

# On Music

The current best advice is that until there is a vaccine, there is **no safe public singing.**

With singing and specific instruments (brass and wind instruments), droplets can be projected farther than six feet and remain suspended in the air longer.

## Rethink

Upon review of the science of singing, reports of choirs that have transmitted the virus, and known difficulties and health risks of singing with a mask, we concluded that we must rethink music production as we prepare to re-enter our spaces for worship.

## Considerations

Guidelines for numbers of people in the sanctuary are determined by local and state governmental directives. Within the NEAC, this includes the six New England states. If a group follows the guidelines to safely meet in-person to record music for virtual worship, then decisions will need to be made about whether vocal musicians can perform while wearing a mask.

A webinar of major singing organizations in the United States met the week of May 3 to discuss the future of singing while the coronavirus is still active. [Here are some of the things that were mentioned about masks and singing:](#)

No masks are currently safe for singing.

N95 masks must be fit-tested first.

They also decrease the singer's oxygen levels due to rebreathing expired carbon dioxide and increasing levels (in the body). This is risky for people with asthma, COPD, and heart disease.

**Humming**, even with a mask, is not a viable alternative to singing normally; aerosolized particles are still released through the nostrils and around the edges of the mask. Vocalists commented that decreased oxygen levels could be the biggest problem with singing while wearing a mask. They also mentioned that when opening their mouths wider to achieve some pitches and vowels during rehearsals that their masks were pulled down off their noses and over their mouths, requiring readjustment during the performance.

**Consider a virtual choir: Ask people to record from their homes and then mix those recordings.**

## Additional Resources

[Resources for Choral Professionals during a Pandemic](#)

["What Do Science and Data Say About the Near-Term Future of Singing,"](#) a webinar co-sponsored by experts in the field of choral singing

[How to Create a Virtual Choir Video](#)

[Droplets and Aerosols in the Transmission of SARS-CoV-2,](#) an article from the New England Journal of Medicine

[Visualizing Speech-Generated Oral Fluid Droplets with Laser Light Scattering,](#) an article from the New England Journal of Medicine

[Singing, the Church and the COVID-19: A Caution for Moving Forward in Our Current Pandemic](#)

[High SARS-CoV-2 Attack Rate Following Exposure at a Choir Practice](#) — Skagit County, Washington, March 2020

## Cleaning Instruments

Pianos and organs may be used in worship; however, they must be properly cleaned and sanitized after every use. When cleaning these instruments:

Generally speaking, a soft disposable towel, using warm water and hand/dish soap is safe to use on virtually every finish, key, and case parts.

Always follow up with a dry soft disposable towel to remove any standing liquid.

Cleaning pianos is a gentle process not a scrubbing process. Pressing hard or vigorously scrubbing may lead to scratching or removing the finish.

If you use an alcohol-based disinfectant (do not use products containing bleach or citrus) put the disinfectant on the towel, not directly on the piano.

Never leave any liquids on the keys.

Case parts finishes vary greatly and can easily be by disinfectant wipes and sprays. A soft disposable towel, using warm water and hand/dish soap is safe to use on virtually every finish, key, and case parts. Always follow up with a dry soft disposable towel to remove any standing liquid.

Remember to wash your hands after you have thrown away the towels.