

## FIM Recommendations for a safe return to work of orchestra musicians

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### I. Preamble

1. The covid-19 outbreak has led governments to close all live performance venues and prohibit open-air concerts as soon as their countries were hit by the pandemic. Three months later, these measures have brought the music sector to its knees. Where financial support has been made available for musicians, orchestras or ensembles, it is generally limited in size, scope and duration. In many cases, musicians are not eligible to any support.
2. There is a common desire of musicians, employers and audiences to re-open concert halls as soon as possible, to allow the artistic activity to resume. Depending on the national situation, such re-opening may be gradually permitted as the pandemic starts to recede, but it requires the adoption, implementation and enforcement of adequate safety measures in order to protect musicians against the risks arising from possible exposure to the sars-cov-2 as they return to work.
3. The purpose of this document is to
  - raise the awareness of music professionals regarding the risks of infection that are specifically associated with music performance, and
  - promote general principles and recommendations on how to address these risks, with the highest level of protection of workers in mind.

### II. General recommendations

4. Acceptability and efficiency of safety measures rely on confidence. To ensure reasonable confidence, such measures should be clear, understandable, documented and consistent across territories and venues.
5. Where the level of risk cannot be accurately assessed or medical experts express diverging views, the most conservative option should be favoured. The best example probably is the risk of contamination via aerosols, for which limited documentation is available. One appropriate response to this risk is to maximise distancing and wear facemasks.
6. Should a worker have doubts about the level of safety offered at the workplace or the level of risk when travelling to the workplace, he/she should, by default, be exempted from any work obligation.

### III. Adoption of safety procedures

7. Safety procedures and information about such procedures must be in place before musicians return to work.
8. Safety procedures should be based on an independent, medical and scientific assessment of risks.
9. If there is doubt or limited scientific consensus, the safest protection measures should apply.
10. No safety procedure should be adopted, published or implemented without prior consultation and dialogue with representative trade unions.

### IV. Aspects of exposure to risk

#### Avoiding contact with potentially infected persons

11. Musicians with one or more symptoms of infection (based on available medical information) should be exempted from attending any rehearsal or performance. Stricter measures (such as systematic fever detection) should be considered with caution as they may conflict with the confidentiality of personal medical data.
12. Distancing: the distance between two individuals must always be above a minimum threshold. During rehearsals or performances, an additional margin may be necessary as musicians tend to move naturally when playing. Marks on the floor may help visualise distances more easily. As minimum distance tends to vary from country to country and to avoid suspicion or doubts, it is recommended to opt for the most conservative option (the largest distance). Consequently, two musicians should not share the same music stand.
13. The surface and volume of a room determine the maximum number of individuals that can be present in the room at the same time. The determination of this number depends on minimum distancing (see para. 12) and other parameters linked to the circulation of air in the room (see para. 19). It should be transparent and easily

verifiable. The characteristics of air circulation in the room have an impact on how it may be used for rehearsals or concerts.

14. When a room needs to be accessed by several individuals at the same time, it is recommended to use a separate entrance and exit. Such a measure is best enforced via control at both entrance and exit. It may render access to green rooms or bathrooms impossible as these rooms are generally equipped with one single door.
15. Green rooms and bathrooms present additional difficulties like narrow spaces or the need for very frequent sanitisation. If access to the green room cannot be granted, solutions should be identified for the safe storage of instruments cases, clothes and other personal belongings (which also are potential virus carriers). If access to bathrooms cannot be granted, the length of rehearsals and concerts must be limited.
16. One-way paths should be used to circulate through narrow areas, to facilitate compliance with minimum distancing. Clear signage (floor, walls) must be in place before the venue reopens.

#### Avoiding contact with potentially contaminated objects

17. Hydro-alcoholic solution dispensers must be available in sufficient quantity at the entrance and in other parts of the building.
18. Door handles, music stands, chairs etc. are potential virus carriers and must be sanitised with adequate products on a regular basis. In particular, sanitisation of stands and chairs must be carried out every time they are to be used by a different musician.

#### Avoiding inhalation of potentially contaminated aerosols

19. The circulation, renewal and filtering of air inside buildings differ from venue to venue. Each case is different and should therefore be subject to a specific assessment before the venue is re-opened to musicians and the public.
20. It is recommended to wear facemasks inside buildings.
21. An ordinary facemask does not adequately protect against the inhalation of contaminated aerosols. Its maximum efficiency is reached only if 100% of the persons present in the same room wear it.
22. Facemasks are not compatible with the playing of wind instruments. In this instance, they should be replaced by shields or other protection devices offering a comparable level of protection, as advised by independent medical or scientific experts.

#### **V. Open-air performances**

23. Open-air performances may entail less risk than in-door performances as far as aerosols are concerned. However, several aspects still need to be carefully addressed, e.g.: safe travelling to the performance location, adequate distancing, safe storage of instrument cases and personal effects, handling and sanitising of chairs and music stands, safe access to bathrooms (or limited duration of performances), audience-related issues as well as more common problems arising from exposure to unpredictable weather conditions (temperature, humidity, wind, rain...).

#### **VI. Establish and maintain confidence between social partners**

24. Musicians unions and employers share the same desire to return to work as soon as possible, but there may at times be diverging views on the assessment of what is actually "possible". While some employers may be inclined to minimise certain risks, trade unions have a duty to do everything they can to ensure the highest level of protection for the workers they represent. They have a legitimate role to play in this respect, which is recognised by ILO convention 155. No decision or recommendation with a potential impact on the health and safety of workers should therefore be taken or promulgated without prior negotiation with their representative trade unions.

#### **VII. Recommended sources of medical information**

*Risikoeinschätzung einer Coronavirus-Infektion im Bereich Musik*, May 19th, 2020 (Universitäts Klinikum Freiburg, Freiburger Institut für Musikermedizin).

<https://www.mh-freiburg.de/fileadmin/Downloads/Allgemeines/RisikoabschaetzungCoronaMusikSpahnRichter19.5.2020.pdf>