Feature Story: To Zoom and Beyond

National Standards: 1, 8-10

Teleconferencing, or "video conferencing" was primarily a tool used by businesspeople to make presentations to others over the internet, or to "meet" while separated by long distances. The pandemic changed all of that. Concurrently, Zoom and other live streaming platforms had become easier to use.

Friends and families began using live streaming more actively to communicate and share experiences as a way of filling the void created by social distancing and quarantining. Musical artists who weren't able to perform live also increased their use of live streaming.

Prepare
Discuss the opportunity that musicians have to live stream their performances:

Key points in the article:
• Live streaming is somewhat more complicated than it seems because the platforms weren't created to transmit diverse musical sounds, instead supplying default audio settings that focus on one sound source.
• Music and video require greater bandwidth, and some WiFi and computer systems aren't robust enough to carry these signals. The result can be glitching or freezing.
• Lighting and background imagery can play a role in offering a superior performance.

Begin
Poll your students to see who has performed live online before.
• Ask them about their experience. Did it go well? Any issues?
• Ask students if they planned to participate or create performance webcasts. What platform will they use?

Review vocabulary words from the article below:
• LATENCY – the lag in time for signals to go from one computer to another
• BANDWIDTH: the capacity of computer, connector, transmitter or receiver
• SUPRESSION: the imposing of limits
• DISRUPTIVE: an action that changes a course or path
• AVATAR: an animation that copies the characteristics of a live being

Discuss
Webcasted live musical performances can reach those who can't attend a live show, and though musicians can't get feedback from attendees, they can thereby reach more people in more places.

Expand

The vagaries of live streaming musical performance today are mostly about the limits of technology. The future of webcasting will remove some of those limits and create the opportunity to make shows more interactive. Discuss the possibilities for interactivity and search during webcasts, and the opportunity for individuals to create webcasted performances with TV-like production quality.