

MUSICIANS TIP SHEET



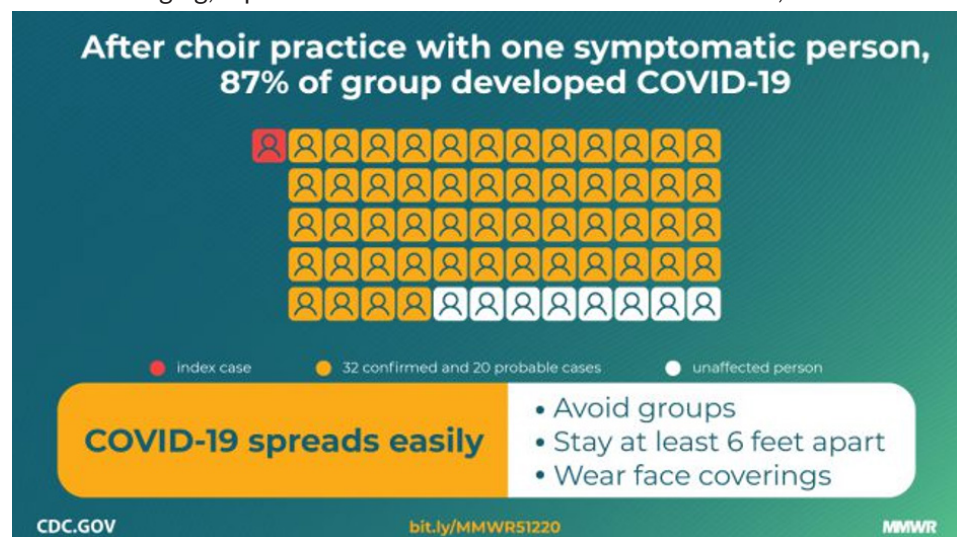
The risk for droplet transmission is high for choirs and musicians playing brass and woodwind instruments. The current best advice is no choirs or congregational singing at in-person worship. With singing and specific instruments, droplets can be projected farther than six feet and remain suspended in the air longer.”
(BWC Guidelines for Re-entering Well, p. 4)

Why?

The risk for droplet transmission is high for choirs, soloists, and musicians playing brass and/or woodwind instruments. Upon review of the science of singing, reports of choirs that have transmitted the virus, and known difficulties and health risks of singing with a mask, we concluded that we must rethink music production as we prepare to re-enter our spaces for worship.

When?

While each local church will go through its own discernment and planning process to decide when to resume in-person worship, most churches have a plan for music while they are conducting worship virtually. We are still learning about the implications for singing in public. While the data is still being analyzed, the current understanding is that until there is a vaccine, there is no safe public singing. That means the prohibition on public singing may extend past Phase 3 and virtual music production may be necessary longer than initially thought.



Virtual Music-Making Considerations

Some considerations for those who are assembling or are thinking of assembling to create music virtually:

- ☐ Guidelines for numbers of people in the sanctuary are determined by local and state governmental directives based on the status of COVID-19 cases in each jurisdiction. Within the BWC, this includes Maryland, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia. If a group follows the guidelines to safely meet in-person to record music for virtual worship, then decisions will need to be made about whether vocal musicians can perform while wearing a mask.
- ☐ A webinar of major singing organizations in the United States met the week of May 3 to discuss the future of singing while the coronavirus is still active. Here are some of the things that were mentioned about masks and singing: “No masks are currently safe for singing. N95 masks must be fit-tested first. They also decrease the singer’s oxygen levels due to rebreathing expired carbon dioxide and increasing levels (in the body). This is risky for people with asthma, COPD, and heart disease.”
- ☐ Humming, even with a mask, is not a viable alternative to singing normally; aerosolized particles are still released through the nostrils and around the edges of the mask. Vocalists commented that decreased oxygen levels could be the biggest problem with singing while wearing a mask. They also mentioned that when opening their mouths wider to achieve some pitches and vowels during rehearsals that their masks were pulled down off their noses and over their mouths, requiring readjustment during the performance.
- ☐ Consider asking people to record from their homes and then mix those recordings, creating a virtual choir.

Cleaning Instruments Checklist

- ☐ Pianos and organs may be used in worship; however, they must be properly cleaned and sanitized after every use. When cleaning these instruments, please note:
 - ☐ Generally speaking, a soft disposable towel, using warm water and hand/dish soap is safe to use on virtually every finish, key, and case parts.
 - ☐ Always follow up with a dry soft disposable towel to remove any standing liquid.
 - ☐ Cleaning pianos is a gentle process not a scrubbing process. Pressing hard or vigorously scrubbing may lead to scratching or removing the finish.
 - ☐ If you use an alcohol-based disinfectant (do not use products containing bleach or citrus) put the disinfectant on the towel, not directly on the piano.
 - ☐ Never leave any liquids on the keys.
 - ☐ Case parts finishes vary greatly and can easily be damaged by disinfectant wipes and sprays. A soft disposable towel, using warm water and hand/dish soap is safe to use on virtually every finish, key, and case parts. Always follow up with a dry soft disposable towel to remove any standing liquid.
 - ☐ Remember to wash your hands after you have thrown away the towels.

Additional Resources

- Resources for Choral Professionals during a Pandemic
<https://acda.org/resources-for-choral-professionals-during-a-pandemic/>
- "What Do Science and Data Say About the Near-Term Future of Singing," a webinar co-sponsored by experts in the field of choral singing
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DFI3GsVzj6Q&feature=youtu.be>
- How to Create a Virtual Choir Video
<https://midnightmusic.com.au/2020/03/dear-music-teachers-please-stop-asking-how-to-create-a-virtual-choir-video/>
- Droplets and Aerosols in the Transmission of SARS-CoV-2, an article from the New England Journal of Medicine
https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMc2009324?query=featured_coronavirus
- Visualizing Speech-Generated Oral Fluid Droplets with Laser Light Scattering, an article from the New England Journal of Medicine
https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMc2007800?query=featured_coronavirus
- Singing, the Church and the COVID-19: A Caution for Moving Forward in Our Current Pandemic
<https://www.drheathernelson.com/singingandcovid19>
- High SARS-CoV-2 Attack Rate Following Exposure at a Choir Practice — Skagit County, Washington, March 2020
<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6919e6.htm>

