

### **COVID - 19 Response:**

- Classes and lesson continued online through the 2020-21 season, as we followed public health protocols through successive waves of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Other events that we normally participate in: Celebrate the Season at the Legislature, Edmonton Music and Speech Arts Festival (formerly the Kiwanis Festival), Contemporary Showcase, and Culture Days, were either canceled or also shifted to an online format.
  - EMSAF tried to remain as an in person event but ended up having to cancel at the last minute when public health recommendations changed.
  - Contemporary Showcase ran an online and an in person component, which they will be doing again this year
  - Culture Days moved totally online for 2020, and did both in person and online for 2021
  - Celebrate the Season was cancelled
- Our events:
  - Online Recitals are still working well, with the added benefits of inviting alumni who have moved away and including friends and family from all over the world in the audience. The chat function in the Zoom platform has also proved to be a wonderful way to include positive feedback with the applause for each performer.
  - Our Institute is still the Borealis Summer Suzuki Winds Online Workshop: BSS-WOW! This year our international teachers included Iñigo Aguilar from Mexico, Sylvia Hinz from Germany, and Wendy Stern from New York. This is something we would never be able to afford if we had to pay travel and accommodation. We will probably continue an online component to the Institute in order to continue to take advantage of this, even when we are back to in person activities.
  - SAA Teacher Training moved online after the experimental seminars in the summer of 2020. We were able to resume our alternation of Recorder and Flute Teacher Training courses with Unit 3 Recorder and Teaching Strategies. We had teachers from Canada, United States, and Mexico participating.
  - The Canadian Suzuki community has realized that moving online can bring our geographically isolated population together for collaborative projects. This has started with a series on online "patio" discussions which were held in lieu of the cancelled SAA conference. Teachers from Yukon, BC, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and Newfoundland met for informal discussion.
  - The Royal Conservatory of Music is continuing its exam program in an online format. My student in Yellowknife is taking advantage of this, and completed her Grade 10 exam this year and is making plans to continue with the ARCT.
  - Group classes and lessons are continuing online. A general meeting of ESFRS membership was held in March to discuss our approach to continuing with COVID-19 protocols, and the general consensus was that we maintain a cautious approach to the return to in person instruction. I purchased a festival canopy this summer and used it to offer outdoor lessons when the weather and wildfire smoke situation permitted, but most people were happier to continue online even when in person outdoor lessons were offered.
  - I am continuing to monitor the science behind the protocols. I have collected the most relevant articles in a blog entry on my website, which you can access at this link:
  - This fall I am engaged in a very cautious small scale return to in person instruction at U of A. The emphasis in this situation is making sure that all students are vaccinated (University students are of an age to be vaccinated, unlike our school age ESFRS students) and rooms are large and extremely well ventilated, with HEPA filters in addition to upgraded HVAC air circulation. I will see how this goes, and report back if there is anything that can transfer to ESFRS practice.

### **Registration:**

- Enrolment was down in 18/19, up again in 19/20, levelled off in 20/21, and down again in 21/22. This was to be expected - lots of people are waiting for things to be back to in person before starting, and we are not advertising much since the situation is so changeable that its hard to predict what you will be doing in time to advertise it.

### **Grants:**

- Provincial Society registration process had returned to normal turnaround times in 20/21, but we now are experiencing a long delay on our return again for 21/22.
- AB Foundation Operating Grant award has returned to its normal yearly award distribution instead of the quarterly payments it was using when the government support of the operating grant program was so

uncertain. This makes our financial statements look like we have a bigger surplus than usual, since the yearly payments and the quarterly payments overlapped in the same year.

### **Financial:**

- Most transactions are now completed electronically
  - Most families now pay tuition and registration electronically, through e.transfer and PayPal
  - Teachers are now paid via e,transfer
  - Not only does this simplify record keeping and reduce administrative time, it also aligns with COVID-19 protocols
- Financial statements are prepared by accountants, audit is conducted informally by two non-Board ESFRS members
- Thanks to an increase in registrations last year, combined with no rental payments due to online instruction, we have an unexpected surplus
  - Tuition was frozen at previous year's rate
  - Teachers received cost of living increase, as per established policy
  - Teachers were offered a reimbursement for their online teaching expenses in lieu of rent (zoom accounts and other online services) but no claims were made.
  - We need to remember that our rent was well below market rates pre-COVID, so can probably expect a substantial rent increase when we return to in person instruction. Maintaining a portion of this surplus as a cushion for future rent increases is recommended.
  - I would also like to see a portion of the surplus be put toward subsidies or financial aid of some kind to increase accessibility to the program, but it needs to be done sustainably so that it can continue when our expenses return to normal levels.

### **Facility:**

- No facility needs at the moment
- Continued good relationship with Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
- When they are ready to do rentals again, we are assured we can resume our previous arrangement for Thursday night groups
- Interestingly, even when things had opened up over the summer, most of the facilities that we rent space from for workshops and concerts were not yet open to outside rentals

### **Administration:**

- After observing the proportional representation used by the Boards of other arts organizations, I want to recommend including a teacher along with the parents as one of our volunteer Board members. It is important that all stakeholders in an organization have a voice in policy discussions.

### **Events:**

- At this moment, I am not preparing a full calendar of events for the entire year
- We will respond to the changing situation accordingly. Possible strategies include:
  - Doing fewer online events through the winter, and extending our season into the spring and summer to take advantage of the weather and do some outdoor in person events.
  - Gradually moving to group classes on a studio by studio basis, to avoid increasing close contacts
  - Moving online classes toward technique and repertoire study, with less emphasis on chamber music , to avoid issues of internet latency

So here is the plan for the fall:

### **Beginning October 14, groups will meet online on this schedule:**

5:00 - 6:00 pm Toolbox group (students with parents as a team)  
6:00 - 7:00 pm Reading & Repertoire group  
(will employ breakouts to create separate groups as required)  
7:00 - 8:00 pm Silverwinds

### **Performance events:**

#### **November 25: Canadian Concert at 6:00 pm**

featuring students from Reading, Repertoire, and Silverwinds in a selection of Canadian group and solo pieces