

Chamber Music Project

Record a duet with a CEM from the Houston Symphony

My name is Dave Connor and I am a bass player and Community-Embedded Musician with the Houston Symphony. I'm very excited about a project that I've been working on and can't wait to collaborate on this with friends all over Houston, including you!

One of my interests is recording music. It started when I was in 6th grade and I played in a band with a drummer whose dad owned a professional recording studio. That was about 20 years ago and technology has come a long way. While recording studios still exist for professional recording, we can do a lot with our cell phones!

We made our videos of Gliere and Dvorak using the following process:

1. Dave recorded his part on his phone while listening to a click track through headphones (similar to a metronome but programmed to allow for changes of speed).
2. Violinists Patricia and Rainel recorded their video on their phones while listening to Dave's recording with click track through headphones on a separate device.
3. Videos from steps 1 and 2 were synced together in a video editing software.

Now it's your turn! After you practice and record your part, we will line it up with one of ours (and replace the other part) so that you can have a video of yourself playing a duet with one of us! There are some things you should know before getting started.

What you will need to create your recording:

- Headphones or earbuds
- A cell phone that can take video
- A second device that can connect to YouTube and has a headphone jack (cell phone, computer, tablet, etc.)

Instructions:

1. **Watch** the duet videos by the Houston Symphony musicians.
2. **Choose** one of the pieces and download the sheet music PDF for your instrument.
3. **Practice** your part until you can successfully play it.
4. **Practice** with the play-along videos. You can use any of the three play-along videos to make your recording (more details below in the "recording tips" section).
5. **Watch** Dave's recording instructions video.
6. **Record** your video. The video should be of just you playing your part with no other sound. Use headphones in a quiet room.
7. **Upload** your video to a shared folder and send to your band or orchestra director
8. **Sync video...** this part of the process will be done for you but if you are interested in learning more about it and doing it yourself please contact me at cemproject@houstonSymphony.org

More Tips for Recording

Planning:

- Let your family know what you're up to and find a good time and space for you to record where there won't be too much background noise. Silence your cell phone and any other devices that could make noise.
- Make sure you have a phone to record, a second device with a headphone jack and internet connection (YouTube), and headphones

Setting Up:

- Use your phone to record your video. Position the phone on a music stand and put it in selfie mode OR ask someone in your home to help record you! Make sure that both you and your instrument are visible.
- Put your phone in airplane mode so that you don't receive any phone calls while trying to record.

The Recording Session:

- Choose one of the three play-along recordings (all three videos use the same click track) and listen to it through headphones while you perform and record your video. Try to play really together with the recording to make syncing possible.
- I like to uncover one of my ears when recording with headphones so that I can hear myself as well as the track. Make sure your volume isn't so loud that your video picks up sound from your headphones.
- A note about intonation: When playing live music, it's common for everyone to be adjusting their intonation to try to find a mutual agreement. In this case you should try to adjust your pitch to the pre-recorded play-along track.

Sending Your Recording

- Upload the video file in dropbox or google drive and send the link to your band or orchestra director. In the file name, list the composer of the piece you recorded (Dvorak or Gliere) and your name. For example: "Dvorak Ana Rodriguez"

A Few Final Thoughts:

- Practice with the play-along recording to get comfortable before you record.
- Some tempo changes are programmed into the click track so listen for this when practicing.
- The play-along recording starts with a preparatory click track to count you in.
 - **Dvorak:** Two empty measures
 - **Gliere:** One and a half empty measures (You'll hear me say "1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2")
- After you play the last note, hold your physical position for a few seconds and try to not make extra noise.
- Record a few versions and choose your personal best.
- Have fun and I'm looking forward to seeing your finished product!