

## **Fall 2020 Plan for JMU Assigned Ensembles**

**\*See below for additional information specific to each ensemble area.**

### **GENERAL ENSEMBLE POLICIES**

**REHEARSALS:** The JMU School of Music ensembles will rehearse during their regularly scheduled times (2.0 Schedule). Each ensemble will be divided into smaller groups in order to comply with social distancing recommendations. To maximize playing/singing opportunities, ensembles will have at least one additional rehearsal space, which will allow two groups to be rehearsing simultaneously.

**PERFORMANCES:** Instead of traditional evening concerts, videos of performances will be posted online. When a piece is ready for performance, it will be recorded in the Concert Hall during class time. These recordings will be combined to create a "Concert Video," which will then be posted on the SoM website.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES:** Physical distancing policy will be six-feet for musicians who can wear masks, ten-feet for wind players and twelve-feet for singers. In an effort to reduce shared surface issues, musicians will stand while playing/singing, except for those instruments that require sitting. School music stands will be available, however students are encouraged to use personal portable music stands (as long as they are tall enough to use while standing). Brass players will need a cloth towel for draining instruments.

**AUDITION INFORMATION:** Assigned Ensemble auditions will be done through online submissions. While a virtual audition process is not our preference, we need to make this one-time adjustment to simplify the start of school, and to safely deal with the challenges created by COVID-19. Audition materials are available at: <https://www.jmu.edu/music/studentresources/audition-excerpts.shtml>. Click on the ensemble link below for information regarding the submission process and timelines for each area.

**\*Additional information specific to each ensemble area.**  
(listed in alphabetical order)

### **BANDS**

**Auditions for all Woodwind, Brass and Percussion will be submitted online by August 17, and ensemble assignments will be posted by August 25.** While this is not our preference, this is a one-time adjustment designed to simplify the start of school, and to safely deal with the challenges created by COVID-19. Details regarding the online submission process are coming soon.

**Wind Symphony and Symphonic Band** will be divided into smaller groups with two groups rehearsing simultaneously. One group will be in Forbes 1115 while the other is in the Concert Hall. Room 1115 will be used for small chamber groups (@8-15 players), while the Concert Hall will be used for larger groups. The Concert Hall will use the "flipped set-up" concept where the conductor will be on the stage and the players will be placed with 10-foot distancing throughout the seating area. Instruments that need to sit (tuba & bassoon) along with percussion, piano

and harp will remain on the stage. This format will allow us to perform works from the normal band repertoire with one per part. When a piece is ready for performance, it will be recorded in the Concert Hall during class time. These recordings will be combined to create a "Concert Video," which will then be posted on the SoM website.

**Concert Band** will be divided into 2-3 smaller bands, pending final enrollment numbers. These bands will alternate rehearsal days in Room 108 in the Music Building. Even smaller sectional rehearsals may also take place simultaneously in B71 (Music Building.) Students will be distanced 10-feet apart and will stand when appropriate. Through the hybrid teaching model, students will also have the opportunity to work independently or with a partner(s) on additional components outside of rehearsal that will enhance their understanding of wind ensemble repertoire, concert programming, conducting, and recording. When the group(s) are prepared for a performance, a professional recording session will ensue, the product of which will be posted on the SoM website.

## CHOIRS

**Auditions:** Audition materials will be available both online and via a Canvas class to which you will be invited on July 13. Assigned Ensemble auditions will be submitted online through Canvas no later than August 26, and ensemble assignments will be posted by August 27.

**Semester Rehearsal and Performance Planning:** Given the plethora of current COVID-19 research outlining the care that must be taken when engaging in singing, this fall 2020 all JMU choirs will be focused on three stages of rehearsal planning, moving from online music preparation to safely negotiated small and medium-sized in-person rehearsals and concert performance recordings. These stages will be carefully monitored and will fluidly shift to align with situational improvements as mandated by JMU, our state leadership, and our national health organizations, as well as research and recommendations for best practice from our national choral organizations.

**Stage 1**, currently calendared for weeks 1 - 5, will be predominantly online (with the exception of optional outside "Sunny-Day Rehearsals,") and will focus on *Musicianship, Readiness, Togetherness*; setting the stage for ensemble success in terms of individual preparation. **Stage 2**, set for weeks 6 - 9 (through Fall Break, October 23), will be a hybrid instructional model with the curricular focus on *Musical Independence and Acoustics*. Small groups (12 or less, rotating, and as assigned) will meet in person in our rehearsal spaces with the remainder of the ensemble participating synchronously online. Careful social distancing and hygiene protocols will be enacted. In Weeks 10 - 15, **Stage 3**, with the curricular focus on *Concert Preparation and Presentation*, will bring larger groups of singers together in safe ways, in both rehearsal spaces and the Concert Hall, to record our repertoire from this semester. These recordings will be streamed later in the semester in conjunction with other JMU performing ensembles.

## JAZZ ENSEMBLES and JAZZ CHAMBER ENSEMBLES

**Auditions for Jazz Ensemble, Jazz Band, and Jazz Chamber Ensembles** (combos) will be submitted online by August 17, and ensemble assignments will be posted by August 25. As is

the case every semester, students may participate in one of JMU's two big bands, a Jazz Chamber Ensemble (combo), or both a big band and a combo. Audition materials are available at: <https://www.jmu.edu/music/studentresources/audition-excerpts.shtml>

Because JMU's rehearsal rooms are large enough to accommodate a full seventeen-piece jazz ensemble ("big band") with 144 square feet (12' x 12') of space allocated per player, the JMU Jazz Ensemble, Jazz Band, and Jazz Chamber Ensembles will utilize traditional rehearsals (with appropriate distancing) and sectionals. Though live performances for an audience in the JMU Forbes Center for the Performing Arts Concert Hall will likely not be possible fall semester due to Covid-19, JMU's big bands and combos will be able to present one or more outdoor concerts on the JMU Quad, which will allow for safe distancing of performers and a live audience. (The JMU big bands will also record their fall 2020 repertoire, which will subsequently be broadcast online.) Jazz Chamber Ensembles will perform several times each semester at Clementine Cafe in downtown Harrisonburg, as per our regular routine, once that establishment resumes indoor dining.

## **MARCHING BAND**

The directors and staff of the JMU Athletic Band Program have been collaborating since March to create a safe and effective plan of operation for the fall (Marching Band) and spring (Pep Band). We have been working with the JMU Administration, JMU Athletics, Health Center, Residence Life, and Dining Services, as well as consulting other institutions, professional organizations, and related research. Our plan will outline, in detail, options for best practice and protocol to be applied to our programs as needed (depending upon current circumstances).

Guidelines provided by the JMU Administration as well as both State and Federal Agencies will be used to guide our decision-making and implementation both in preparation for and during the season(s). The JMU Marching Royal Dukes are expected to return to campus on August 16-19 for our annual pre-season rehearsals. The JMU Pep Band will begin meeting in October in preparation for the basketball season.

### **SUMMARY OF (anticipated) ADJUSTMENTS:**

- Masks (per university policy) will be used at all times when not playing.
- Appropriate social distance (as recommended by JMU/State/Federal guidelines) will be used during all rehearsals and performances.
- All logistical aspects of regular rehearsals will be adjusted to create an organized environment that allows for safe ingress/egress and protocol when the band is together.
- All aspects of our game-day schedule and protocol will be adjusted, working collaboratively with Athletics, to ensure an organized and safe environment for our members and also the parents/alumni/public who are an integral part of our game day traditions and performances.
- To create a safe environment for a program of our size, it is likely that we will break the group into smaller groups for rehearsal, utilizing available multiple field space.
- For performances, the band will be split into two smaller ensembles (or more) - one will perform in the stands (during the games), while the other will perform the field shows (pregame/halftime). They will switch roles during the season to ensure all members are able to contribute to game day performances.
- Drill will be designed and taught to create safe social distancing during performances

**LINK TO THE MRD SEASON PLAN (working document) - Final Document will be provided when reviewed/approved by JMU Administration:**

## **OPERA**

JMU Opera Theater plans to produce an indie-film version of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* during the fall semester, a Scenes Concert in February, and Gilbert and Sullivan's *Iolanthe* in April. Any live performance in The Forbes center will be held in accordance with state mandated procedures. We also plan an "Opera Shorts" competition, which will encourage vocalists to produce their own interpretations of opera/opera scenes for faculty and peer review.

All auditions will be held online via submission through Canvas. Information will be emailed to voice majors on July 13.

Staging rehearsals will occur in Anthony-Seeger, in a church, or outdoors. Before shooting, rehearsal schedules, and the overall "story board" will be sent to the cast and reviewed online. The rehearsal schedule will be put together like a film schedule. Rather than working toward one date of completion, we will divide the work into ten scenes/x takes and complete each "wrap" before moving to the next. This will require that students learn/memorize music quickly. Intimacy will be achieved via camera angle and editing: over-the-shoulder, multiple camera, and green screen shots. We hope to capture the humorous, vaudevillian nature of Mozart's fanciful opera.

## **ORCHESTRAS**

**Auditions for all String Players wishing to participate in Symphony Orchestra** will be submitted online by August 17, and ensemble assignments will be posted by August 25. Audition materials are available at: <https://www.jmu.edu/music/studentresources/audition-excerpts.shtml>

While online auditions are not our preference, this is hopefully a one-time adjustment designed to simplify the start of school, and to safely deal with the challenges created by COVID-19. Details regarding the online submission process are coming soon. Based on the evaluation of the submitted audition material string players will be placed in either Symphony Orchestra or Chamber Orchestra. There will be no Opera Orchestra for the Fall semester.

**The Symphony Orchestra** will operate as a string orchestra with possible subdivision into smaller groups to maintain proper social distancing but also to explore diverse repertoire. Monday's rehearsal time (4:00-4:50PM) will be reserved for full group meetings online to discuss various issues of musicianship, repertoire context and analysis, as well community building. Tuesday and Thursday (2:45-4:00PM) rehearsals will take place in the Concert Hall but through the use of room 1115 it will be possible to have two groups rehearse simultaneously. Rehearsal formats will vary with conducted, unconducted and sectional rehearsals all occurring at various points throughout the semester.

**The Chamber Orchestra** will also operate as a string orchestra for the Fall semester. There will be a blend of online discussion and instruction as well as regular rehearsals on the Concert Hall stage.

In a typical semester the concert calendar drives the rehearsal process, but the current situation provides unprecedented opportunities for a deeper understanding of the repertoire. Time will be allotted to explore each composer's background and works. There will be a special emphasis on underrepresented composers. When we have collectively decided that a particular work or works is ready to perform, we will make a video recording of our performance to be live streamed later.