



# Virtual Production Tips and Tricks

 Decide as early as possible if you will be live streaming or recording and streaming a video.

 If you will be live streaming, identify the streaming software platform right away and conduct your rehearsals on the platform.

 Be aware that all content that is not in the public domain or original work must have permission from the copyright holder to be used in the production. (Music, script, video, images, etc.) Obtaining rights can be time consuming. Do not wait to begin the process.

 Spend time researching and using the software. Think about the audience experience. Don't put it off until the end.

 Recruit team members to help!

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## • Software

- When multiple people are speaking at the same time, **Zoom will identify the dominant voice and soften the others.** This makes it less conducive to scenes where multiple people are talking or singing at the same time.
- **The recorded video output resolution on Zoom can be relatively low** making it a poor option for recording your presentation. Better resolution could be achieved by recording your screen using a separate program, such as Quicktime.
- **For music sessions in Zoom,** have participants use headphones. Launch Zoom and click the small gear icon on the top righthand corner of the screen. Click the Audio tab, then click the Advanced button at the bottom. There are two new checkboxes: High Fidelity Music Mode and Disable Echo Cancellation. You must have the Enable Original Sound box checked in order to see these new features. In a meeting, click on the 'Turn On Original Sound' button to enable or disable High Fidelity Music Mode. Participants should notice an immediate difference in sound quality.
- **JamKazam** is another platform that can be used for better loss of latency when recording remote music sessions.
- **Zoom OSC** is an external program that works with Zoom and media server such as Isadora or Qlab. It can give more refined controls over Zoom including spotting video windows and muting and unmuting microphones. It can be a great tool but requires a higher level technical know how.
- **Streamyard** is another great all in one option for live streaming with smaller cast sizes.

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## • Recorded Productions

- **Create a shot list** of all the video you want to take. If you are really into detail, you could storyboard the production.
- **Record the big scenes with the most cast members first.** The more people in the scene, the more video there is to edit. Doing the larger scenes first gives your team more time for editing in the postproduction.
- **Create a calendar** for shooting that includes upload and editing time. Be sure to include time for pickups. You may need to go back and rerecord certain content.
- **Identify cast members who may have internet connectivity issues** early in the process and see what solutions exist to improve their connection. A plugin ethernet connection is a better option than wireless whenever possible.
- The highest quality audio and video can usually be attained by having cast members **record themselves on their devices and upload those to a cloud** storage location created for the team .
- **Have all members of the team set their recording quality to 1080p, 24 fps** for consistent, high streaming quality video.
- **The organizational system for storing uploaded videos** should be created at the beginning of the process and should be very highly organized. For example, group folders could be created and organized according to Act/Scene/Page/Character/Take. This is a great job for the Stage Manager!

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- **General Tips**

- **Be sure everyone is using the most updated version of their software.**
- If working with designers, **give the designers time to work with the cast** in their environments to adjust lighting and background. Be conscious of the time of day for recording as it will have an impact on the available lighting options.
- **Evaluate standing vs sitting** poses for performers. Don't be afraid to have them get up, move around and change locations.
- **Phones often have better cameras** and microphones than laptops. The camera on the back of the phone is likely a better camera than the face. The drawback of using the backside camera is the performer can't see themselves, but it can capture a higher quality image.
- **If there are other people in place with your cast members, see if they are willing to assist in the filming.** Other people can aid with filming, effects or work as a body double. For instance, a body double could have their back to the camera and represent another performer in another video screen. They could also extend a hand into the shot, representing another remote performer.