

This month, in lieu of a “From the Workbench” article, I thought I would share my thoughts about being a musician during the COVID-19 pandemic. Among all the other dreadful implications and frightening consequences of this event, the one that undoubtedly affects us all is the “shake-up”; the destruction of our routines. Whether you’re a doctor, a store clerk, or a gigging musician, your life is now wholly different than it was a month ago. And it seems, depending on our professions, we either have more time than we ever had or next to none. It’s rough out there, and that means a couple different things for us musically inclined or musically employed folks.

First the practical: We probably aren’t making money from gigging, busking, or lessons at the moment. That income stream has dried up for at least another couple weeks, and that’s really scary!

Now the more esoteric: With all this talk of “essential business services” it’s easy to feel totally worthless as a working musician. And even for the amateurs among us, it’s likely that making music is not on your priority list at the moment. I mean, you need water, hand sanitizer, and toilet paper for goodness sake! How much of our focus should we really be putting on scales and chord progressions?



*Even during the apocalyptic days of the Black Plague, people turned to music. Guillaume Dufay's 'O sancte Sebastiane' was a particular comfort to the suffering. [Check it out!](#)*

Addressing the first issue, we live in what is likely the greatest time to be quarantined. With all its ills and all its wonders, the internet has made it possible for us to connect with people from Melbourne to Anchorage. And that includes your students and your fans! Remember that the people in your professional life are isolated too, and in dire need of productive distraction. Whether it be tele-lessons or live streaming a performance, there are people out there who value your talents and want to compensate you for them. All you have to do is meet them halfway!



If it's guitar lessons, then grab yourself a decent webcam and microphone and get after it! Your students don't need you to sound perfect, and your words and guidance are what really count. Just keep them practicing and playing; they'll thank you for it when this is over.

If you're a performer, you will need to put some more thought into your product. It's super easy to livestream and upload your music, but with a little extra effort you can take your quality to a new level. If you are interested in streaming video, we encourage you to [check out this resource](#) from our good friends at [Blue Rock Artist Ranch and Studio](#). In it you'll find all the product info you need, and how to implement it in your home!



*French composer Olivier Messiaen composed his 'Quartet for the End of the World' While imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp; likely the worst place imaginable. It's a very modern sounding piece, but [check it out](#) if you're adventurous.*

Regarding the second issue, it's time to get a little bit deep. Music is a constant. It has been around since the first human beat a drum, through calamities and wars, through plagues and pandemics. Monks were still chanting during the Black Plague and composers still made music during World War II. Indeed, music is never so important as it is during tribulation. It's an outlet for our frustrations and fears, and a catalog of the events of our lives. So in short, keep playing, keep practicing, keep composing, and keep performing; we need it and you need it. As long as you make music, we'll do our best to put great instruments in your hands. Thank you.

-31st Street Vintage Guitars, by Thomas Randolph

*"So long as the human spirit thrives on this planet, music in some living form will accompany and sustain it and give it expressive meaning." -Aaron Copland*