

(Message sent on behalf of Prof. Stéphane Lemelin, Chair, Dept of Performance)
–Monday, Oct., 26, 2020

Dear members of the Schulich community,

As communicated by the Dean last week, I write to provide further details on the proposal submitted by the School to the University's central planning committee for increased in-person activities in Winter 2021.

In designing those plans, we were guided by several principles:

- We know that ensemble playing is an essential part of performance training. While possibilities for engagement with ensemble playing using remote platforms have been explored in Fall 2020 and will continue to be developed in Winter 2021, it is crucial that we return to in-person music-making to the greatest extent that circumstances allow.
- Some types of ensembles cannot be offered remotely; some can function on a hybrid, part in-person, part-remote, model; a few can be offered entirely remotely
- Regardless of the category above, all ensembles' course outlines, even those that cannot properly function on a remote platform, will need to include an alternative plan to enable students to fulfill course requirements in the event that further tightening of restrictions prevent us from completing the course as planned.
- Emphasis will be placed on the process of ensemble playing and of rehearsal, rather than on the preparation of public performances.
- Most ensembles, large and small, will work in concentrated periods of time (as opposed to throughout the term) to enable the greatest number of students possible to benefit from ensemble experiences while limiting the total number of students physically present in our buildings at any one time.
- The size of large ensembles will be reduced to enable adherence to the latest provincial guidelines for distancing in performing arts situations.
- In most instances (with exception of winds and brass instruments), face coverings will be mandatory in rehearsal and teaching situations.
- Plexiglas shields will be supplied in all situations requiring playing a wind or brass instrument or singing without a mask.
- To improve ventilation, 25 additional HEPA air filtering devices have been purchased and will be placed in rooms where rehearsals and teaching occur.
- The length of rehearsals will be reduced to minimize exposure.
- Large ensemble rehearsal rooms will be cleaned by dedicated crews after each use; the collaboration of all participants will be expected.
- As much flexibility as possible will be built into the schedule to enable the possibility of postponement of certain activities in case of tightened restrictions.

The attached document lists the ensembles that we plan to offer and information about their specific modalities. Further to it:

- The audition process for ensemble placement will be done by recording and it will be kept as simple as possible to minimize the impact on student workload at the end of the Fall term. Detailed information will follow from the Ensemble Resource Manager.
- We are working with the University's IT services to assess real-time remote platforms for ensemble playing and to seek approval for their use within the context of McGill courses.
- Ensemble placements should take into consideration the quarantine requirements of students who will be out of the country over the Winter holiday.
- One rehearsal and one coaching per week will be booked in a suitable room for each small ensemble
- Due to the need to provide ensembles that include winds and brass instruments with the largest rehearsal and teaching spaces available, fewer in-person meetings will be possible for those ensembles.
- The large and small ensembles that were offered remotely in Fall 2020 will continue to be available to students who are not on campus in Winter 2021, even if a portion of the course is offered in person next term.
- At all times, McGill's guidelines on health safety will apply <https://www.mcgill.ca/coronavirus/resources/health-guidelines/potential-covid-19-exposure-what-do>. Consequently, the work of any ensemble may be interrupted if members need to self-isolate.

We all miss making music together very much. I sincerely hope that we can experience it again in Winter 2021. Your collaboration, flexibility and adaptability are appreciated as we navigate through the many organizational challenges that await us as we prepare to implement our plan.

Cordially,

Stéphane Lemelin

Chair / Directeur

Professor of Piano / Professeur de piano

Department of Performance / Département d'interprétation

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