same link and password) so that the student can view the tests more naturally on the music stand. Keep in mind that logging in using the **second device** is best left for after the technique and repertoire, as it will attenuate the connection on the primary device, degrading audio transmitted to the examiner.

Other Considerations

- Although it is possible to reply to an examiner from the email sent to you (with the zoom link), this is discouraged and should only be reserved for **emergency** use only. An emergency occurs when you are unable to connect to the zoom meeting and risk missing your scheduled exam time. This may be due to a technical glitch within zoom, an internet issue within your home, or a power failure. Contacting an examiner in advance of the exam for any other reason is discouraged and examiners are not obligated to reply. Some examiners may share a cell phone number with you to communicate by text in case of an emergency. In these cases, it is helpful to identify yourself, should you need to text.
- There will be **no sharing of musical scores** with the examiner prior to the exam. Examiners are trained to assess without looking at physical scores. This is necessary in order to limit the number of potential distractions that an examiner experiences during an exam session, as well as cut down on their administrative tasks. Scores shared with the examiner by email will have to be ignored.
- If a student is required to play along with a **backing track** (Contemporary Idioms exams), parents are expected to play the track at the appropriate time, as directed by the examiner. It is not essential that the examiner hear the backing track detail during performance. They will need to favour hearing the student foremost.
- If you have a **mini-lesson** scheduled with the examiner, it will take place immediately following the examination. If your teacher wishes to attend, please share the meeting link with them so that they can log into the meeting and be let in from the waiting room by the examiner at the appropriate time. Teachers will not be allowed into the exam meeting room during the actual exam. Parental and teacher involvement during mini-lessons is most welcome. Mini-lessons are scheduled for 15 minutes and examiners will let you know when the time is up. Please be prepared to leave the meeting promptly to allow the exam day to run on time.
- Students that have music memorized should have nothing placed on the music stand.
- Students are reminded that the use of photocopies is strictly prohibited. Students clearly playing from photocopies or unlicensed copies risk forfeiting their exam.
- Any recording of any portion of the exam is strictly prohibited. CC is unable to make efforts to re-evaluate a student's repertoire that has been recorded due to poor internet connectivity.
- An FAQ for online exams can be found on our website [here](#).

Emergency Backup

- Should a reliable connection suddenly be unavailable between examiner and student at exam time, the examiner will make a zoom phone number available to the student. Calling the zoom phone number on a cell phone or landline will enable audio to be transmitted to the examiner through the meeting, while video connection is maintained on the computer. This can work well to rectify **nagging audio issues** using a computer alone. Using this number: **1-647-558-0588** and entering the meeting ID and password can connect you by audio of any zoom meeting, once the host admits you from the waiting room. Testing this with your teacher in advance may reveal that this is the best planned solution, especially if you are prone to poor internet speeds in rural areas.