

BHS Webinar on Drive-In Rehearsals

This is a series of four webinar sessions:

Wed & Thurs., 9/16-17/20, 8:00 pm EDT	Introduction to the Drive-In Rehearsal
Wed, 9/23/20, 8:00 pm EDT	Technical Session
Thurs., 9/24/20, 8:00 pm EDT	Making Music in Sedans and SUVs
Wed., 9/30/20, 8:00 pm EDT	Leading the Way in Chorus Safety and Success

Registration is free at:

[Session 1](#)

[Session 2](#)

[Session 3](#)

[Session 4](#)

9/16/2020 Session 1 Notes

The presenters were Rob France and Christian Hunter. Bryce ____ was introduced as a technical resource. Rob has been an audio technician for more than 40 years. With his help, Christian implemented drive-in rehearsals with Somerset Hills Harmony and Hunterdon Harmonizers this August. Other panelists are Manny Lopez, Charlie Ross, Matthew Marinelli and Don Staffin.

All BHS webinars are on www.barbershop.org. Search for "webinar". Session recordings and slides should be available a day after each session.

References include the Somerset Hills "Hot Rods & Harmony" page on Facebook.

Some key takeaways:

- *You can do this!* It's not without challenges, but it works well.
- You'll be surprised to see how much you have missed singing together.
- Hunterdon Harmonizers actually gained members during the Pandemic as they became known as the only chorus in the area that was singing.
- Safety outweighs our desire to sing as usual.
- Alternatives like widely spaced singing without mikes aren't good enough because singers can't hear each other.
- Online alternatives Jamiulus, Jamkazam, JackTrip, etc. are promising but aren't ready yet.

There are numerous equipment options. SHH and HH went with whatever they could find cheaply and were happy with the results. Their basic setup is this:

The director and sound tech stand on a porch of a church, home, etc. with restroom access. Singers gather in cars in the parking lot or a large back yard. They form an arc - perhaps two or more cars deep - facing the director. A "valet" directs each driver where to park. Each singer has a mike with a 25 foot cable. Cables from the wings are extended as needed. SHH used

Shure SM-48 mikes, which they bought at a quantity discount for \$36 each. Mikes have cloth-covered foam windscreens. (Search Amazon for "music life".). Rob bought ten 25' mike cords on eBay for about \$4.50 each. They paid \$125 for a used 16-input snake on Facebook.

The tech plugs up to 16 cables to a "snake" (audio bundler, AKA "stage box") lying on the ground inside a weatherproof plastic box. (Other snakes have 12 or 20 inputs.). If there are 17-32 singers, a second "snake" is used, etc. Cables connect the snakes to the mixer. SHH and HH used a 16-input Mackie 1604-VLZ4 analog mixer they bought used on eBay for \$50. With more singers, additional mixers can be slaved in.

To sing from the driver's seat, singers should mount their mikes on or by the steering wheel pointing toward their mouths. Singers can stand at stand mikes outside their cars. Anyone with a window open or standing outside is expected to maintain a 12 foot separation from others for Covid safety.

No one should be walking or driving over the cables.

An inexpensive FM transmitter at the sound board is set to a vacant FM frequency. Participants and interested onlookers tune into it. They can use car radios or portable radios. Headsets are optional for singers but pretty well necessary for the director and sound tech.

Wireless mikes are an alternative with some advantages, but they cost more and require selection of a free, legal frequency. Also, they all have switches and batteries; someone will inevitably forget to keep his mike switched on or will have a dead battery.

To find a transmitter, search Amazon for "fm broadcast transmitter". A good mid-range FM transmitter might be the Reteless TR-506, available in both plug-in AC and battery powered versions with a range of up to 1000 feet. Cheaper "plug and play" transmitters such as the Scosche FMT4R may be too short-range.

Mixers can be borrowed from a church, another chorus, etc.

Serious audio enthusiasts unafraid of a \$1000+ investment and increased complexity might consider a 32-input digital mixer with its support for recording of individual channels.

It's possible to mix two dynamic mikes (not condenser mikes) into one channel, but this prevents the sound tech from balancing the individual voices.

Learning tracks can be mixed in for singers to sing along to.

It's important to test the process on a quartet or VLQ before inviting the entire chorus.

A sample rehearsal schedule:

30 minutes tech and support team setup

- 30 minutes singers arrive, are directed to parking spaces. Hookup, mike test.
Consider staggered arrival times.
- 2 hours rehearsal, with a 5 minute break every 30 minutes to "disburse aerosols"
During breaks, drivers may idle their cars (3 minutes max in New Jersey)
to recharge car batteries and run heating or cooling.
- 30 minutes support crew breakdown.
Singers must alcohol **sanitize** mikes and cables.









Singers are instructed always to wear masks outside their vehicles. The director can be exempt.

For financing, see if your county has CARES Act funds you can apply for.

Somerset Hills ran a Facebook ad with the title "Local choruses seek used Music Equipment for Drive-In Rehearsals". They used the free tool at <http://www.canva.com/> to create this digital content.

The webinar resource page was:

RESOURCES AND LINKS

Facebook Group: [Hot Rods & Harmony: Drive-In Rehearsals](#)

Facebook Group: [Making music together during COVID](#)

Somerset Hills Harmony: www.shhchorus.org

Hunterdon Harmonizers: www.njharmonizers.org


Legend Sound Systems: bill.lyle@legendsoundsystems.com

Our inspiration: Bryce Denney's "Driveway Choir"
<http://thedenneys.org/pub/music/driveway-choir/>

Part 15 of FCC Rules regarding Low Power Radio:
<https://www.fcc.gov/media/radio/low-power-radio-general-information>

CDC Considerations for Events and Gatherings:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html>

BHS Blog "Studies Provide Some Guidance for Singing Together"
<https://www.barbershop.org/singing-aerosol-study>



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