



# Reopening your Orchestra



Orchestra Operations  
in the time of Covid-19





# Relaunch/Reprise

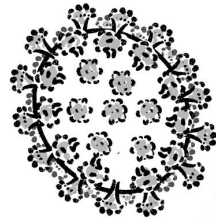
— Online Learning Series: Part I of II





# Monopoly Classical Music Edition

*Chance* A CATASTROPHIC PANDEMIC  
WIPES OUT YOUR SEASON.  
WHEN YOU CAN ROLL AGAIN IS UNCERTAIN.



Curnow



# Tell me what to do!

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- What every orchestra has in common is we are all a bit different
- We all have to create our own recovery plans based on our local situation
- We must follow municipal, provincial, and federal guidelines
  - As a legal entity your organization needs to follow [federal](#) and provincial, labour law, health and safety guidelines and specific COVID-19 measures
  - Our local health unit is the primary agency to satisfy with our COVID reopening plan
- **Volunteers should be considered “workers” for health and safety.**



# What is allowed varies greatly by jurisdiction

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- **Ontario July 15, 2020:** "Plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier is required between the audience and singers as well as players of brass or wind instruments."
- **City of Toronto July 29, 2020:** "Singers and players of brass or wind instruments must be separated from any spectators by at least two metres/six feet, or by an impermeable barrier (e.g. plexiglass) if physical distancing cannot be achieved."
- **City of Toronto August 10th, 2020:** Confirmed with Orchestras Canada they would be updating their guidance to be consistent with the Province.



# Racing to a start line that keeps moving

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- “We have just one chance to get it right when it comes to reopening..that means letting the science guide us.” Actors Equity executive director Mary McColl
- What makes this really hard is the science has not caught up.
- Avoid the “breaking news” some Orchestra did a study with ... that ... so.
  - Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence

“The WHO has been tracking published medical studies about COVID-19 as of mid-June more than 22,000 papers on the virus have been published, and more than 2000 trials are underway....an enormous amount of papers that are coming out before official peer review and that is a problem.” Dr. Stuart Weiss



# HOW DOES COVID-19 SPREAD?



Mainly spreads from close contact with an infected person when they cough, sneeze, or talk.

**ACTION:** Keep a distance of 6 feet (2 metres) from others.



The virus can land on surfaces and survive for hours, but does not spread easily this way.

**ACTION:** Clean surfaces and wash hands often.



People are most contagious when they are sick and 48 hours before they show symptoms.

**ACTION:** Stay home and self-isolate if you are sick.



The virus does not spread through the air, so building residents are not at greater risk from shared vents.

**ACTION:** Keep distance, especially in common areas.



Masks or face coverings can help protect others from your germs when used alongside handwashing, physical distancing, and staying home when sick.

**ACTION:** Wear a mask or face covering.



# Respect and understanding is critical

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- I think we will see two behaviors possibly from the same people:
  - Eager to return to normal as soon as possible
  - Terrified that resuming activity will bring the virus to them and their family
- Each individual's circumstances and vulnerabilities are different. Open communication, and a strong framework for reopening, with options, will allow workers to decide if a return to work poses an unreasonable risk
- You need a written business continuity plan specific to the pandemic.
- You need to communicate the plan early and often to all stakeholders.



# Where do I start?

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- If you work in a professional venue they will have a plan you can start from.
- When you are in that venue you will be following their plan with some additions specific to our type of performance.
- The [Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety](#)
- The [Event Safety Alliance](#) has the most comprehensive guide.
- The [AFofM](#) and [FIM](#) have specific guidance for Orchestra musicians.
- [Orchestras Canada](#) is also maintaining a repository of information.







# Successful infection = Exposure to virus x time

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- Longer contact between people increases risk of transmission
- Working indoors increases risk of transmission
- Slow the process down, work with fewer people, take longer to do the job
- Work in small groups, and limit interaction between groups so that one symptomatic person does not mandate isolating the entire Orchestra.
- Allow only mission-critical people into any area until all public health restrictions are lifted.
- Revise rehearsal and performance protocols to limit interactions between musicians and support staff, as well as each other.



# Best practices for gathering

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- All group activity should be monitored by an infection control supervisor
  - Someone whose sole job is to make sure your safety and covid 19 protocols are followed
  - Someone with the authority to enforce your plan
  - Someone to implement and document symptom screening
  - Someone with the resources and knowledge to deal with a symptomatic worker.
  - Ideally someone with some medical background and training
- Enforce a strict symptom screening protocol prior to arrival at an activity
- Handshaking, hugging, and other physical contact should be avoided.
- Frequent hand washing should be encouraged.



# Best practices for gathering

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- PPE - specifically face masks - should be mandatory for everyone until they are seated in place on the stage ready to play
- Backstage warm-up procedures should be discussed and revised as needed
- Equipment not supplied by the performer must be clean and disinfected prior to use.
- Most disinfectants that work against COVID-19 will damage wood finishes



# Best practices for Orchestras

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- Sharing instruments, microphones, musical scores, and all other items should be avoided.
- Each musician will have their own designated stand and chair, distanced from each other by at least the currently recommended minimum standard.
- Musicians will bring their own instruments, sheet music and accessories to the stage to avoid cross contamination.
- Wind & brass musicians must clean up, remove and dispose of their own condensate residue. Be sure to include enough disposal containers.
- Musicians should arrive dressed for performance



# Best practices by design

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- Concert flow designed to eliminate contact between staff and musicians
  - No changes of stage setup between works
  - musicians may come and go if practical between works
  - no musician is allowed to sit in another person's location
- No Intermission
  - Reduce interaction and need for washroom use
- No paper tickets or programs, contactless entry & multiple entry points
- Advance ticket sales by section not by seat



# Final thoughts

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- Communicating and enforcing new protocols will be among the most challenging tasks we face
- Organize the usual stuff so that you can focus on the new stuff
- Document everything
- Communicate early and often with all stakeholders
- We need to model the behavior we want to see



# Follow up and questions

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- Send me an Email [TSO.Prod.Mgr@gmail.com](mailto:TSO.Prod.Mgr@gmail.com)
- Join our Facebook Group [Orchestra Production Canada](#).
- Weekly Orchestra Operations [zoom](#) call Wednesdays 3:30 pm EDT.
- International Musician's [Symphonic Services](#) various articles of interest
- Special thanks to
  - [Jeffrey Curnow](#) associate principal trumpet of the Philadelphia Orchestra for the walk in image.
  - Katherine Carleton, Sarah Thomson, and Dr. Roydon Tse of [Orchestras Canada](#) for the opportunity.



# Reopening Your Orchestra: Part II

## ***Re-launch | Reprise***

Online Learning Series

Série d'apprentissage en ligne



ORCHESTRAS  
ORCHESTRES  
CANADA

## **Re-opening your Orchestra**

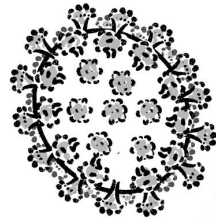
Part 1: Friday August 14th,  
with Chris Walroth

Part 2: Thursday September 10th,  
with Janet Sellery



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