

Dear Parents,

I hope this finds you all well and coping with the very strange world we now find ourselves in.

Since I wrote to you at the end of last term, Marina and I have been working tirelessly to develop a strategy by which YMC can continue our valuable work and provide the very best musical environment for our students. Details will follow in the next couple of days, however we wanted to give you an idea of our plans as soon as possible. Broadly speaking our classes will function as before except we will be using the online platform, Zoom. With this software teachers will be able to take ensemble classes, teaching their groups individually, together. They will work on their parts, discuss the music and enhance their musical skills to be ready for when they can meet again in person. The voice aural and choir will function in a similar way, likewise small group lessons. Of course there is the flexibility for the group to be divided into short, individual lessons.

The orchestras provide the biggest challenge but also the most interesting opportunity. I have always wished that our students would listen to more music and on reflection I concluded that it's quite possible that they don't really know where to start. Therefore, it is my aim to give them some help in that direction. Over the last weeks I have consulted with many of our students to gauge their interest in this approach and I have had a very positive response. Besides choosing repertoire for everyone to practise I will be giving a series of classes in musical appreciation using YouTube films of orchestras and musicians to illustrate different themes. The functionality of Zoom will allow me to send musical scores and other material to the group during those classes. The themes will range from the repertoire each orchestra is playing to some major areas of interest such as this year's 250th anniversary of the birth of Beethoven to exploring virtuoso instrumental music and other topics will follow. Fiona and Henry will have their own initiatives for the younger children.

It is my ardent wish that we will all soon be reunited at Bigwood House yet I am also quite excited at the challenges that we face and the solutions that we have found.

Warmest wishes as always,

Nigel