



ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC

London

Synchronous online learning: The musicians' experiences

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Royal College of Music, SOL since 2003...



- Teaching: Masterclasses & 1:1
- Research seminars
- Global Auditioning Training Scheme
- Rehearsing and performing
- Research
 - Communication and interaction in rehearsal and performance (LoLa)
 - *'The Digital Turn'* due to COVID-19 [\[DOI\]](#)

The Musician's Experiences

“ ...a great performance opportunity... a fantastic way of connecting with other countries and benefiting from world-class tuition...astounding video and audio quality ...’ (Student)

*“... an extraordinary opportunity for these students who felt so honoured to take part in a master class with one of the world's leading Professors’ (Professor)
(Upbeat, 2009, p. 11)*

“In Sync project”

Rehearsing and performing (LoLa)

- Team
 - researchers, professors, 4 classical guitarists (London/ Copenhagen)
- To investigate
 - The development of rehearsal and performance strategies
 - The development of musical communication and interaction in synchronous distance learning
 - Review the use of the technology and impact on the musicians



In Sync' project

- Rehearsals/performances were successful
 - Adaptions/new rehearsal techniques = impact on music training provided by HE institutions?
- Social interaction and Communication
 - developed through sharing new virtual spaces and musical experiences
 - verbal communication > non-verbal (as compared to face-to-face) = pedagogical implications

What the musician's say...

*“ I think the **non-verbal** conversation is the **most tricky thing**, by far...when you have someone's present ...you can feel him breathe, you can hear him breathe, you can see the facial expressions...” (P4)....*

*“If someone had a nice idea, **we would discuss**, try and incorporate it” (P2)...“ **We talked a lot more** than we actually played” (P3). “...in this project, **I had to know what I wanted well and be really clear on what I said”** (P1)*

What the musician's say...

*“...I was playing **almost waiting for the reactions** rather than trusting the tempo and trying to be spot on the attacks...hard to synchronise” (P4).“...yeah, I was just trying to do...**be a very tiny bit ahead** of what I would actually do myself (P1)”*

“We worked on dynamics but balance was decided by the technicians. Once that was set, we worked on nuances (P1)”

Dealing with latency

- Compensating for minute degree of latency
- Measures
 - clear/exaggerated physical gestures to lead
 - anticipating each other's actions
 - focusing on keeping their own tempo steady
 - deliberately playing ahead of the beat
 - relying more on listening to the other players rather than watching as the music progressed.

Lisboa, Jónasson, Jonhson (in Press)

Home set-up

Lisboa, Jonasson, Johnson (in press)



<http://healthyconservatoires.org/guidance/>
<https://youtu.be/dKmuLZJTij8>

The COVID-19 experiences

- Enforced social isolation = a '*Digital Turn*' in music education...
- The *need* to operate solely within a digital domain from home has disrupted the norm = *emergency* online teaching (Hodges 2020)
- What are the implications of the 'digital turn' in music education for teachers and musicians?

Camlin & Lisboa, 2021 [\[DOI\]](#)

The COVID-19 experiences

- Online music education ↔ positive contribution to family life during lockdown
- Adaptations to practice due to differences between online and offline music education worlds + pressures to maintain pedagogical standards ↔ creativity in teaching approaches; social connectedness

The COVID-19 experiences

- Comparisons with face-to-face learning are unavoidable ↔ students work more independently.
- Institutions need to mobilise resources and training for workforce, to support them and to respond most effectively
- Remote teaching multi-stressors ↔ to remain pedagogically resilient; to respond to technological challenges; digital poverty; parental involvement; inconsistent school management systems.

Looking to the future

- Going beyond *emergency* online teaching (*Hodges et al., 2020*); implementing new delivery approaches ‘in the building’?
- Online experiences that complement practical musical activities face-to-face?
- Prepare staff/students for a global digital future?
- New initiatives (RCM):
 - L7 The Digital Musician; L5 Musicians in the Digital Age;
 - ‘*The Global Conservatoire*’ consortium

References

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- Lisboa T, Jonasson P, & Johnson C (in press), Synchronous online learning, teaching, and performance, in GE McPherson (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Music Performance*, Oxford University Press.
- Camlin DA & Lisboa T (2021), The digital 'turn' in music education (editorial), *Music Education Research*.



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THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!

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