

Welcome back to Southam Hall!

The following information will help acclimate you to the procedures and precautions we have instituted for a safe work environment. Our guiding purpose is to keep each other safe and healthy while returning to the work we love.

The following protocols were developed by the NAC Workplace Health & Safety Committee, the NAC COVID-19 Response Team and the orchestra specific NACO Re-Opening Group. These represent the most important and effective steps we can take to mitigate our risk of transmitting the Corona Virus and align with the requirements from the Province of Ontario, sector-specific guidelines as well as all prevailing advice from the public health authorities.

There are three primary rules governing the behavior of everyone entering the NAC:

- Wear face masks
- Maintain physical distance of 2 metres
- Practice consistent hand and respiratory hygiene

These practices represent a baseline for health and safety. NAC staff, musician representatives and health professionals will continue to refine, improve and update protocols as needed throughout the pandemic.

If have you recently traveled outside the National Capital region, please notify Meiko Taylor meiko.taylor@nac-cna.ca or by phone at 343-997-6678. We may ask that you self-quarantine for 14 days.

What to expect

Before you come to the NAC *each day* you must self-monitor for any symptoms of illness. Each day that you are scheduled to work, you will be required to complete a *health screening questionnaire*. This will be filled out electronically at home and submitted before leaving for the Centre. Accommodation will be made for those musicians unable to fill out these forms electronically. This form will be used for contact tracing should an individual at the NAC contract the virus; public health is required to establish the tracing of any infected person.

The NAC will reimburse any employee for the purchase of home thermometers for your daily testing. Instant read infrared thermometers will be provided at the back stage entry for further confirmation.

All musicians are encouraged to utilize the Health Canada Covid Alert smart phone app available for download: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19/covid-alert.html>

If you have any symptoms of illness, do not come to work. Contact the personnel manager at 343-997-6678.

Like other public institutions throughout Canada, the NAC will not be offering onsite nasal swab testing. We are watching closely for any Health Canada approvals related to point of care testing, home saliva testing or antibody testing.

In line with public health guidance, Covid testing for any NAC employees will not be mandatory unless tracing indicates a potential exposure. In the event of any indication of Covid transmission to anyone in the building notification will be made to all individuals with potential exposure and testing at OPH sites will be required. Musicians experiencing symptoms or receiving notification via contact tracing or school notifications should go for immediate testing at the COVID-19 Assessment Centres. Please contact the personnel manager to discuss any testing or quarantine advice received from these sources.

Here are two likely scenarios for Covid exposure and what you need to do:

1] If a Musician or close contact family member develops symptoms of Covid-19:

- Musician must notify Personnel Manager
- Musician does NOT report to work and remains isolated at home
- Musician follows OPH guidelines

2] If a musician has been exposed to a confirmed Covid-19 case OR receives a notice from Public Health or School Board that a family member or close contact has been exposed to a confirmed Covid-19 case:

- Musician must notify Personnel Manager
- Musician follows OPH guidelines

The Personnel Manager will advise musicians to communicate with public health in making decisions regarding work obligations. All decisions will be governed by public health recommendations.

At the NAC

In general, all musicians and employees must enter the NAC via the Stage Door entrance. If the NAC requires a secondary entrance due to special circumstances, you may be advised to use an alternative entrance.

Put on your mask before entering the building.

Upon entering the Stage Door you will be directed by signage to read and confirm the following statements. If you cannot confirm these statements, please inform the personnel manager and expect to return home immediately.

- I have completed and submitted the COVID-19 NAC self-assessment and can answer 'no' to all questions
- To the best of my knowledge I have not recently been exposed to someone with COVID-19 symptoms within the recommended Ottawa Public Health timelines
- I have read and understood the Orchestra Re-entry Preparedness Plan [this document]
- I have taken my temperature before arrival and I do not have a fever

Masking

As per the Ottawa Public Health guidelines all musicians and staff are expected to wear approved face coverings and masks inside the building. This includes hallways, restrooms, lobbies, backstage and onstage.

A wide variety of fabric or polymer masks are suitable, excluding single fabric masks or masks with exhalation valves. While public health universally advises non-medical masks for all indoor applications the NAC will not prohibit N95 or KN95 masks if you feel these are appropriate for your individual needs. For performances, we encourage musicians to choose black or non-patterned masks, but you may use whichever masks make you feel the most comfortable for extended work periods.

If you have a medical condition that prevents you from wearing a mask, please contact Meiko Taylor by email meiko.taylor@nac-cna.ca or 343-997-6678.

In addition to your own preferred masks, the Music Department will make available sufficient ASTM Level 2 disposable masks whenever requested. These will be available from the Personnel Manager upon request.

All musicians and staff are expected to wear approved face coverings and masks at all times while inside the building. Detailed discussion of masking on stage follows below.

Entering and exiting Southam Hall

Musicians and staff are expected to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer stations upon arrival at the workplace and frequently throughout the day. This is especially important when arriving at the workplace, prior to and following any meals, and

after using the restrooms. Hand sanitizers and other disinfectant supplies will be located throughout the NAC.

String players should be cautious about the effect of sanitizers on instrument varnish. Sanitization stations will be kept at a safe distance from your unpacking areas. Alcohol swabs should be used on fingerboards or strings only. Pocket sanitizers are encouraged as long as precautions are taken to protect instruments.

Please follow signage to backstage. Infrared thermometer checks will be made as you enter the backstage area. Leave all cases at your designated unpacking location, then enter the stage and proceed directly to your assigned position on stage to warm-up. Musicians should not warm-up or linger backstage in any spaces. Please close cases whenever you are finished assembling or disassembling instruments.

While in the workplace, musicians should keep their unpacking area clean and maintain social distancing *at all times*. Do not bring unnecessary personal items on stage or place extraneous items on music stands. Players are responsible for carrying and removing any extra instrument stands or mutes. Please do not share pencils. You may bring personal water bottles on stage.

While on stage use only the chair and stand assigned to you and do not move or touch any other chairs or stands. Staff has taken great care to map out safe distances for all musicians on stage.

All winds and brass players producing condensate [spit] will be required to utilize absorbent pads and will be responsible for their safe removal after each service. The Centre will provide absorbent pads to all wind and brass players for this purpose.

Staff will be located in the wings to assist with the safe flow of musicians entering and exiting the stage.

Please do not linger following rehearsals. *Exit the building as quickly as possible and do not remove masks until you have left the Stage Door exit.*

Access to dressing rooms will not be allowed. *If you are performing, you must come dressed in concert attire.*

Distancing and risk mitigation on stage

Onstage seating will reflect current medical guidelines of 2 meter physical distancing. These guidelines reflect concern with Covid transmission via droplets or physical contact. Maps for seating for each program will be prepared reflecting safe distances.

As the pandemic has evolved, the Re-entry Committee has focused our attention on the potential transmission of disease via aerosols. In addition to physical distancing, adequate air exchange and masking are the primary tools for reducing aerosol dangers in the workplace. Masking is a proven risk mitigation strategy for both exhalation and inhalation of potential viral carrying aerosols.

Onstage masking will be mandatory for strings, percussion, harp, keyboard and conductors at all times for all rehearsals and performances. Wind and brass players are being provided with additional specialized facemasks as well as instrument bell barriers.

Understanding aerosol emissions

Masking is now considered a “two-way” protective strategy, limiting distribution of droplets and aerosols upon both exhalation and inhalation. Masks serve to filter and reduce potential viral dosing. While no masks offer 100% protection, there is significant evidence that reduction of the amount of inhaled viral particles is associated with measurable reduction of risk of contracting Covid and reduction of eventual disease severity. The goal of all on-stage strategies will be to reduce and dilute potential airborne particles. Combining sensible family and life practices, safety cohorts and bubbles as well as diligent self-monitoring are the starting tools we all have for protecting our colleagues. Distancing, air exchange and masking are additional and important steps in mitigating risk.

A primary concern within the orchestral world is the extra challenge of reducing aerosols when wind and brass players are present. It is natural to assume that wind and brass instruments are dangerous aerosol vectors. However, it is important to understand the difference between sound generation and airflow. [Try blowing out a candle with a trumpet fanfare.] Significant international studies have been done in the past several months on the dangers of aerosol contamination from winds and brass. These studies are providing the context for the return strategies of many orchestras.

Current research suggests speaking produces more aerosol emissions than what is emitted through the bells and tone holes of wind instruments. This is due to the filtering effects of deposition, friction, condensation and bore geometry. The results from several recent studies indicate that aerosols from wind and brass *instruments* are non directional and do not flow further than 30 cm from the instrument before decreasing to the level of ambient air. Evidence suggests there is more potential aerosol emission from wind and brass *players* when their instruments are *away from* their lips. This is why your wind and brass-playing colleagues will be working diligently to keep masks on *as much as possible*. Mask use during inhalation is just as important for their individual safety as for everyone else on stage. Wind and brass players will be practicing masking protocols that balance the need for adequate breathing, oxygenation, functioning embouchures and overall respiration

protection. These practices will not be perfect but they will significantly reduce potential exposures.

Proper mask fitting is essential for everyone. Multi layer masks increase filtering efficacy but also increase resistance to air flow, which may increase leakage at the nose, cheeks or chin. The NAC will be providing self-adhesive nose wires to facilitate improved fitting at each service. Music department staff will have the obligation to observe and assist players in wearing their masks effectively at all times.

Speaking - even at normal volumes - releases droplets and aerosols, so *you must not remove masks when speaking*. This will apply to all employees at all times. The conductor will be supplied a microphone in order to communicate effectively during rehearsals while fully masked.

Plexiglass barriers remain mandated by the Province of Ontario between audiences and brass/singers. However, the recent aerosol studies indicate clear barriers inhibit the efficiency of air exchange on a stage. Therefore, barrier use will be limited to a few select areas as required. Stage set up may be further refined during our work periods according to evolving observations of prevailing air motion on stage.

Engineering modeling of the Southam Hall HVAC systems calculate a complete replenishment of outside fresh air every 20 minutes. This falls within minimum guidelines of 3 “Air Exchanges per Hour” currently recommended. This is an ongoing process of fresh air replenishment, distribution and the dilution of potential aerosol contaminants.

What to do before, during and after services

Your guiding principle should be to minimize time spent in the building as well as minimizing time spent in hallways. On breaks between services you should leave the building and not linger.

During a service, when you are not required on stage we recommend two possible locations to pass time while waiting to return:

1. At your designated unpacking/packing spot backstage, maintain 2 meter distancing and wearing masks.
2. Assigned aisle seats in Southam Hall, with mandatory use of sanitizers before entering the theatre. Please respect the rigid cleaning requirements for all public spaces, including armrests. Assigned seats will reflect 2 meter distancing. A list will be posted of which aisle seats you will use.

We strongly discourage you bringing any food with you into the building as we do not have a safe location with enough space for eating. Small snacks are permitted.

Instrument storage

Musicians will travel back and forth daily to the Centre with their instruments. Overnight storage will be provided on stage level for double basses, tuba, timpani and percussion. Bass players should handle only their own personal travelling trunks. These trunks will be available for daily use but may not be shared or exchanged. Percussionists will be responsible for sanitizing any shared instruments or mallets before storing or before use by another musician.

Restrooms

The Men's and Women's Chorus Room washrooms are the designated restrooms for orchestra members. Please limit washroom occupancy to two people. Enter restroom and immediately wash hands *before* utilizing facilities. Stall availability will be limited. The doors to the chorus rooms will be propped open to allow efficient exit and to use the available sinks in those rooms. Lineups for washrooms will include standard 2 meter distancing. Washing hands **before and after** restroom use is **now mandatory**. Additional washroom facilities may be available depending on the scheduling of non-NACO events in the building.

Additional rooms

Locker rooms, Musicians' Lounge, Practice Rooms, Bass Room are not available. If access is required to any of these spaces to collect important items, please contact Fletcher in advance to make an appointment.

The Green Room service will be limited and *people will not be able to gather in this space*. Microwave ovens have been removed from the building.

As much as possible, meetings should be conducted remotely. In-person meetings should be coordinated in advance by contacting Fletcher.

Congregation in public areas of the Centre will be severely curtailed. Please stay within the designated work areas and passageways.

Drinking water fountains in the building will remain out of service. However, water dispensers will be available backstage. Please bring your own reusable water bottle with large opening and secure top. Paper cups will *not* be provided. To limit frequency of use of the water dispensers, we encourage you to bring bottles full of water when you leave home.

Hand sanitizer stations have been installed throughout the building. You are also encouraged to bring small personal sanitizer bottles with you at all times. As suggested above, all musicians should familiarize themselves with the safety of sanitizers relative to valuable instruments.

Music and Library

Due to the small music library entryway and close quarters inside the library, no one will be permitted in the library except the librarians. Electronic parts [PDFs] will be available on the Library Box page: <https://app.box.com/s/f17bdebcf902d2dee554>

Parts will not be available in the library cupboard.

Printed practice parts will be provided for individuals who request them and will be left at Stage Door Security entrance for pickup. Please email BOTH librarians with *at least* two business days' notice for these request: nancy.elbeck@nac-cna.ca or corey.rempel@nac-cna.ca Librarians will respond about availability and an anticipated time the request will be filled.

Vinyl music folders will not be used during this time for rehearsals or concerts. Performance parts will be provided in individualized packets for each musician. The librarians will place the packets on stage on each musician's stand prior to the first rehearsal. Musicians will be responsible for their music packets until the end of the final performance, at which point the librarians will collect the packets from the stage. Librarians will wear protective gloves when retrieving used packets.

At the end of the day...

When leaving the NAC you should use the same precautions as when you enter. Follow designated pathways, do not linger in the hallways, maintain appropriate distance when leaving and *wait to remove masks until outside the building.*