

Mystic Chorale

Creating Virtual Choir Videos for Mac Users

These directions may sound complicated. There are many steps, but it's not as difficult as it sounds. Once you master the process, you can make many more recordings easily. Remember, you're AMAZING.

Overview: Basic steps for creating a video:

1. Practice and memorize the songs you plan to record
2. Watch Nick's instructional video.
3. Practice with YouTube
4. Set up Zoom.
5. Record yourself singing.
6. Save the recording and rename its file.
7. Upload the file to the Mystic Chorale Dropbox.

1. Practice and Memorize Songs You Plan to Record

- First, practice each song in your voice part under [Practice Audios](#) on the Mystic Chorale Member page. Try to memorize the songs so that while recording, you can follow Nick's instructions instead of reading the lyrics.
- When you are ready to start recording, go back to the Member page and look at [Virtual Choir Video Project - Reference Videos](#)
- For each song included in the season Nick has provided a link to a recording of himself and/or other Mystic Chorale members singing the various parts, along with lyrics on the screen and Nick's conducting directions.
- For each song, there is also a link for you to upload your video into the Mystic Chorale's Dropbox.

2. Watch Nick's Instructional Video

- Click the link for the video: [Nick Page's Introduction & Instructions for the Virtual Choir Video Project](#)

- The instructions you are now reading are the written form of Nick’s instructional video (Note that in the instructions, Nick says that the links for each song you plan to record will be emailed to you. This has changed. Links for all songs are now on the Members page under [Virtual Choir Video Project - Reference Videos](#) Using them is explained later in these instructions.)

3. Practice with YouTube

- Go to the member page and look at [Virtual Choir Video Project - Reference Videos](#)
- Most recordings begin with a verbal introduction by Nick followed by the synching process. This involves clapping twice with Nick. The claps allow him to synchronize your video with those of others in the final video for the season. Include the claps even when you are just practicing, in order to get the hang of it.
- Practice the song along with the video. Nick gives cues and cut-offs. Keep the cut-offs clean, particularly syllables that end with a short, soft “s”.
- Please memorize the songs as you would for a concert. Practice as many times as necessary.
- Test your earphones or earbuds to make sure that no extraneous sound is coming from your computer when you’re listening to YouTube (which will help you prepare for recording later.)

4. Set up Zoom

- First, set up your computer as follows:
 - Place your computer on a stable, flat, surface, and select a background that’s not too distracting.
 - Place your light source in front of you so you can be easily seen. Being backlit from a sunny window or a lamp will place you in shadow. If you are in the dark, we may not be able to include your recording in the final group video.
 - Check the location of your computer’s camera. You should be looking there while recording, and not at the screen
 - Have your headset, earphones, or earbuds handy.
- Set up a Zoom account if you don’t already have one.

- To record on Zoom, you must be a host in order to initiate a meeting (during which you will be the only participant.) Being a host requires that you set up an account rather than just having Zoom on your computer as you do for rehearsals.
 - Go to www.zoom.us
 - Sign up for a free account by clicking on the orange and white icon labeled “SIGN UP, IT’S FREE”.
 - You will be prompted for your birthday (which they do not store) and your email address.
 - After a security question, you will receive an email with a link, which you can use for signing in.
 - Log in and create a password.
 - Answer any additional security questions.
- Open a New Meeting
 - If you are not already there go to www.zoom.us
 - On the Zoom home page click “Host a Meeting” (You will be creating your own meeting with you as the only participant.)
 - Select “With Video On” in the dropdown menu.
 - If prompted, click “Join with Computer Audio.” (You can select “Automatically join audio by computer when joining a meeting” to make it permanent.)
 - This is your own meeting. Zoom allows 40 minutes before you have to start over again (if you don’t want to pay for a Zoom account.)
 - Adjust your sound settings
 - Before starting to record, adjust your Zoom audio settings
 - In the main Zoom window, look for the microphone icon in the lower left black menu bar of the Zoom window. (If you don’t see it, move your cursor into the main Zoom window towards the lower left until the black menu bar appears.)
 - Click the tiny up arrow to the right of the microphone icon.
 - A popup menu appears. Choose “Audio Settings” at the bottom of the menu.
 - The Zoom “SETTINGS” window appears. In the left panel of the window, make sure that “AUDIO” is selected.

- If you wish, you can use the “Test Speaker” and “Test Mic” buttons to test your speaker and microphone volumes. Note that you can also test these levels with your headphones plugged in using a MAC computer, but not a PC.
- Make sure that there is no checkmark next to “Automatically adjust microphone volume” in the “Microphone” section.
- Select the “Advanced” button.
- Under “Audio Processing” where it says “Suppress Persistent Background Noise” and “Suppress Intermittent Background Noise”, use the dropdown menus to choose “disable”. Leave the other setting alone.
- Click the red button at the top left button of the “Settings” window to return to the main Zoom session.

NOTE:

If your version of Zoom does not show the “Background Noise” buttons after you click the “Advanced” button, click “<Back” at the top left of the window to return to the original “Settings” window for Audio, and set “Suppress Background Noise” to “Low”.

5. Record Yourself Singing

- It’s a good idea to practice the recording procedure for the first time with a short, easy song you already know by heart.
- In the main Zoom window, check the Microphone and Video icons in the lower left corner of the black menu bar. If there is a red slash through either one, click once to remove the slash.
- Plug your earphones, headset, or earbuds into your Mac computer. Double check that no sound is coming from your computer

HINT:

After practicing, when you record for real, leave one earbud or headphone off so you can hear yourself singing along with the YouTube video. Should you need it, this will help you stay in tune.

- Make sure your face is centered in the Zoom window and that you are well lit.(Don’t worry about the size of your window. It will be cropped in the final version.)
- Switch to the window containing the YouTube video. On Mac computers, you can switch between windows simply by clicking in each window as desired. Or, use Command + Tab.

- Click on your voice part for the YouTube video of your song, skip any ads, and Press the “Pause” icon before the part where Nick asks you to clap twice.

Note:

Please don't record any long introduction that precedes the two claps.

- Switch back to Zoom by clicking the Zoom Window.
- Press “Record” near the right side of the Zoom black menu bar.
- You will see a blinking red light on the upper left of your screen to indicate you are indeed recording.
- Switch back to YouTube.
- Press the “Play” button to restart the video and sing your part.
- The first thing you will be asked is to clap twice on cue. It is important to be accurate.
- The words will appear on the screen on the video, but you should sing looking at your camera. (On Macs the camera lights up green when it is active.) Remember to look directly at the camera, not the not the video, your screen, your eyes, or the printed words. This is why we strongly recommend that you memorize songs before attempting to record them.
- Relax, the key is to look and feel lively as you sing. We want these videos to reflect Mystic joy!
- Sing your part and be alert to Nick for cut-offs, crescendos and other cues. Be accurate and expressive. If you make a mistake, keep singing. Nick can remove some mistakes in editing, or you can record another version if you're not sure whether he can fix the error.
- At the end of the song, keep looking at the camera with a smile until you see the message “Don't Go Away”
- When the video ends, instructions are given for naming the video you just recorded. The instructions are included below, so don't worry if you can't absorb them all on the video.
- Stop the video in YouTube. You can either leave YouTube open if you think you might want to re-record, or you can close YouTube if you are finished recording.
- Go back to Zoom and click the square “Stop” icon near the lower right of the black Zoom menu bar.

- After you stop your recording Zoom will display a message that the recording will be converted to mp4 when the meeting has ended. (You can make another video at this point, if you like, by following the preceding recording instructions.)

6. Save the Recording and Rename its File

- Locate the recording folder.
 - Click the red “End” button on the right side of the black Zoom menu bar, and then click “End Meeting for All”
 - Your Mac will display a popup window that says “ ‘zoom.us.app’ would like to access files in your Documents folder.” Your recorded video is stored in your Documents directory in a Zoom folder. Zoom is asking permission to access it in order to convert the document to mp4 format. To understand privacy issues involved, you might want to click the question mark in the lower left of the popup first. To allow access, click “OK”
 - After clicking “OK”, your Mac will display a popup that says “CONVERTING” along with a progress bar showing the progress of the conversion.
 - There will be multiple files in the folder. Your recording(s) will have the extension mp4.

Note:

If you made only one recording before you ended the meeting, it will be called “zoom_0.mp4”. Additional recordings made during the same meeting will be numbered in the order in which you made them, for example, “zoom_1.mp4”, “zoom_2.mp4”, etc.

- Unplug your earphones from the computer, then double-click your mp4 file to play it. It contains both the audio and video.
- Rename your recording by right clicking the filename. Choose “Rename from the menu. Change the name as follows:
 - Type the section in which you sing (Sop, Alto, Tenor, Bass)
 - Add your first name and last initial
 - Add the title of the song as specified in the YouTube video
 - Leave the .mp4 extension at the end

For Example:

Bass Nick P WE RISE.mp4

- To find the renamed file, click the Finder icon on your Mac.
- In the left part of the Finder window, select Documents and you should see the Zoom folder containing your renamed file. The folder will have a name such as “2020-10-11 16.11.2.3 Nick Page’s Zoom Meeting 78320353537”

7. Upload the File to the Mystic Chorale Dropbox

- Go back to the Mystic Chorale website’s [Virtual Choir Video Project - Reference Videos](#).
- Click on the Dropbox link for the song you recorded.
- In the popup window that appears, click “Add Files” and choose “Files from Computer” Then use the procedure previously described to find the recorded file in your Documents/Zoom folder.

Alternatively, you can just drag your recorded, renamed file from Documents/Zoom to the Mystic Chorale Dropbox.

- If you’ve recorded another song (not the same song again, please), you can upload that as well by clicking “Add More Files” in the same window. Be sure to navigate to the correct folder for the added song.

Note:

Each time you end a Zoom session after making one or more recordings, a new folder is created with a new timestamp. For example in the example at the end of Step 6, the Zoom folder is named 2020-10-11 16.11.2.3 Nick Page’s Zoom Meeting 78320353537”. Note that 2020-10-11 is the date when the folder was created and 16.11.23 is the time (in 24-hour format) that the folder was created.

If you have an earlier Zoom folder in your Documents directory, new folders may be added to them. If you cannot locate a Zoom folder with the expected timestamp, you may have to search through earlier Zoom folders.

- In the next popup, you will be prompted to enter your name and email address. Do so, and then click “Upload”. Uploading may take a few minutes.

- When uploading is complete, a message will be displayed saying “Finished Uploading. We’ll let Mystic Chorale know you uploaded files.”
- Shortly, you should receive an email message from the Dropbox Team confirming that the file was uploaded to the Dropbox, for example to “We Rise Mystic” and it will include the name of the video .mp4 file you uploaded.

Congratulations! Be proud! Your hard work will be well rewarded!