

To: Edmonton Youth Orchestra members
From: Michael Massey - Music Director

Welcome to the 2020 - 21 season

As we all know, this year will not be like other years due to COVID 19. However, the EYO board and I have decided that we will proceed with rehearsals in an online format until such time as we can meet in groups or all together depending on Alberta Health guidelines. Our goal is to keep EYO alive and creative and vibrant and still be a part of your lives in these difficult times. I hope you will agree with this goal and participate as much as you can.

Online work can only be done individually (one on one) because it is impossible to play together in any meaningful way over the internet. This requires that our members be ready to play their parts as a soloist in a masterclass situation, not (for the strings) as a section. I think this will be useful for everybody re: discipline and part learning. With this in mind, I have chosen repertoire that will facilitate this learning approach as much as can be, and will also be a wonderful opportunity to learn some of the great masterworks.

SENIOR ORCHESTRA

I would like to divide the rehearsals between September and Christmas into two blocks.

Block one

During the last six months of isolation, I have found myself drawn to the music of J.S.Bach - music that consoles the soul, uplifts the spirit and reaffirms life. Therefore, I would like to concentrate on Bach for the first 4 to 5 weeks.

To this end, we will divide the strings into 3 groups in order to play the Brandenburg Concertos nos. 3, 4, and 5 with the appropriate soloists from EYO.

The woodwinds, horns and trumpets will work on a number of preludes and fugues in magnificent!! arrangements by yours truly.

The trombone choir will work on the Prelude from the St. Anne Prelude and Fugue in a great arrangement for 8 trombones.

Finally, we will all work on the Fugue from the above mentioned St. Anne P. and F. as orchestrated by Arnold Schoenberg.

I think that if we can accomplish something by this method of work it will be a better understanding of the amazing mind of J. S. B.. With the help of our wonderful ESO coaches, we can look at baroque performance practice and modern approaches to the Bach style.

It is also hoped that all these groups, except the last, will be able to get together, socially distanced, (I prefer physically distanced) perhaps before Christmas to rehearse and perform these works - if not live, then live streaming.

(EDMONTON YOUTH ORCHESTRA plays J. S. BACH)

Block two

BEETHOVEN

Beethoven turns 250 on December 16, so I think all musicians have to pay homage by playing his works. I would like to start work on the Seventh Symphony at the beginning of November if possible, starting with the above format if we have to. Winds and brass will also work on the Symphonie Funebre et Triomphal by Berlioz, a great admirer of Beethoven, and a work admired by Wagner.

INTERMEDIATE ORCHESTRA

Block one

We will divide the strings into three groups as in the senior, and work on the Corelli Concerto Grosso op. 6 no. 8 (the Christmas Concerto), the Don Quixote Suite of Telemann and a Handel Concerto Grosso, all composers contemporary with Bach. The goals will be similar to the senior orchestra. Winds and brass will also do some fugues and we will join for an orchestral version of the "Little" Fugue in G minor.

Block two

I would like to continue working on the First Symphony of Beethoven, which we had just started last February and were rudely interrupted by Mr. Covid.

I hope these plans will interest you and that we do not have to be online for long - but that is out of our hands. Please feel free to call me if you have brilliant ideas on how to make this all run smoothly.

Happy music making.

Michael Massey.

"Beethoven tells you what it's like to be Beethoven and Mozart tells you what it's like to be human. Bach tells you what it's like to be the universe." — Douglas Adams

"The man that hath no music in himself, Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds, Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils; The motions of his spirit are dull as night, And his affections dark as Erebus. Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music." — William Shakespeare