COVID-19 Guidance for Musicians (Vocalists and Instrumentalists)

July 21, 2021

This guidance is meant to support individuals, groups, businesses and organizations in planning for musical activities including lessons, practices, performances and musical gatherings.

This guidance should be used in conjunction with the COVID-19 Prevention Guide for event organizers, theatres and performance venues and all individuals must adhere to the public health measures outlined in the Health Protection Act Order.

COVID-19 is most commonly spread from an infected person through respiratory droplets generated through coughing, sneezing, laughing, singing, and taking a layered approach with multiple measures reduces the spread of COVID-19. Some of these measures include vaccination, physical distancing, the use of non-medical masks, hand hygiene and environmental cleaning.

If there is COVID-19 activity in the community, the likelihood of it being introduced during an event or at a theatre/venue is higher. Gatherings/events may pose a greater risk of COVID-19 spread if there is a large number of attendees over an extended period of time. Individuals should also consider their own personal circumstances when deciding whether or not to partake in activities that may post a higher risk of spreading the virus that causes COVID-19.

Additional Guidance for Musicians (Choirs, Ensembles, Musical Theatre, Wind/brass instruments)

Adherence to gathering limits must be maintained for participants and audience/ spectators. The public health measures listed below should be implemented as a layered approach to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19.

Those involved in group singing and playing instruments (wind/brass) should consider:

- Performers and participants should not attend events while ill, even if symptoms are mild. If an individual feels unwell they should complete the COVID-19 Daily Checklist and follow directions provided.
• Maintain physical distance between performers and others (e.g. event staff, spectators).

• Consider how to maintain physical distance when participants and spectators move throughout the venue/event.

• Use physical barriers (e.g. plexiglass) where physical distancing is difficult to maintain. Barriers need to be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

• If possible, have performers and participants face away from others while singing or playing wind or brass instruments.

• Use outdoor sites where possible to further minimize risks. If indoors the site should be well ventilated.

• Post signage to inform participants of signs/symptoms and reminders about physical distancing, hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Signs can be found at: https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/resources/

• Participants should conduct frequent hand hygiene and practice respiratory etiquette. Access to hand hygiene (e.g. handwashing or use of alcohol-based hand rub) stations should be available.

• Follow cleaning and disinfecting procedures outlined below.

• If live music is being used for ambiance, lower volume of the music. Lower music volume allows the other individuals present to more consistently practice physical distancing (reduces need for close or loud talking).

• Keep a list of performers and participants present and contact information to assist Public Health with contact tracing, if needed.

Karaoke

• Karaoke is permissible as long as public health measures are followed.

• Perform hand hygiene before and after handling shared items.

• Shared equipment (e.g. microphones) should be cleaned and disinfected between uses.

• Physical distancing between participants should be maintained.

Cleaning & Disinfection

Particular attention to cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces must occur. Health Canada has a list of approved disinfectants that are suitable for use. All products should be used as per the manufacturer’s directions.
• To reduce the risk of exposure, hands should be cleaned before and after touching items that must be shared (e.g. sheet music, drumsticks, guitar picks). Items that could pose a higher risk for transmission (e.g. microphones) should be disinfected between uses.

• Instruments, mouthpieces and accessories should be cleaned and disinfected as per standard protocol. Do not share cleaning equipment.

• To reduce the risk of exposure, cleaning of instruments with saliva build-up should be done outside of the group setting (maintaining physical distancing or use of a barrier) directing the saliva into a disposable container/trashcan. Perform hand hygiene after cleaning instruments.

• Uniforms or gowns should not be shared and should be laundered after each use.