

## PLAYING LIVE TOGETHER ONLINE?

By now, most of us will have had experience of Zoom. So we know its limitations – you can hear the lead instrument and play along, but that is it; you cannot play “live” with a group. Basically, Zoom is designed for speech, and visuals - faces and documents. You cannot play in “real time” with others, because there are time delays, both in the translation of analogue sound to digital, and in WiFi communication to your router. So is there an alternative? The answer is yes - but it needs some financial and technical investment...

There are programs which prioritise and allow live music group playing. The best known are Jamulus, and Jamkazam. But there are complications and limitations.

First you need equipment:

- a USB microphone, or – if you already have a pickup or microphone – an audio interface which translates the real sound into digital (c. £40 upwards)
- a laptop to feed the interface into
- a LAN cable connecting the laptop to your router (modern laptops may not have a socket for this, so you might need an adaptor)

Then you download Jamulus or Jamkazam -from the internet (scary, huh?)

The OTHER thing which is necessary is for someone, somewhere, to set up a “server” - a hub to coordinate the various inputs - and I confess this would be beyond me! And there is a slight risk in making your PC or laptop a server - you do not want to have everything on your machine exposed to the hackers of the world...?

Now, the next step is the one where my nerve has failed me, so far. I went into the Jamulus space online. As latency (or delay) is the major factor, the Jamulus space lists known servers ordered by increasing delay (servers in UK should be fine, in Europe OK; in USA or Australia...forget it!). Many of these servers will be inoperative...and you may see that those which are “live” have three electric guitars, two drum kits and a bass - so not our cup of tea?

There are a couple of folk I know of, who sometimes set up servers, who are fellow folkies. Should we establish a private and secure list of these servers, and the likely times for folk sessions, via SMG, so that we can have some “live” sessions? I am willing to be co-ordinator for the time being.

If you're interested in getting involved, email the SMG office on [admin@scotsmusic.org](mailto:admin@scotsmusic.org) and they will forward your email to me.

Pav Verity