



NATIONAL SEMINAR REVIEW

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I had the opportunity in July to attend, virtually, my first National Seminar! The cost of this event is usually prohibitive for me, but as it ended up being totally on-line, it became affordable!

I missed the social part - meeting new people, having conversations about what we just learned in a class, having meals together, etc., but there were a lot of positives about the classes being on-line. There was no limit to class size for most of the classes, so no one had to worry about the class they really wanted being full. All classes were recorded, so if you missed one, or wanted to take two that were scheduled at the same time, or really learned a lot from a class and wanted to see it again, you could do that, starting 30 minutes after the class and lasting the whole week after the event!

I watched the class on 6-in-hand and 8-in-hand a few times, which was even better than seeing it once live! We were able to ask questions in the chat feature while the class was live. There were concerts every night, which were assembled from videos each group had taken at previous concerts. They even had games each night for attendees!

One of the highlights for me was the opportunity to participate in a virtual bell choir. We were sent "Triumphal Entry" by Michael Bedford to download, along with a click track of the whole song with a metronome clicking. So we chose the part we wanted to play, recorded video and audio of ourselves playing it (while listening to the click track on headphones). I used my iPad and a blue Yeti condenser mic to record my part. I recorded a few times until I was happy with the sound and how I looked while playing! Some people used their cell phones, or just their iPads. Then the recordings, about 75, were edited into one bell choir. (One of the class offerings was How to Assemble a Virtual Bell Choir-taught by the editor!) I've listened to a few virtual choirs and ensembles on YouTube, and I was amazed at how together we were, and how musical it sounded! Here is the link:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL6qaTnpA29xD5eD5oSyzM0W7ZQ-A2Wz5A>

I think having on-line classes is a model we could consider adding to the Area One Festival. Perhaps choirs that do not attend would be willing to sign up at a reduced price, or maybe it could be priced per choir instead of per person so the director could choose classes that all the members watch together.

Is it a perfect substitute for being there in person? Not at all! And I would really miss the massed ringing, but there are many ways to learn, and I enjoyed this one!