

The University of Freiburg Summary

The University of Freiburg, Germany, have produced [a risk assessment for musical activity](#) based on research available to the authors. This is now also available in English, but we have taken the most useful information from it and used it below (latest update at time of writing was from 19 May). Note that the report emphasises throughout that the first guiding principle must be the regulations in place in your country at the time.

And a disclaimer: there is no guarantee that following their suggestions makes meeting up and rehearsing totally safe; however, we were impressed by the detail and the practical suggestions, which is why we have reproduced some here, to give you some ideas on potential risk minimisation measures and whether/how you might implement them for your group.

General transmission of COVID-19

- Via droplets which are heavier than air and thus fall down. If they land on a surface which we then touch with our hands (e.g. table), we may pick them up. Subsequently touching our face could then lead to infection
 - General prevention measures: wash hands frequently, do not touch face, clean surfaces often, wear gloves if handling items which may be touched by several people is unavoidable
- Via aerosols; these are much lighter than droplets and can therefore linger in the air, for up to 3 hours, researchers say, if there is no ventilation or draft. This makes it more likely that someone else walks through and inhales this virus 'cloud'.
 - General prevention: face coverings, meet in large spaces, social distancing, good and frequent ventilation
- Via other secretions from mouth/nose (sneezes, mucus, saliva)
 - General prevention: sneeze into a tissue and dispose of it; cough/ sneeze into crook of arm; do not share items/wear gloves

Music-specific risk-minimisation

- Reduce risk at entry point by excluding:
 - those in high risk groups
 - anyone who has been in contact with someone with symptoms of Covid-19 in the previous 5-6 days
 - anyone who has symptoms
 - anyone with a temperature above 37.5C
 - how? Questionnaire prior to rehearsal for each attendee
 - how? Measure temperature at entrance to rehearsal each time
 - neither of these will be completely reliable or exclude all potential carriers of Covid-19, but both will keep everyone's awareness raised and therefore also support compliance with other measures
- Reduce risk by creating low risk environment:

- Play/sing outside: current research suggests that, provided recommended distances between people are kept, this is a low risk activity; follow official guidance re size of group allowed to gather
- If in a building:
 - Frequent ventilation, ideally from windows, rather than mechanical
 - Use much larger rooms than you might usually, so that social distancing is possible to current guidance
 - Shorten rehearsals: length overall, but also rehearse in 15 min bouts, interspersed with ventilating the room
 - Ensure social distancing also possible at break times
- Reduce risk through safety measures applied to individuals:
 - Face coverings: only medical grade will prevent you from picking up the virus, but all face coverings will reduce the chance that the wearer emits aerosols and droplets; they must be well-fitted and worn to be effective
 - Distance between people: at least 2m radius around each singer or player (general – see specifics below)
 - Frequent handwashing or hand sanitising; consider gloves also
 - Specific measures for different kinds of musicians (see below)

Wind Instruments

- Droplet transmission: does not seem more significant for either brass or wood wind instruments than for other instruments, therefore 2m radius distance deemed sufficient
- Aerosol transmission: research currently insufficient about transmission via aerosols for brass instrument players and flautists and whether their deeper in-breaths may also present an additional risk factor
- Additional preventative measures therefore suggested:
 - Use of a tightly woven fabric cover over the bell of brass instruments and flutes recommended and/or plastic screens between players
 - French horn players/any player coming into contact with saliva/ secretions/the inside of their instrument should observe extra thorough and frequent hand washing (at least 30 seconds)
 - For brass instruments – disposal of saliva which may be infected; this should not be emptied on to the floor, but caught in a container or with absorbent paper then disposed of safely; ideally cleaning should take place outside/ away from the rehearsal room

Other instruments/ensembles

- No specific increased risk of transmission due to their musical activity, but recommendations as above for 2m distance between players etc.
- In general: do not share instruments/drum sticks/music
- People who have to handle items touched by other people should wear gloves for their own and others' protection (e.g. if setting up chairs/percussion)

- Pianists/accompanists:
 - Instruments cleaned/disinfected between players
 - Any player before starting should wash hands for at least 30 seconds
 - Remember 2m distance to anyone else in the room/group