

Valley Chorus Virtual Choir Instructions

Here's what we're going to do in this project, Chorus:

- We're going to do what we're good at, and sing together (Virtually, this time)
- Our finished video will have all singers included, and will look something like these:
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqWQCWc_zCc

To do this, you're going to record yourself singing your part of three songs. Follow these steps, and we will be able to put together an amazing finished product that we will all be proud of.

Here's what you need to do:

1. Read this whole document first!
2. Sign up for the project by filling out the form linked on the Website.
 - a. The virtual choir page is in the member's section of valleychorus.org, so you will need to be a member of the website first.
 - i. If you haven't already, go to valleychorus.org, and click the sign-in link at the top of the page. There create a user account. I will approve it, and then you will be able to access member-only pages.
 - ii. If you already have a user account, sign-in and look in the members menu for the virtual choir pages.

3. Be able to sing your part to the three songs: (A Holiday Sing-Along, The First Noel/Pachebel's Canon, and the Hallelujah Chorus)
 - a. These are pretty easy songs, and we've done two of them before. You'll learn them pretty quickly.
 - b. If you need to learn your part, or brush up, the guide tracks are on the web pages. There is a page for each of the three songs in the members' menu. Everyone should sing along with your part recording at least once to make sure you're singing it correctly.
 - c. There is a conducting video and audio file for each part, as well as one with all parts, and one with piano only. You can practice and record with whichever of these tracks help you sing your best.

4. Figure out a setup where you can video record yourself while listening in headphones to the guide track. This works best with two devices. Try to memorize the music as much as possible so you don't need to be looking at the sheet music too much. Our audience will want to see your face, not the top of your head.

5. Play the guide track or conducting video in your headphones while recording yourself singing your part.

6. Upload the video
 - a. I have created a form that you will use to upload your video. It will be linked on the song page when we are ready to upload.

That's it.

Please remember a few things as you prepare for this project:

- Recording this may be a little scary, since you're all by yourself, but in the finished product, you will be surrounded by your choir mates, just like it is when we are in the chorus room. I promise you won't stick out. Trust me, everyone finds this difficult, even seasoned professional musicians.
- Sing out loud and strong. This will make the best recording we can get.
- Once the videos are all put together in the computer, the sound will be the same as if we were all in the same room. It is weird to hear yourself all by yourself, but that's not what the world is going to hear. Adding more singers blends the sound together in the computer the same as it does in the chorus room. Please don't listen to your recording, and get scared. Your voice is your voice. I want you to sing with us in person, and I want you to sing with us virtually, as well. If it's got the right notes, and you've done your best, send it. Don't hesitate.
- Audio/Video tips:
 - Audio
 - You must sing along with the guide track in your headphones. That's the only way to put the videos together and have them sync up.
 - You must get through the whole thing in one, good take. I can't splice multiple takes for this project.

- Try to find a room that is quiet. Watch out for street noise, fans/furnace blowers, etc.
- Stand, or at least sit up straight to get your best singing sound.
- If you are using paper sheet music, make sure you turn your pages as silently as possible.
- Most people find it helpful to have one earphone in, and the other ear uncovered in order to hear yourself singing. If you are using headphones, put the one you are not using behind its ear, so we can't hear it in the recording as much. If you are using earbuds, just put the unused one down your back or something.
- Smart phones generally have better audio and video recording than your computer's built-in camera and mic, so use your phone, if you can.
- Make sure you wear headphones to stay with the guide track. We need the audio in your recording to **only** be you, so don't use speakers.
- If you want to challenge yourself, feel free to learn and submit videos for any of the other parts. The more videos we have to use, the better our final product will be.

- Video

- Prop your phone or computer up a bit, or set it up on something at least even with your face, so that it isn't looking up at you.
- Have your phone set up horizontally (landscape). We can't use portrait-oriented (vertical) videos.
- Frame your video so that your armpits are the bottom of the shot, and leave some space above your head, but not too much
- You must do the clap in the guide track visibly.
- Prop the phone up, so you are not holding it. Shaky video doesn't work well.
- Try to use a well-lit space with as plain a background as possible, but the background should not be brighter than your face in the video.
- Try to figure out where the camera is on your phone, and look at it. Always looking to the side will look a little weird.
- Smile! We're singing fun Christmas music here. You'd definitely be smiling on stage. Plus, it will actually make your sound better.

- When the song is over, stay still and smile for a few seconds before breaking character. I need time for the video to fade out.