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Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir breaks new ground in replacing their Spring season concerts with YouTube virtual premieres, recorded by the singers from their homes. The season began with Music of the Pacific Rim: A Virtual Concert premiered on March 20, 2020. Two more concerts are in production, Jazz & Beyond May 16th, and Spring Sing! June 6.

When the shelter in place guidelines came out on March 9, the PEBCC staff quickly pivoted and scheduled the last rehearsals of the week in a beautiful room at the Piedmont Center for the Arts. Realizing the concert scheduled on Friday the 13th would not happen, the singers from three of the performing choirs were able to perform in front of a GoPro camera and an iPhone. Unknowingly, it would be their last in-person rehearsal of the season. That footage was compiled into a memorable virtual concert that premiered on March 20, only one week after the original concert date. Today more than 2000 people have viewed **Music of the Pacific Rim**.

Excerpt from the concert on PEBCC YouTube Channel:
[Bells of Rhymney - "Give us hope for the future"](#)

The amazing fortitude of the human spirit to gather the resources and adjust to adversity is demonstrated through this transition. The following week Zoom rehearsals were in place for the four performing choirs, and by March 30 the eight Kinder and Training choirs had transitioned to online rehearsals. Accompanists are now theory teachers, conductors are navigating online platforms with technology they never thought to use, office administrators are in rehearsals as assistants, and the singers are not only singing but recording their voices and uploading files to be layered into heartfelt songs for the community and beyond. Everyone is expanding their knowledge and abilities in ways they never dreamed of.

Jazz and Beyond - A Virtual Concert premiering on YouTube May 16 at 7:00 pm promises to be an eclectic evening of music presented by the talented musicians of the

top two performing department choirs. Alongside vocal jazz, lighthearted contemporary works, and the latest a cappella stylings, the talents of individual singers in solos, duets, and small groups will be showcased. Performing live on stage is a skill but to record yourself on video takes another type of bravery that choir members are learning to face. The more advanced singers performing in this concert have been challenged to confront themselves raw on video. The production team has promised to recreate the sound of a hall and microphones to show the voices at their best. A sneak peek can be found on Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir YouTube Channel. One of our top-performing department choirs, Ancora, offers a virtual performance of the jazz classic "[A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square](#)."

Longtime PEBCC member Mia Atkinson, a featured soloist in the Jazz & Beyond concert, shares:

"The recording process for our virtual concerts has made me appreciate the little imperfections in my voice. It's frustrating to have recordings that aren't completely perfect, but to me artistry isn't about perfection, it's about passion."

Senior Kyle McDonald, who is featured singing and playing the trumpet, shares:

"The main thing that challenged me as a singer was knowing that whatever we send would be permanent. So I end up practicing a lot more than normal. Since concerts are fleeting moments, a few mistakes always happen somewhere but it's nothing to fret about. As a result, the nature of the recording drives me to truly learn and sing the music to the best of my capability."

The most poignant concert of the season will be **Spring Sing! - A Virtual Concert on June 6 at 3:00 pm**. Ten choirs featuring singers from ages 6 to 18 will come together to celebrate the year of accomplishments and acknowledge the graduating seniors. This will be the most technically challenging virtual concert to assemble due to the sheer number of singers. Parents will join the PEBCC team by helping to video record their children (ages 5-18 years) singing alone with a backup track on headphones. The production team will layer the tracks together to form one cohesive choir. Each choir will showcase one song and they will come together to sing the traditional song *Homeward Bound*.

PEBCC's Artistic Director, Eric Tuan, shares:

“During these unprecedented times, I have been amazed by the flexibility, creativity, and resilience of our students. They have risen to the challenge of creating music together online with grace, good humor, and joy, offering their voices and talents in new and surprising ways. Through all the difficulties they have reminded us, as Chorus America has put it, we should focus not on what we can’t do but what we **can**.”

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