

A Message from the Dean of Academic Affairs

State and Federal restrictions under the coronavirus pandemic have rapidly changed how LACM provides the academic curriculum to our students. As the situation continues to evolve, we are creatively exploring every avenue available to us with the strong support of our accreditation body – the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM). In doing so, we are finding new ways to teach course material and the students are finding new ways to study and engage with faculty and their classmates.

In making the changes that accompany a shift to online learning, LACM insures that the course learning objectives are being met as mandated by NASM. The curriculum for each course has been carefully planned out by the instructors, under the guidance of the Department Heads, the Dean's Office and the Academic Affairs Committee to give students the essential course elements in an online format.

We have also upgraded our Naxos Listening Library so all students have unlimited access to the library from their personal computers, pads or phones. And we're adding JSTOR, the premiere online research resource to our library for students. JSTOR is the number one source for peer reviewed journal articles, books and periodicals and will be an invaluable asset for students as they write papers, prepare presentations and study a wealth of music topics.

General Education and Music Lecture Classes

A large percentage of the curriculum is naturally adaptable to online learning. The lecture classes are a prime example, where instructors present weekly material through lecture and visual examples in much the same way they do in the classroom. Students are able to ask questions and engage in discussion. Private lessons are another example as instructors and students meet one-on-one online.

Lab Classes

Online Lab Classes are made possible through the availability of vital software programs from the manufacturers. Software companies such as Avid (Pro Tools and Sibelius), Apple (Logic Pro) and Ableton (Live) have responded to pandemic restrictions affecting education by providing temporary free downloads of these programs for students and educators.

Industry Guests

LACM has always been a leading and exceptional resource for music industry involvement through our Masterclasses, Workshops, and Seminars. We have been pleasantly surprised that there are even more professionals than usual who are available and interested in "visiting" our classes during this time of remote learning. There is an exciting roster of guests being booked for the Summer 2020 quarter and we are confident that each student will have the unique opportunity to meet and learn from some of the most prominent professionals in our industry.

Performance Classes

Performance classes including ensembles, styles classes, showcases and recitals pose a unique challenge for online learning. In redesigning these classes, LACM focused on the essential learning objectives and the musical experience for students. And through our relationships with other prominent institutions such as UCLA, Berklee College of Music, Cal State Northridge, University of North Texas and many others we have shared constructive ideas and methods and gained valuable insights into how performance classes can be

designed to achieve the learning objectives and the musical experience that is such an important part of these classes.

Ensembles/Styles Classes

For ensemble classes we have settled on a process that includes remote recording techniques in which students play their individual parts to a support track that is provided by the instructor and then all the parts are mixed for the weekly online class discussion. As the students progress through the quarter they will be playing along with the parts their classmates have recorded, improving their musical interpretation as they do. In the styles classes in which students learn by playing along with a professional rhythm section, the professional musicians LACM hires for on campus classes will record backing tracks for the students to play and record with.

Songwriting Showcases

Online showcase preparation will focus on each songwriter's individual song components, performance ability, creative arrangements, and effective expression. While the ability to source band members may be limited, each student will be encouraged to conduct remote recording sessions in order to represent a more full arrangement where possible. Students will be thoroughly instructed and guided in the technology to accomplish this.

As the pandemic restrictions evolve, we may find it possible for showcase performances to be held on campus during finals week in September, but if this is not a possibility there will be a live show performed via Crowdcast or alternate online platform. In whichever manner the performance is presented, a live industry panel will critique each showcase, as per usual.

It's important to note that the ability to produce high quality and engaging content that is adapted to remote platforms is a skill that is becoming more in demand by the music industry. These classes will focus on learning how to approach performance of original songs in a way that is cutting edge and innovative.

Recitals

Recitals will be conducted online under the guidance of the department heads. A list of options will be provided so students can work with their department heads to create the best format for each individual. We are acutely aware that an online recital is not the same as performing with a band in front of an audience, so LACM will provide the facilities and technical support for students who wish to perform their recital on stage once the school is reopened. The live performance is optional and will not be graded, and it is available to every student who wants to do it.

On Campus Performances

While the Summer Quarter is designed for online learning, LACM will aim to host final performances and showcases on campus for students who are able to return during finals week in September. If reopening the campus for these performances becomes a possibility, any students who may be unable to return at that time will be guided on how to deliver their final performances remotely. Again, any plans to open the campus are solely based on the recommendations and requirements put forth by the state and federal government and the health department.

In conclusion, I am hopeful that this brief overview of our online course design helps to settle some questions about the learning experience that students will have in the near future. The coronavirus situation is evolving and we will update and revise our operating procedures along with it. Whenever we are able to reopen the campus, rest assured that we will do so with safety protocols in place to insure the health and well being of everyone.

On behalf of the administration and all the faculty and staff at LACM, we are here to answer your questions and provide the guidance and support you need to make the LACM learning experience the best that it can be. Stay in touch with the Academic Advising Office for institutional policies and with the Department Heads for guidance with the curriculum. The Administration will keep you informed and updated about all aspects of your college life so you can plan ahead and prepare.

Providing students the best, most creative and useful education in music is the reason LACM exists and the reason we are all here. As always, we continue to place the student learning experience at the top of our priorities, during this temporary online phase and in the future when we will celebrate welcoming you all back to campus.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Walker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small mark at the end.

Daniel Walker, PhD
LACM Dean of Academic Affairs