

# CHORAL SINGING - PLAN FOR THE RESUME OF CHORAL ACTIVITY REHEARSALS AND CONCERTS



DATE: OKTOBER 2021

It should be noted that this Plan is a revision of the documents of analysis and recommendations, which has the will to respond to the needs of the moment and the uncertainties about the development of choral singing in the near future, as we said in the previous documents and in the 1st Prevention Plan in spring 2020. Therefore, it is a plan subject to temporality according to the criteria for emergencies to emerging transmission diseases with high risk potential linked to the COVID-19.

However, this document of recommendations appeals to the responsibility of groups and individuals to whom it is addressed and to their power to establish other measures with the aim to ensure public health.

**The Coronavirus is the infectious agent, but for the transmission of the disease, the transmitting agent is the people, so it is our responsibility that other people do not get sick; let us do everything we know to prevent this transmission!!!! Let us be solidary and responsible citizens.**

The activities of choirs will be subject to the epidemiological situation and to the restrictions that may be determined by the local authorities, in each case and territory.

The activities of choirs take place indoors and outdoors.

As for the closed spaces, they can be of diverse ownership and welcome other social and cultural activities, choral singing rehearsals and, in many cases, also concerts. Very often these are shared spaces with different groups and activities. Therefore, in their use, during the resumption stage, it will be necessary to take into account the measures for disinfection and ventilation of the spaces and the establishment of shifts for limiting their use, and this will depend on the owners of the places, whether they are public, private, from the church, etc.

With regard to street activity, it will be necessary to evaluate the permitted uses of the public highway established in the local plans for resumption. Likewise, and as has already been pointed out in many municipal proposals, the actions will have to be rethought given that a large part of the activity, and specifically the concerts, will have to adapt their format.

**Measures to stop the spread of infection during musical exercises are always present:**

- **Sick people must not participate in choral singing rehearsals and concerts.**
- **Good hygiene (hand washing and the use of masks) must always be present at rehearsals and concerts.**
- **There should be no physical contact between people, neither between singers nor with the audience. (A safe distance should always be maintained).**
- **Equipment, instruments and sheet music cannot be shared.**
- **The room must be adequate: sufficient space proportional to the number of participants in the activity and adequate ventilation.**
- **And we add:**

**VACCINATION is the best measure to stop the spread of covid-19!!!**

**The social role of musical life**

The practice of choral singing is important on a social level. Singing is possible if singers keep their distance and follow the infection control advice: hand washing and disinfection, use of masks, distance and ventilation.

The use of the mask has proved to be an effective preventive measure and at the same time it does not imply great inconveniences, nor important modifications of the sound, and we have many examples of choirs that have been applying these measures during these last months without incidences and with good musical results.

To limit the transmission of infection, there are several measures that can be implemented in rehearsals and concerts.

**In order to be able to carry out their activities, exceptionally and during this period, the choirs will be regulated as regular cohabitation groups.** Choirs will have this consideration in concerts, rehearsals, training and displacement.

Many of these measures, which were already contemplated in the Prevention Plan for rehearsals, are now more extensive and exhaustive for concerts both outdoors and indoors, and are applicable to all kind of adult and children's choirs.

## General Considerations

- The sung voice is projected further than the spoken voice, not only by drops but also by aerosols, up to 6-7 meters as suspected and now has been proven, a fact **that makes the safety distance to avoid contagion, singing with mask, has to be 1.5 meters laterally between singers and 2 meters between rows.**
- During the choral activity we will try to speak as little as possible and speak softly, in order to emit less aerosols, the conductor may use a disinfected microphone or loudspeaker protected with a disposable plastic cover.
- **Masks must ALWAYS be worn, including when singing.**
- Rehearsals and performances should preferably take place outdoors, in this case if the singers are all vaccinated, do not have any symptoms and keep the safety distances, they can sing without a mask. If they take place indoors, there must be the possibility of keeping physical distances.
- The persons participating in the activities must be registered singers of the choir. If not, the choir will have to keep a record of contacts of people outside the choir, who will participate in the activity, as well as the places and dates on which it will take place.
- For the transportation, priority will be given to private transport, and in case of collective transport, the rules of safe transport will be followed, established by the means of transport.
- Singers have to adopt the necessary measures to avoid the generation of risks of spreading the COVID-19 infection, as well as their own exposure to these risks, and they have to adopt individual and collective protection measures based on: frequent hand hygiene; self-control of respiratory symptoms; the use of surgical masks (avoid coughing directly into the air, cover the mouth with the inside of the forearm and avoid touching the face, nose and eyes); maintaining groups of habitual cohabitation as stable as possible; minimizing daily social contacts to avoid the multiplication of possible chains of transmission; physical interpersonal safety distance; proper ventilation of enclosed spaces and cleaning and disinfection of surfaces.
- Indoors and outdoors, the physical interpersonal safety distance for choral singing is set at 2m in general, with the equivalent in a safety space of 2.5 m<sup>2</sup> per person, unless more restrictive values are current.
- The main novelty currently is the relaxation of quarantines in the choir. There is no need of confinement for vaccinated singers. If a singer is in close contact with a positive person but is completely vaccinated for more than 15 days, he/she will not have to be isolated at home and will be able to go to rehearsals. He/she will have to do the analytical controls indicated by Public Health.
- Unvaccinated or partially vaccinated singers will not be able to attend rehearsals and will have to do the quarantine.
- **That's why singers are being called upon to get vaccinated in order to ensure more immunity.**
- At rehearsals and choral concerts, frequent hand hygiene with soap or hydro alcoholic gel will continue to be present. Temperature controls at the entrances will not be compulsory, although it may continue to be

carried out if the centre decides to do so.

- Access in common areas will have to be organized and coordinated to maintain physical distance.

### **General Activity**

- For the associated persons attending the public, the distance during the whole process of attention will be, at least, of 1.5 meters, and with mask.
- The public attending the concerts will wear masks at all times.
- There will be different spaces for singers and audience (entry rooms, toilets, etc.)
- Cleaning, disinfection and ventilation of closed rooms and open-air spaces must be carried out before each rehearsal or performance. In case of several sessions, before each one of them, a new disinfection must be carried out at the entrance of people, according to the terms indicated in this protocol.
- When the session is over and after cleaning, disinfection and ventilation, the spaces will be closed to ensure that they remain sanitized until the start of the next session.
- The cleaning and disinfection of toilets will be carried out at the beginning and end of each session, with special attention to their ventilation in accordance with the recommendations of the health authorities.
- When cleaning and disinfecting spaces, special attention should be paid to areas of common use and frequently touched surfaces, in accordance with the following guidelines:
- Disinfectants to be used are alcohol 70°, or dilutions of bleach with water (1/50) just prepared, or soap and water, or any of the disinfectants with virucidal activity that are available on the market and that have been authorized and registered by the Ministry of Health. In the use of this product, the indications of the label must be respected. Cleaning and disinfection measures must take into account the specificities of the spaces in which the activity is carried out and the material to be disinfected.
- After each cleaning and disinfection, the materials used and the protective equipment used should be safely disposed of and hands should be washed.
- Cleaning, disinfection and ventilation measures shall also be extended to private areas such as changing rooms, lockers, toilets, kitchens and rest areas.
- Cleaning and disinfection shall be carried out under the maximum ventilation conditions that the place can provide.

### **Activities of the choirs with audience**

- The audience of the events organized by the choirs will have to comply the prescribed rules.
- As a general rule, public activities involving physical contact are not permitted, nor are activities where it is not possible to maintain the physical distance of interpersonal safety prescribed by the health authorities, or any activity where unpredictability factors that disturb the

movement or safe circulation of people may be present, in open air spaces or in the street.

In general, the following rules are prescribed:

- We recommend online ticket sales or prior registration of the attending audience, with the allocation of seats to be occupied.
- Please note that public access may be limited in accordance with the safety distance and maximum capacity in each case.
- Indicators of the maximum capacity conditions and of the protection, hygiene and disinfection measures, location of disinfectant gel, etc. where concerts are held.
- Horizontal signposting of the routes to be followed by the public, indicating the safety distances in the areas of ticket offices, toilets, common areas, etc.
- Warning that the activity may only be carried out in the presence of public if the measures prescribed in this protocol are complied with.
- Warning of the mandatory use of surgical masks by the public to comply with mandatory prevention standards in enclosed spaces.
- Warning that people with symptoms of COVID-19, or those who have been in direct contact with a sick person, are not allowed to enter. It is appealed in the self-responsible declaration.
- Plan measures for the circulation of attendees to avoid crowds at crossroads or points of greatest affluence.
- Outdoor concerts should last a maximum of 1 hour, and it is recommended that there are no breaks in between.
- Cloakroom service and luggage storage are not allowed.
- In enclosed spaces it is compulsory for the public to wear a mask.
- The physical safety distance is 1.5 meters, except in groups with regular cohabitation. In non-habitual cohabitation groups, it is not possible to be less than 1.5 meters away, despite wearing a mask.

#### Choral concerts in concert halls

In order to avoid breaks in the concert that involve the coexistence of artists and / or public in the stage or access spaces, it is recommended to reduce the duration of the concerts to a maximum of 60 minutes without pause or with technical stops (max. 3-5 minutes). No one should move from their place. If it is not possible to perform the show without a break, this break should be 30 minutes. It has to be done guaranteeing enough time, 15 minutes, for ventilation and 15 minutes for the exit and entrance of the public with security and distancing, and with the use of a mask.

Recommended safety distances for vocal ensembles and soloists (These distances may be modified by subsequent technical-scientific studies).

- Vocal groups / soloists: minimum distance 1.5 to 2 meters.
- For choirs, if this is not possible, the person in charge of the production, together with the artistic direction, will detail the conditions in which the show will take place and propose the necessary safety measures.

It is recommended that each singer is responsible for his or her rehearsal material: scores, music stands, chairs and stools.

The piano must be disinfected at the beginning and end of the rehearsal or concert.

As choral activity often does not allow personal distancing measures, it is recommended to look for alternatives such as the establishment of position marks for performers or stage elements; each particular case will have to be studied to offer guarantees of protection.

If the singers have to perform at some point in the area set aside for the public, the safety distance must necessarily be respected.

It is proposed that organizational measures be put in place for each concert, in addition to the general measures provided for each space, to avoid crowds.

It is recommended to consider the possibility to install barriers to separate workers, in certain cases, such as at the ticket offices.

As a general rule, access to personnel not involved in the artistic activity will be prohibited. If this is not possible, the safety distance must be maintained and the use of masks is compulsory.

With regard to the use of dressing rooms, it is recommended that previously disinfected spaces be provided that are large enough to safeguard personal distance. (2,5 m<sup>2</sup> per singer). If no space is available, the artists will change in shifts, disinfecting the space after use.

The optimum would be to be able to set up previously disinfected toilets for the exclusive use of artists, with WC and washbasin as a minimum.

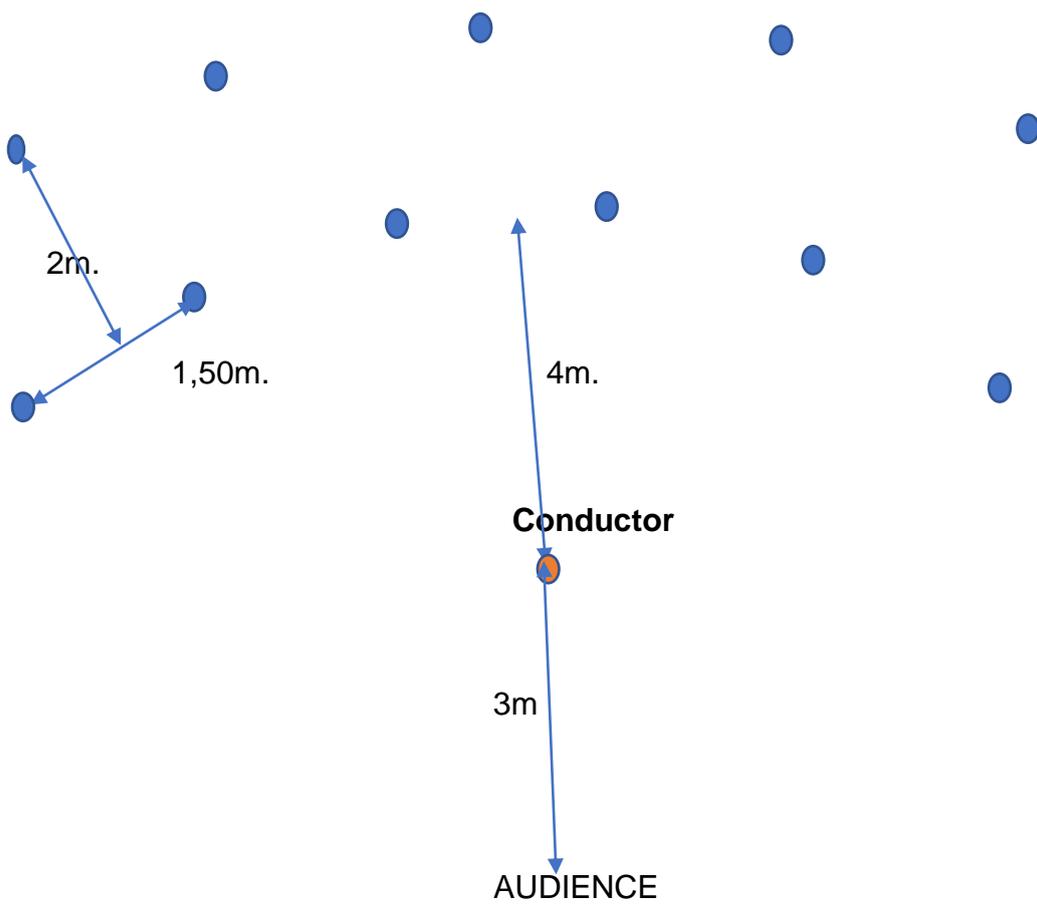
It is advisable to encourage teleworking and videoconferencing for musicians and production staff and those jobs that allow it. It is essential to try to reduce face-to-face meetings as much as possible.

It is advisable to arrange meetings or visits to the stage in advance and visitors should bring their own protective materials. It is recommended to have courtesy masks at the entrance for visits that do not come with them.

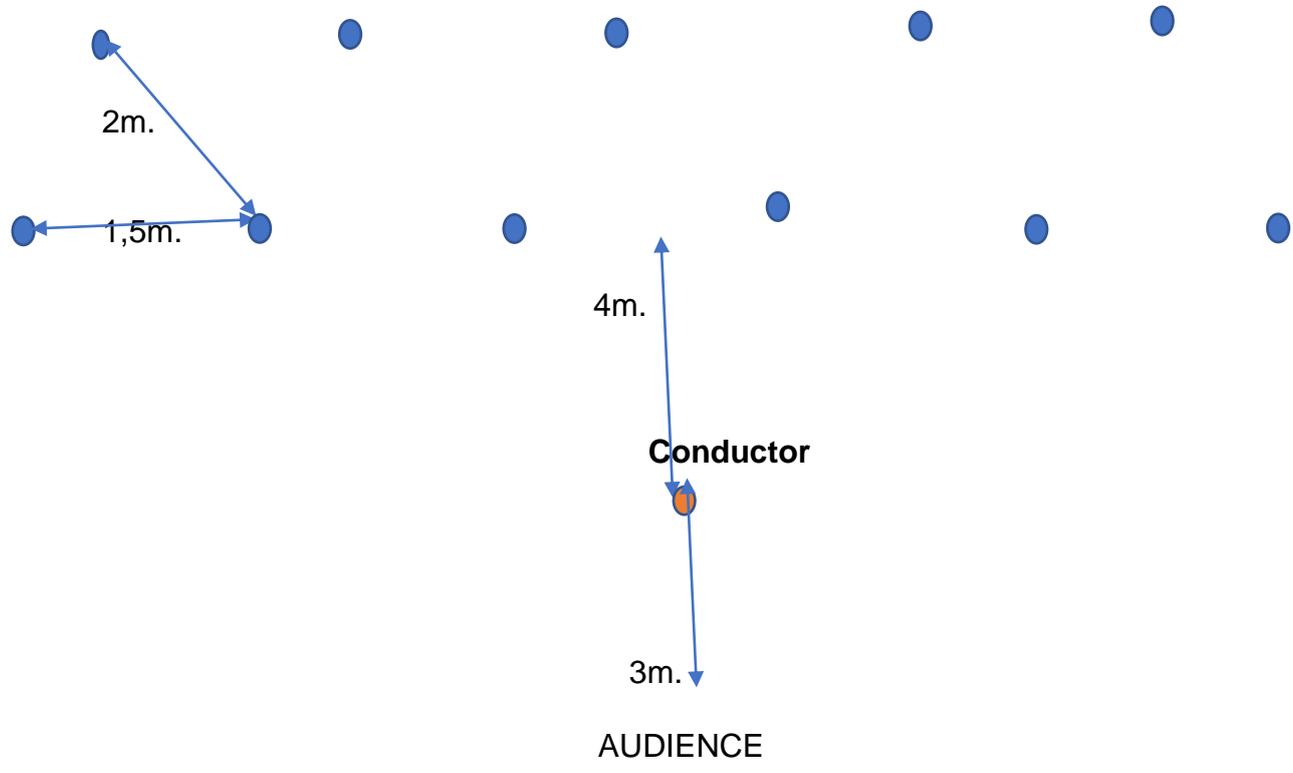
#### Placement of the choir (ground signal or fixed chair)

The choir will be placed according to these schemes, whether in open-air concerts or in an enclosed spaces.

The minimum separation between singers will be 1.5 m., and between rows, 2 m. The conductor will be 4 m. from the choir, and the audience 3 m. from the conductor or 7 m. from the choir.



Safer arrangement, in parallel files.



The arrangement of the singers can be straight or circular, and the rows can be arranged in such a way that a singer in the second row is between two singers in the first row, making a triangulation.

The audience will be at least 7m from the choir and 3m from the conductor. A natural or mechanical ventilation system to the hall is necessary.

All participants, singers, conductor, musicians and staff must wear masks before entering the concert hall, and must continue to wear them until the end of the concert. Singers must be seated 1.5m apart and be prepared to follow the directions of the person in charge (e.g. long breaks, moving into the hall, etc.). It is forbidden to speak in the facilities without wearing a mask properly in place.

Singers should all be positioned facing the same direction, towards the front, to minimize potential exposure.

Children may release less respiratory particulate matter because of smaller lungs with fewer terminal bronchioles where aerosol production bursts through the fluid film that could be produced. In the Riediker and Morawska report (2020), the authors point to a reduction in droplet formation in the respiratory system that may partially explain why children are poor transmitters of SARS-CoV-2 compared to adults, evidence that has also been picked up, these days by a study of the Hospital of San Juan de Manantial setting the contagion rate at 6 times lower than adults.

### Ventilation

- Most venues have only natural ventilation; it will be kept open before, during and after the concert.
- Natural ventilation is a very efficient system for air renewal in rooms that do not have a mechanical, controlled and conditioned ventilation system.
- The natural ventilation of spaces or rooms can be done with high efficiency and can be very diverse depending on the building (size of the windows, location of the room, temperature gradients, climate, occupants, etc.).
- For obvious reasons, mechanical extractions from toilets, kitchens, storerooms and garages must be maintained and remain effective.
- For all these reasons it is important to keep doors and windows open to ensure ventilation of the room with a minimum of discomfort. Whenever possible, two or at least one of them should be kept open. You can help with extractors or fans that evacuate the indoor air to the outside.

### Air conditioning systems

- For air that is recycled through an HVAC system, viral particulate removal also occurs. This happens even if there is no filtration, and will be enhanced by the length of the ductwork and bends. If there are filters to the HVAC system, this will increase the removal.

The volume of the room (length x width x lift) or m<sup>3</sup> must be taken into account. The rotation rate of the conditioned air outside the appliance, has to be expressed in "air changes per hour" or "liters per second".

For a room of 100m<sup>2</sup> with 35 persons maximum, the minimum ventilation

standard is required, which is approximately 3 ACH (air changes per hour).

-Additional HEPA air purification units can be added to achieve "higher" air changes per hour or "liters per second".

HEPA filters can also be added to existing mechanical HVAC systems.

HEPA filters capture >99.97% of airborne particles down to 0.3 microns (including the COVID\_19 virus). There are also portable HEPA air purifiers on the market to provide more filtration suited to the size of the space to sing, plus speed of air change of the systems, easier to assume replacement in one hour of 3 times the air volume.

-Portable HEPA filter air purifiers that have a high rate of clean air supply and avoid add-ons (e.g. ionizers, ultraviolet lights) can also be used.

-HEPA filter air purification devices, which help to improve the prevention of contagion, are one more preventive measure, which can be added to the masks, distances, cleaning and disinfectant gel, in addition to the reduction of the size of the working groups and the duration of the sessions.

We will continue to update the document with new information about prevention measures and adequate distancing between the choir and the audience, the impact of choir configurations and specific measures for children's choirs.

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#### Bibliografía

-Round one preliminary results, Singer, James Weaver - NFHS Director of Performing Arts and Sports. Mark Spede – CBDNA President, Director of Bands, Clemson University. Dra. Shelly Miller University of Colorado Boulder. Dra. Jelena Srebric University of Maryland. - Supporting Organizations American School Band Directors Association (ASBDA) American String Teachers Association (ASTA) Arts Education in Maryland Schools (AEMS), Association Européenne des Conservatoires/Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC), Buffet et Crampon, Bundesverband der deutschen Musikinstrumentenhersteller e.V ,Chicago Children's Choir Children's,Chorus of Washington, Chorus America, Confederation of European Music Industries (CAFIM) Drum Corps International (DCI,) Educational Theatre Association (EdTA,) European Choral Association - Europa Cantat, HBCU National Band Directors' Consortium, High School Directors National Association (HSBDNA), International Conductors Guild, International Music Council International Society for Music Education League of American Orchestras Louisiana Music Educators Association (LMEA) Midwest Clinic Minority, Band Directors National Association, Music Industries Association Musical America Worldwide National Dance Education Organization (NDEO), National Flute Association (NFA), National Guild for Community, Arts Education National Music -Council of the US, Percussive Arts Society (PAS), Save the Music Foundation, WGI Sport of the Arts  
-COVID-19 Aerosol Transmission Estimator, Prof. Jose L Jimenez, Dept. of Chem. and CIRES, Univ. of Colorado Boulder

Model of responsible declaration for use by choirs:

**Responsible declaration in relation to the pandemic situation generated by the Covid-19**

**I declare under my responsibility:**

- That I am aware of the context of the current pandemic caused by the Covid-19 and that I accept the circumstances and risks that this situation may entail during the development of the activity in which I participate. Likewise, I understand that the entity organizing the activity is not responsible for the contingencies that may arise in relation to the pandemic during the activity.
- That I have been informed and I agree with the general prevention measures and with the necessary actions to be carried out if the case of a person with symptoms compatible with Covid-19 appears during the development of the activity.
- That I will inform the organizing entity about any variation in my state of health compatible with Covid-19 symptomatology, as well as the appearance of any case of Covid-19 in my family environment.

Finally, that prior to the realization of the activity, I declare that I meet the following health requirements:

- Absence of illness and symptomatology compatible with Covid-19 (fever, cough, respiratory distress, malaise, diarrhea...) or any other infectious condition.
- That I have not lived with or had close contact with a confirmed Covid-19 positive person or with a person who has had compatible symptoms in the 14 days prior to the activity.

[Name and surname, Identity Number and signature of the person taking part or of the parent or guardian in the case of minors]

[Date and place]

[Signature]