



The Blue Coat School

Looking To The Rainbow

by Becky Drake

with The Blue Coat School Chapel Choir

Tips for your recording

Jeremy Nicklin, Director of Music, The Blue Coat School Birmingham

Getting Ready

What to do first

01 Preparing the 'Talent' part 1

First of all don't panic!

To start with, you might find this a little daunting. I know I did, but with a little bit of planning and preparation, you will soon have your singers ready and raring to go.

There are quite a few of these sorts of videos around on YouTube and Facebook, and to start with they look as though everyone is singing all together at the same time. Well they aren't - it's a trick of smoke and mirrors.

Everything is pre-recorded to a click or backing track individually and then compiled by someone into one cool-looking video.

Where to begin? I am going to give you two ideas - one for isolated children, and one for those of you who are open and supporting the children of key workers. These are only ideas... just to help you get started.

A: For isolated singers

As the editor and organiser (and probably everything else!), you need to give the children really clear instructions to make their video recordings. We decided to use one of our school choirs who were in isolation; I felt this was going to be quite a powerful project for the school, and I knew they would be able to do the job.

It goes something like this....

1. Send the backing track with Becky's vocal on it home - use an e-learning platform if your school has one, or through your parent portal or by email.
2. Get the children to rehearse the song so they know it off by heart!
3. I gave my kids 48hrs to rehearse and record the video and send it to me. (I'll explain how later)
4. I then collated the videos and edited them together.
5. THE EDITING TAKES THE LONGEST TIME
6. Ta-daa! Job done!

B: If you are at school with the children of key workers

The easiest way is to have the backing track playing in the classroom so the children can hear it loud enough to sing to but not so loud so as to drown them out. Use your whiteboard or a Bluetooth speaker

Use a phone, tablet, camera or whatever you can get your hands on and film them all together in one long shot. It will look a bit shaky and that's fine - you want a DIY look to the finished project.

Move the camera so that it is interesting to look at - most of the views will be on phones so some movement will be good so parents will be able to see their child.

Get the children to clap together on the 4th beat of the 2nd bar of the intro - the voice over goes 1,2,1,2,3,4 and you need a clear clap on that 4th beat so that you can synchronise the video and audio together.

I will come on to editing later.

THE EDITING TAKES THE LONGEST TIME - did I say that already?

03 Things to sort out before you start....

Permissions

If, like us, you intend to circulate your video on a social networking platform, you will need to make sure you have the necessary parental permissions.

What is your deadline?

It's good to work to a clear deadline so that everyone knows what is happening. Communicate this to parents and pupils right from the start.

If anyone missed my deadline, I didn't put their video into the final edit - and I told them that - so they all made it!

THE EDITING TAKES THE LONGEST TIME.



Teamwork

If possible get as many people around to help. WeTransfer means you can share files between your team easily (see the How To Do It page)

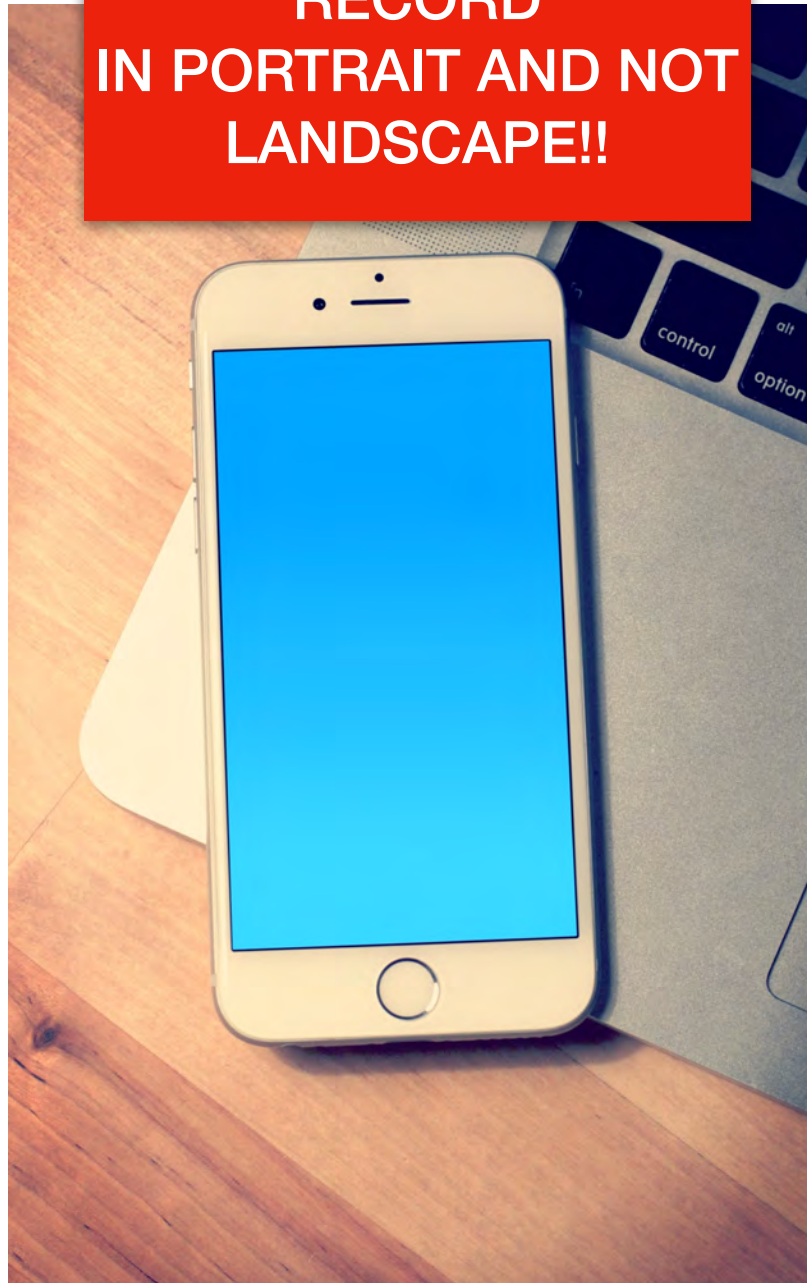
You will probably spend quite a bit of time emailing and calling!

Making the recordings

Tips

04 Making the Recordings - Isolated Singers 1

**GET THEM TO
RECORD
IN PORTRAIT AND NOT
LANDSCAPE!!**



Record the singer on a smartphone. The camera and mic quality is plenty good enough nowadays for this job. It also makes sharing the finished video easy. Tell them to get someone to hold the phone for them



It's probably a good idea to get the singers to perform in headphones, that way you only record their voices and not the backing track as well.



Make sure they SMILE!!

05 Making the Recordings - Isolated Singers 2

Use the camera grid

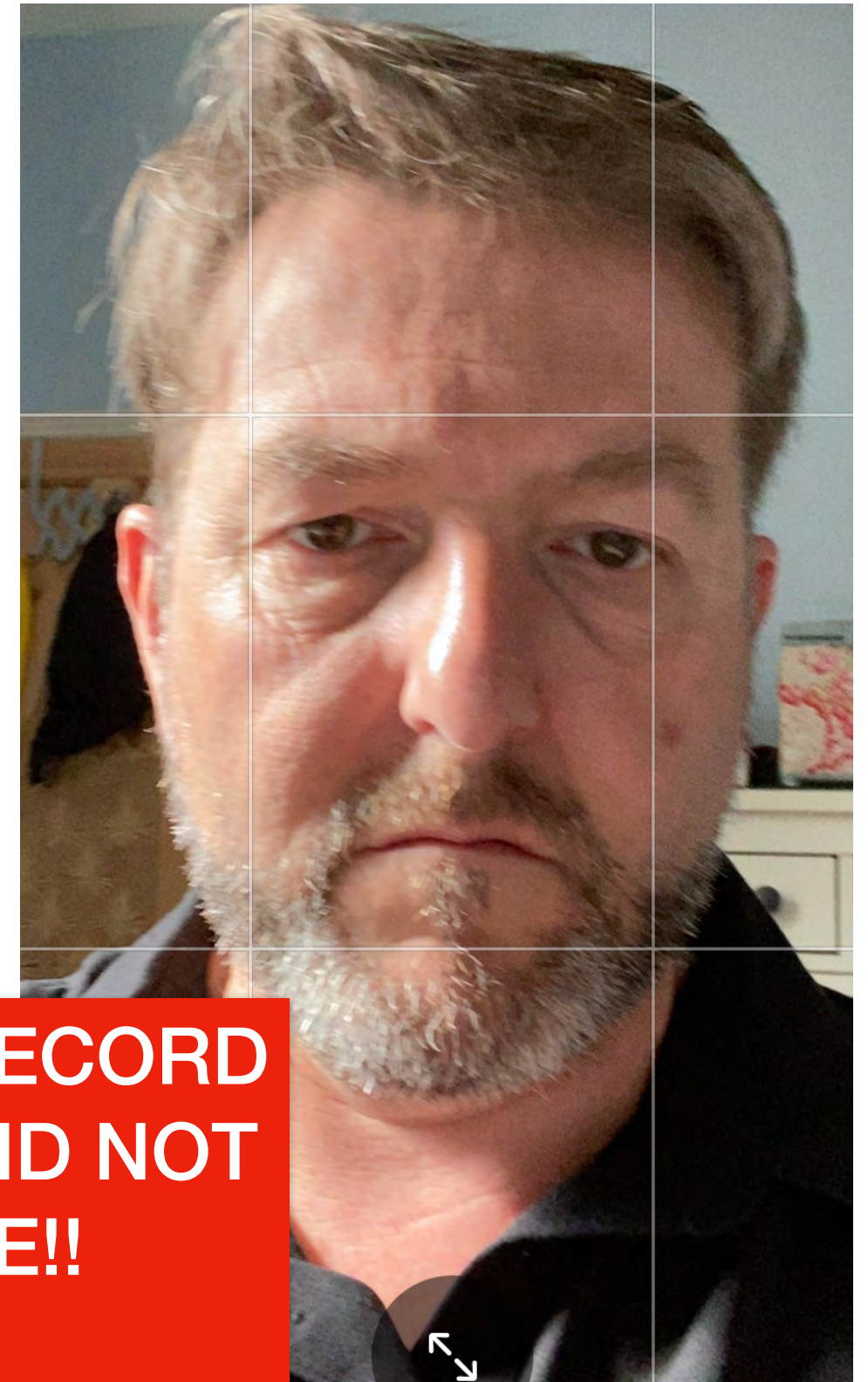
Ideally you want the singers to have the same eye line in your finished video - so ask them to turn on the grid in the camera settings.

Use some additional lighting

Ask the singers to have a lamp shining on their face if possible. Make sure curtains are closed behind them - we need to see their smiley faces!!

Use headphones

It is really helpful if your singers wear headphones to listen to the backing track. That way you won't get any overspill of that onto your finished edit. Ordinary phone headphones are ideal.



**GET THEM TO RECORD
IN PORTRAIT AND NOT
LANDSCAPE!!**

06 Making the Recordings - If you are at school

Film all the singers in **LANDSCAPE** this time - but only if you are filming everyone at once



Use whatever you have to hand - a phone is ok, or a camera or video camera. An iPad will do a good job too. You don't need any fancy kit!



Play the backing track on a portable speaker (Bluetooth) or through your classroom interactive whiteboard speakers...



Make sure they **SMILE!!**

07 Getting good recordings - all recordings

The start of the video is critical

As each singer starts to record, you will need them to CLAP on the 4th beat of the 2nd bar - you will hear the voice over cue say 1, 2, 1,2,3,4. The singers **MUST** clap on that 4th beat because that is how you will synchronise all the singers at the same time...

Video files tend to be quite large. Some parents emailed them to me, again straight from their mobile using the share function and it works just fine.

Email is a good way if you don't want to share your own mobile number!

You could also upload them to your e-learning platform.

Remember - most people are not '*tech-savvie*' so make it as easy as possible to get the videos.



Backing Up

Once I had got all the videos together, I saved them on an external drive in case I had some crisis!!

Belt and Braces!! You can never be too careful....

08 Getting the Videos to the Editor

The easiest way....

I asked the parents to WhatsApp the videos to me. WhatsApp has a cool way of compressing the videos to a manageable size which makes everything just a bit easier all round.

That worked really well, because I could airdrop them onto my mac.

WeTransfer

This is a free to use app parents need to install on a phone or tablet. Parents will attach the video file and then WeTransfer sends you an email link so you can download.

Storage

The final edit file for our project was 279 GB - so you might need an external storage device.

I backed up the project every night.....



Backing Up

Remember to back up your videos once you have them all.

Editing the final video

Tips

09 Fitting the whole thing together

I've made a couple of tutorial videos for you to look at.

1. Isolated Singers

[Click here to access the video](#)

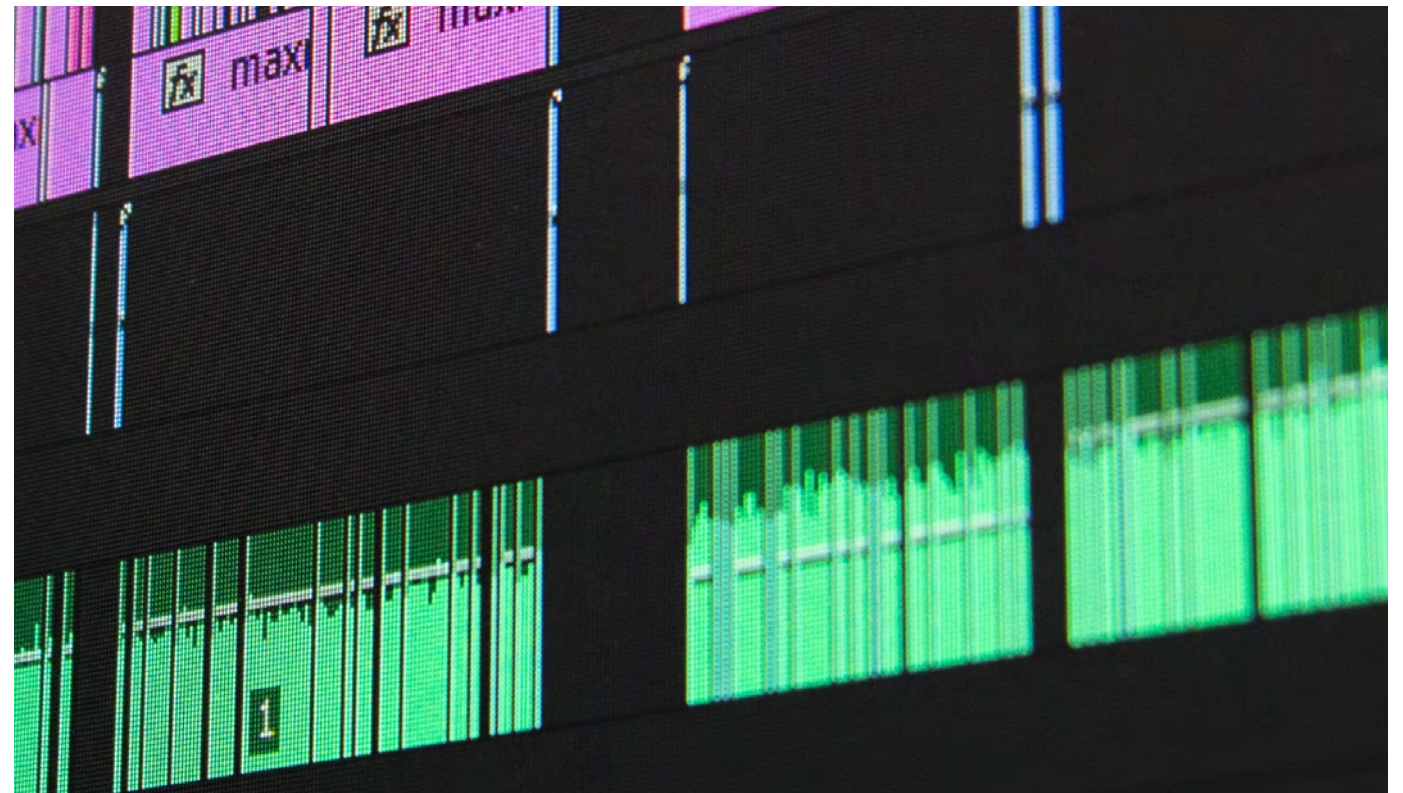
2. At School

[Click here to access the video](#)



Once you have finished, upload your video to Vimeo (free to set up an account) or YouTube and then share a link with everyone.

You can embed into your school website too from here - but you might need to hand that task over to your web design team.



Here's what I used...

- I am running everything on a 2013 Mac Book Pro with 16Gb Ram and 1TB SSD HD
- I edited the final video in Final Cut Pro X. You could easily use Adobe Premiere. These are quite expensive, and require some technical knowledge to use them. [Click here for a walk through](#)
- You can't use iMovie for the big project - it can't handle that number of video files.
- There are cheaper options...
- I would recommend looking at Filmora9, which has an educational discount on it. It will run on Mac or PC and can handle what you want to do.
- I uploaded the final edit to Vimeo, so that we could share and embed the video on our various platforms.
- I created the opening and closing titles in Keynote (Apple's version of PowerPoint) and saved them as videos. It's so easy to create the fluid motion graphics that way rather than in

Kit you might need in school

- Smartphone, camera, tablet (an iPad is ideal)
- Bluetooth speaker for playback (you could use your whiteboard)
- Editing app - iMovie (can only handle one video!), or Splice (recommended)
- Some way of adding additional light to the faces of your singers
- The backing track on your tablet or phone
- Some smiley singers!!

Finally, my advice is don't be too ambitious, or conversely be as ambitious as you feel capable.

I'm pretty confident using this tech, but this project stretched my technical know-how and my patience a few times too!

A bit about me...

I am Director of Music at The Blue Coat School, Birmingham. I am a bit of a geek when it comes to things like this, and we have been videoing concerts and performances at School for about 7 years now. We edit and share these with our parents so that they can share them with their families in turn.

Under normal circumstances, I would be fly-fishing on my beloved River Dove in Derbyshire.

Feel free to get in touch and I will help you if I can!

nicklinje@thebluecoatschool.com

Good Luck!

