

**School of Music, Theatre & Dance**  
**COVID-19 Work & Safety Plan for Rehearsals**

Date: Revisions to original plan were reviewed and approved by EHS on February 24, 2021.  
Department: School of Music, Theatre & Dance

Guiding Principles:

- 1) This Work and Safety Plan is for rehearsal activities under Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's MI Safe Start Plan.
- 2) Rehearsal activities covered under this plan include:
  - \*Musicians (wind, brass, and string instruments),
  - \*Theatrical speaking voice (phonation),
  - \*Singing with or without microphones,
    - \*under the arts disciplines of **choral singing, opera, and musical theatre**
  - \*Dance.
- 3) Rehearsals are defined as the preparatory activities conducted in advance of a performance or a presentation to members of the public. Rehearsal activities may or may not be conducted in the same building as performances and include musical, staging, technical, costuming, and other preparatory activities. When the preparatory activities reach the point of creating show conditions (such as a final dress rehearsal) in front of audiences, the Work & Safety Plan for Performances becomes applicable. On single-day engagements to be presented before audiences, representatives of the School of Music, Theatre & Dance will discuss with outside users their intended schedule of activities and which plan SMTD will apply to those activities. Recorded presentations without audiences are guided by the Work & Safety Plan for Rehearsals.
- 4) We have developed our work plans around activities rather than individual buildings because we seek specific public-health guidance on these activities, especially since the spaces in our buildings are multi-use.
- 5) Safeguarding the health of students, faculty, and staff is of paramount importance.

## I. Workplace Requirements

1. Personnel plan to reduce density
  - A) Instrumental rehearsals
    - (1)String players would be placed six feet apart.
    - (2)Wind and brass players would be placed 12 feet apart. The use of bell covers is required.
    - (3)Conductors, who remain in one place but who are breathing and using their arms vigorously, will be placed at least 12 feet away from any performer.
  - B) Choral, musical theatre, opera, and theatre rehearsals
    - (1)Each performer must maintain a social distance of 9 feet from each other.
    - (2) Directors, stage managers, and coach/accompanists, all who work seated, will be spaced at least 6 feet apart.
    - (3) Conductors, who remain in one place but who are breathing vigorously, will be placed at least 12 feet away from any performer.
    - (4) Masks are required at all times; see II.1.A below.

C) Dance rehearsals

- (1) No contact or close dancing is permitted. Floor work is permitted.
- (2) Each dancer will be placed 9 feet apart.
- (3) Stage managers and accompanists, all who work seated, will be spaced at least 6 feet apart.
- (4) Choreographers may move around the rehearsal space to direct movement but must maintain social distancing of 6 feet. Touching is not permitted.
- (5) Masks are required at all times; see II.1.A below.

D) Visitors will not be allowed into rehearsals, with the exception of department chairs and faculty, staff, and students with direct business related to the rehearsals.

2. Rehearsal and “Room-Resting” Periods.

A) Instrumental rehearsals in the Moore Building

- (1) A rehearsal period should last no more than 100 minutes.
- (2) A room vacancy of 20 minutes is required to allow for adequate air exchange.
- (3) If a room is at least 2,500 square feet (Hankinson, McIntosh, Britton, Kevreson, Revelli Main Rehearsal Hall), up to 4 staff members may remain in the space during the room rest to facilitate a transition of equipment and material

B) Choral and instrumental rehearsals in Stamps Auditorium

- (1) A rehearsal period should last no more than 100 minutes.
- (2) A room vacancy of 20 minutes is required to allow for adequate air exchange.

C) Musical theatre and theatre rehearsals in large rehearsal rooms such as Newman Studio, Studio 2, Towsley Studio, and Voice Studio

- (1) A rehearsal period should last no more than 100 minutes.
- (2) A room vacancy of 20 minutes is required to allow for adequate air exchange.
- (3) If a room is at least 2,500 square feet (Newman Studio, Studio Two, Towsley Studio), up to 4 staff members may remain in the space during the room rest to facilitate a transition of equipment and material.

D) Opera rehearsals in McIntosh Theatre

- (1) A rehearsal period should last no more than 100 minutes.
- (2) A room vacancy of 20 minutes is required to allow for adequate air exchange.
- (3) Because McIntosh Theatre is at least 2,500 square feet., up to 4 staff members may remain in the space during the room rest to facilitate a transition of equipment and material.

E) Dance rehearsals

- (1) A rehearsal period should last no more than 100 minutes.
- (2) A room vacancy of 20 minutes is required to allow for adequate air exchange.

F) Due to the large air space of the major venues and their high air-exchange rate (which can be set with BAS), room rest is not required in any of the following performance

halls:

Hill Auditorium, Rackham Auditorium, Power Center, Mendelssohn Theatre, and Arthur Miller Theatre.

### 3. Dedicated Entry Point

Most of the rehearsal spaces have just one entry point. Stage managers will stagger the call times of each performer in order to eliminate congestion at the entrances of the rehearsal spaces. In the case of musical ensembles, call times will be staggered by section.

### 4. Daily Screening Protocol

- A) Stage managers will start each rehearsal with a reminder that any cast members who are feeling unwell, for whatever reason, should stay at home or if they start to feel unwell during rehearsal, should leave the room immediately.
- B) All UM students and staff who wish to enter a University building must complete the ResponsiBLUE screening before entering.

### 5. Testing, Contact Tracing and Notification

- A) The names, addresses, and contact information of performers, crew members, and artistic staff are routinely collected.
- B) Students, faculty, and staff will follow any applicable U-M testing requirements as detailed in [campublueprint.umich.edu](http://campublueprint.umich.edu) as part of admission into campus facilities.

### 6. On-site Supervisors

- A) In order to de-densify SMTD buildings for classes and to allow students to take their classes, rehearsals for Dance, Theatre, Musical Theatre, and Opera will need to take place during their traditional evening hours. As such, there may be an on-site health safety supervisor for evening shifts in which rehearsals take place, or a responsible individual may be asked to be the ambassador for basic safety protocols. Hired student staff, who normally set up and take down equipment, will be asked to assist with equipment disinfection (spray bottles or hand wipes).
- B) At the start of each mainstage rehearsal process, and as necessary during various phases of rehearsals, the production manager will issue email communications with specific directions for Covid compliance during each phase. Depending upon the public-health circumstances of the campus and production, more frequent communications may be necessary.

## II. Health and Safety Measures

### 1. Masks

- A) Unless otherwise noted, every person involved in rehearsals must wear a face mask or face covering.
- B) String players – will wear masks at all times.
- C) Wind and brass players – will wear masks at all times except when actively playing. This means that they should go to their chairs wearing masks, play without, and then depart wearing masks. Wind and brass players shall use bell covers.
- D) Actors, singers, & dancers -- Masks must be worn in rehearsal at all times for all performers and crew members. Regarding the use of facial coverings, we realize that

masks may inhibit a performer's vocal ability, as well as hide their full range of facial expression. On the other hand, the balance of scientific data supports the value of masks in reducing the risk of transmission in community settings. Reducing the risk of transmission is important not only to safeguard the health of the individuals involved in a production, but also to reduce the risk that a production may have to be cancelled due to community spread. With these considerations in mind, our plan requires that masks be worn in rehearsal at all times for all performers and crew members.

- E) Stage directors and stage managers; conductors in staging rehearsals – will wear masks at all times.
  - F) Conductors in front of musical ensembles – will wear masks at all times.
  - G) A supply of masks will be kept by stage managers and orchestral staff in case anyone in the company has forgotten their mask.
  - H) People who have been vaccinated against COVID-19, or people who have suffered from COVID-19 and have come out of quarantine, are not exempt from mask use, and must follow current U-M mask protocols.
2. Touching, whether among performers or by artistic staff to adjust blocking, will not be permitted.
  3. Floor work for dance is permitted.
  4. Everyone who participates in a rehearsal (performers, conductors, director, stage managers, etc.) will be required to wash their hands with soap and water before and after every rehearsal.
  5. Hand sanitizer with alcohol content greater than 60% will be available at the door to each rehearsal room and in a spot within each room.
  6. Safety glasses will be made available to anyone who wishes to use these pieces of PPE and become their personal property. The safety glasses will be for the sole use of the requestor throughout the rehearsal and performance engagement. Safety glasses shall not be shared. The requestor will be responsible for cleaning and disinfecting their glasses.
  7. The CDC poster to *Stop the Spread of Germs* will be posted in each rehearsal room. In addition, production-specific signs with appropriate public-health advisories may also be posted as needed.
  8. Stage managers will include any public-health concerns in their nightly rehearsal reports, which go to upper management and are read the next morning.
  9. Every cast member or musician will be given their own script and score with their names marked on the materials. They will be told not to share, given the risk of droplets on the materials.
  10. During any breaks in rehearsal, performers will not be allowed to congregate together in a clump but shall need to remain socially distanced at 6 feet.

11. Given the short duration of rehearsals under this plan compared to traditional rehearsal times, rehearsal refreshments should not be necessary. However, if the occasion arises, any rehearsal refreshments will be individually packaged or bottled. There will be no self-serve food or beverages.
12. For any brass or wind players who may have condensation accumulated in their instruments during playing, receptacles or absorbent pads will be placed next to each player's chair. Letting the condensation drop on the floor is prohibited. Players will remove their own receptacles or absorbent pads at the end of rehearsal and dispose in trash containers. Players will wash their hands or use hand sanitizer immediately after disposing of these materials.
13. Disinfection
  - A) Each participant in a rehearsal will be asked to disinfect the items that they will touch or have touched in their "personal zone," such as a chair, table top or music stand, with a disinfectant wipe.
  - B) Musicians will be asked to use a disinfectant wipe before and after rehearsal on common SMTD instruments which are left in the room, such as pianos and percussion instruments.
  - C) High touch, common areas such as door knobs, push plates, light switches, and will be cleaned and disinfected daily by UM custodial staff. Dance barres will be disinfected by SMTD.
  - D) Hand and furniture props should be disinfected before and after each rehearsal by assigned SMTD staff, whether by wipes or spray bottle as appropriate.

### III. Exposure Determination

We have gleaned as much of the latest scientific and medical advice as we can regarding how people in the performing arts can return to work safely. We have surveyed emerging safety practices in both professional and educational performing arts. However, there is much that remains unclear about how COVID-19 may or may not be transmitted by various activities in the performing arts. Anecdotally, there is more and more indication that airborne respiratory particles are a likely means of transmission of COVID-19. Since there is not enough scientific evidence to develop a safety plan that would bring the risk to zero, this plan culls safety points from various sources in order to mitigate risks in as many ways as can be imagined. In instances where clear consensus on best practice has not been reached, we have decided to err on the side of caution with the safety of our students, faculty, and staff held as first priority.

### III. Current Exceptions

#### 1. Mask-less Performance & Recording:

A. Mask-less performance is permitted under strictly controlled circumstances:

- 1) A student would be singing or performing a monologue without a mask only while on the stage of one of the major performance venues with high levels of air exchange

(Hill Auditorium, Rackham Auditorium, Stamps Auditorium, Power Center, Mendelssohn Theatre, and Arthur Miller Theatre).

- 3) The single performer will go on stage masked; all levels (audio, video, lighting) will be checked while performer is masked.
- 4) Tech and run through the scene as needed with the performer masked.
- 5) Up to 10 people, such as camera operators, director, choreographer, stage manager, light board operator, sound operator, etc. would be a minimum of 30 feet away. All other people must vacate the room. No audience is permitted.
- 6) The performer can have the face covering off for up to 30 minutes.
- 7) When the recording is complete, the performer re-applies the mask and then exits the stage.
- 8) Following the performer's exit, everyone else must exit and the room must rest for 20 minutes.

## 2. Mask-less Interviews & Recording:

B. Mask-less interviews are permitted under strictly controlled circumstances:

- 1) A person may be interviewed **in a conversational voice** without a mask only while on the stage of one of the major performance venues with high levels of air exchange (Hill Auditorium, Rackham Auditorium, Stamps Auditorium, Power Center, Mendelssohn Theatre, and Arthur Miller Theatre). A person giving a speech with projection (phonation) for a recording falls under the protocols of III.1.A Mask-less Performance and Recording.
- 2) The person being interviewed will go on stage masked.
- 3) Any technician applying a microphone to the interviewee will wear a mask and a face shield. Any interaction closer than six feet will be as short as possible.
- 4) All levels (audio, video, lighting) will be checked while the interviewee is masked.
- 5) Tech and run through the interview as needed with the interviewee masked.
- 6) Camera operators, director, sound operator, and stage manager would be a minimum of 12 feet away. All other people must vacate the room. No audience is permitted.
- 7) When the recording is complete, the interviewee re-applies the mask and then exits the stage.
- 8) Following the interviewee's exit, everyone else must exit and the room must rest for 20 minutes.