

RECORDING A 'VIRTUAL' BAND

COORDINATORS GUIDE

This guide assumes that you, or someone in your corps/congregation, already has the relevant software and knows how to use it. Without the software and skills it will be difficult to produce a video.

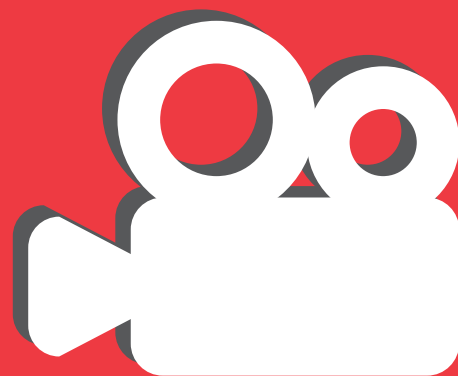
Here are some examples of corps who have produced videos during lockdown:

HEDGE END CONGREGATIONAL WORSHIP - '10,000 reasons'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owc1GkyYZO8>

REGENT HALL WORSHIP TEAM - 'O praise the name/Anástasis'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=61BuNtfHyBU>

GLOUCESTER BRASS BAND - 'There is a new song'
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_8vicvPS2Uc

LIVERPOOL WALTON BRASS BAND - 'Righteousness, joy and peace'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pbSXY6UloEA>



EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE BUT NOT ESSENTIAL
EDITORS	Video editing software (eg Final Cut, iMovie, Pinnacle etc) – and someone with the skill to use it	Audio editing software (eg Logic, Audacity, GarageBand) – and someone with the skill to use it
EACH PARTICIPANT	Your instrument Wired headphones Music/chords and click track Some way of recording video and sound (smartphone, computer, iPad etc) Some way of steadying the recording device Some way of playing the click track (unless they are recording directly into a program with a click track)	USB microphone, or recording mic with audio interface



COORDINATORS GUIDE (CONTINUED)

USING A CLICK TRACK

Before participants can play their part, you will need to source a click track for the song you are wanting to record. This provides a constant metronome-style beat that ensures all participants play at the same tempo. They can be purchased from websites such as www.multitracks.com. An alternative is to source an original recording of the song you want and add a click to this – which you can do in most audio software packages (GarageBand, Audacity, Pro Tools etc)

You'll also need to ensure that participants have a score or chord sheet that matches the version of the song you're recording.

If everyone records to the click track then all performances should all be at the same tempo and lining it up is easy for the video (and/or audio) editor. It's even easier to sync recordings from performers who are using the same audio software as the editor (eg Logic, GarageBand) as these recordings will have the same start location. If you're recording vocals on a phone, you'll have to line up the start of the recording by ear, but the rest should then be in sync.

RECORDING AUDIO AND VIDEO TOGETHER

The instructions in the Participant Guide are written with the assumption that participants will be making one video that contains both the audio and visual recordings. This poses the least demand on participants in terms of time and can also feel more authentic.

However, if you have separate audio and video editors, you might prefer to ask participants to make two recordings - one video (or pure audio) with audio that sounds as good as possible, and a separate video that looks as good as possible.

Even if you do choose to stick with one recording, you might find that some participants may struggle to record footage that is good enough quality for both purposes – for example, the place in their home with the best acoustics may have the poorest lighting.

And of course, you or the editor(s) may have a different opinion about whether participants' best quality footage is of sufficient quality.

Remember these two rules of thumb:

- In the end, these videos should try to encapsulate the authenticity and messiness of corps people coming together in worship, rather than be perfect.
- If you have to choose between having good video but poor audio and having good audio with poor video, always choose good sound quality. People can forgive grainy visuals, but they'll quickly be frustrated if they can't hear the content well enough.



RECORDING A 'VIRTUAL' BAND

PARTICIPANT GUIDE



WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Your instrument
- Wired headphones
- Music/chords and click track
- Some way of recording video and sound (smartphone, computer, iPad etc)
- Some way of steadying the recording device
- Some way of playing the click track (unless you are recording directly into a program with a click track)
- USB microphone, or recording mic with audio interface (optional)

This guide assumes that video and audio will be recorded together. Audio quality, however, is the priority and you might find that the location in your home with the best lighting or background has poor acoustics. In this case, you could record twice, one that sounds best and one that looks best. But please check with your editor/coordinator that this will be ok!

PREPARE YOURSELF

- Make sure you have the correct sheet music or chords for the song.
- Set the level of the click track so it's loud enough to hear through your headphones while you perform, but not so loud that it's distracting. Some people find only wearing one is a good compromise.
- Tune your instrument. There are free apps available online.
- Warm up your voice or instrument.
- Rehearse with the click track until you are ready to record.



PREPARE FOR RECORDING

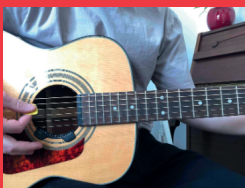
Audio

- Microphone - If you have a plug-in microphone use it! Phones have excellent cameras these days but their mics aren't quite as advanced.
- Audio levels – Depending on which instrument you play, it's possible to either record audio that is too quiet or too loud, resulting in distorted audio. Adjusting the distance between you and the recording microphone will help avoid either extreme. Do a test recording with your device at a reasonable distance, playing something at forte and piano. When you get louder does it distort? When you get quiet can you still be heard? Vary the distances/ locations to find a good balance.

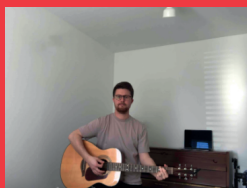
Video

- Use wired headphones - If you sing or play an acoustic instrument ensure you use wired headphones when recording, otherwise the backing/click track will be picked up and the audio won't be able to be used. Wireless headphones are not suitable as there can be a delay between what you hear and the actual time of the recording.
- Video Settings – Your video may take up a very small portion of the screen in the final edited video, particularly if there are a lot of participants. For this reason:
 - Use your smartphone - it will still produce a reasonable quality video, but it will be easier to share.
 - Maximum quality should be HD – many phones these days will record in 4K as default, but this level of quality isn't needed. If possible change the settings to lower the quality of the recording to HD (720p) maximum.
 - Frame rate – similarly, your phone or camera can record video at different frame rates (FPS). Footage with different frame rates plays back at different speeds which makes editing difficult, so ensure your camera is recording in 30FPS.
- Steady your shot - Put your phone on a stand/tripod/bookcase - or whatever you have to hand - to steady your shot.
- Orientation - Unless you're told otherwise please film in landscape (as shown below), rather than portrait mode.
- Framing - Try to frame all the 'action' of your shot without being too close to or far away from it. People make a performance engaging so try and capture your face as you perform for example:

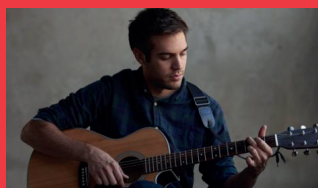
TOO CLOSE



TOO FAR

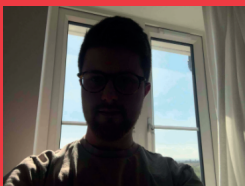


GOOD FRAMING



- Lighting - Try and find a spot near a window, place your phone next to the window with you facing the window and phone for good lighting. There is only so much you can do to fix lighting while editing.

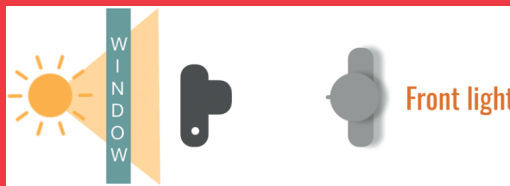
BAD LIGHTING



GOOD LIGHTING



EXAMPLE



- One take wonder - Chances are, you won't get it right the first time. Don't panic - allow yourself plenty of time and try again. It might be the first time you've ever heard yourself back on a recording; this can be an unnerving experience. Just relax, try to enjoy what you're doing and give it another shot.

RECORD YOUR VIDEO/AUDIO

1. Press record on your video recording device.
2. Press play on the click track/metronome.
3. Play the entire piece through from start to finish in one take.
4. If you are recording video and audio separately, repeat steps 1-3.
5. Send your footage to whoever is editing it

Acknowledgment: Many thanks to Alex Gibson (MACA) for contributing significantly to this guide.

