

Wirtz Center Covid-19 Performing Arts Practice Protocols

IN-PERSON PERFORMANCE WORK PROTOCOLS

Spring 2022

Introduction

The Wirtz Center is committed to prioritizing the health and safety of all students, staff, faculty, and audiences. Our goal is to provide the safest working environment possible while maximizing educational opportunities for all students. This document seeks to clarify best practices related to the COVID-19 pandemic and outlines the requirements for production work at the Wirtz Center.

Student work includes vocal projection, movement, dance, and singing, all of which occur in two parallel tracks at the Wirtz Center: as curricular activity in the classroom and through extracurricular productions produced by the Wirtz Center, the American Music Theatre Project, and StuCo, the student-run theatre community.

All Northwestern students, faculty, and staff must follow [University health and safety guidelines](#) regarding vaccinations, masking, and testing. As local, state, and federal guidelines evolve, we will alter our policies accordingly.

Organizational Strategies

Season Planning

The Wirtz 21/22 season's productions will be in person in front of audiences and will include some limited virtual offerings. Specific rehearsal/practice protocols are outlined below for these productions.

Communication

- Wirtz safety protocols will be shared and reviewed with each production team on or before the first rehearsal.
- Wirtz Production Managers will field questions or address concerns from the production team. Where applicable, they will redirect questions to the appropriate source: Wirtz Managing Director, the Theatre Department Chair, the School of Communication, or Risk Management.

PPE and Supplies

Wirtz will provide the following PPE and disinfectant/cleaning items:

- Disposable masks are available in kiosks in the main lobby and the dance lobby
- Clean dust mops for dance floors in dance studio spaces
- Disinfectant wipes for tables, chairs and high-touch surfaces

Pre-Rehearsal Preparation and Strategy

- **Stay home if you have any symptoms at all**, even if it seems questionable. Err on the side of caution and in consideration for your colleagues.
 - Follow protocols on [Northwestern's website](#) if you're experiencing COVID-19 symptoms of any kind
 - You must be symptom and fever-free for 24 hours and have received a negative COVID-19 test before returning
- **All personnel involved in a Wirtz process must be tested once a week at the Jacobs Center or the downtown testing venue during the rehearsal and performance process.**

Rehearsal Protocols

- Masks are optional for all actors, crew and production personnel.
- In moments of choreographed intimacy, violence or closeness participants may not touch the eyes, nose or mouth of any other participant.
- When possible, breaks should be taken outside the room, and any food should be consumed outside the room.

Hygiene

- Participants must engage in frequent hand washing or sanitizing if running water is not available
 - Wash or sanitize before using the space or after coughing, sneezing, using the restroom, or touching your face
 - Sanitize hands before and after handling props
- Participants must avoid touching the eyes, nose or mouth of their colleagues
- Practice good cough and sneeze protocols
 - Use a tissue; cover the mouth with an elbow or shoulder
 - Wash hands afterward

Documentation

- Participant/production must have confirmed room use through 25Live with name, date, and time accurately documented
- The stage manager, or a designated member of the production team, must maintain a list of all individuals participating in an in-person work session, including date and time

Performance Protocols

- Masks are optional for all actors, crew and production personnel.

Testing

- **All personnel involved in a Wirtz process must be tested once a week during rehearsals and performances.**

- All cast and crew members will need to complete a COVID-19 test at least 48 hours before the first technical rehearsal and again 48 hours before the brush-up rehearsal during the second week of the run
- In the event of a positive test, the stage manager and production manager should be notified immediately, and all [NU quarantine and health monitoring policies](#) must be followed
- In the event that a production team member tests positive, all members of the company must obtain a negative test before returning to the rehearsal or performance rooms.

Conclusion

This document is a living document; as information develops, these protocols may be adjusted to reflect the most contemporary knowledge and best practices.

Sources

Wirtz Center guidelines are sourced from the [Northwestern University COVID Safety guidelines](#) and the Theatre Production & Theatre Patron – CCO Certificate & COVID Safety Training provided by [Arts & Science](#).

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