Introduction
The Wirtz Center is committed to prioritizing the health and safety of all students, staff, faculty, and audiences. Our goal is to provide the safest working environment possible while maximizing educational opportunities for all students. This document seeks to clarify best practices related to the COVID-19 pandemic and outlines the requirements for production work at the Wirtz Center.

Student work includes vocal projection, movement, dance, and singing, all of which occur in two parallel tracks at the Wirtz Center: as curricular activity in the classroom and through extracurricular productions produced by the Wirtz Center, the American Music Theatre Project, and StuCo, the student-run theatre community.

All Northwestern students, faculty, and staff must follow University health and safety guidelines regarding vaccinations, masking, and testing. As local, state, and federal guidelines evolve, we will alter our policies accordingly.

Organizational Strategies
Season Planning
The Wirtz 21/22 season’s productions will be in person in front of audiences, and will include some limited virtual offerings. Specific rehearsal/practice protocols are outlined below for these productions.

Communication
- Wirtz safety protocols will be shared and reviewed with each production team on or before the first rehearsal.
- Wirtz Production Managers will field questions or address concerns from the production team. Where applicable, they will redirect questions to the appropriate source: Wirtz Managing Director, the Theatre Department Chair, the School of Communication, or Risk Management.

PPE and Supplies
Wirtz will provide the following PPE and disinfectant/cleaning items:
- Disposable masks are available in kiosks in the main lobby and the dance lobby
- Clean dust mops for dance floors in dance studio spaces
- Disinfectant wipes for tables, chairs and high-touch surfaces
Social/behavioral reinforcement

Wirtz will post signs in rehearsal spaces and classrooms to define safe working procedures.

- Wirtz will install signage to remind and reinforce mask use
- Wirtz will install signage to remind and reinforce personal hygiene practices
- Wirtz Production Management must approve all room use related to production work through 25Live

Pre-Rehearsal Preparation and Strategy

- **Stay home if you have any symptoms at all**, even if it seems questionable. Err on the side of caution and in consideration for your colleagues.
  - Follow protocols on Northwestern’s website if you’re experiencing COVID-19 symptoms of any kind
  - You must be symptom and fever-free for 24 hours and have received a negative COVID-19 test before returning
- **Before coming to campus** all production personnel must fill out and submit the Symptom Tracker survey; be prepared to show your green badge. **Do not** come to campus if your Symptom Tracker badge is red or yellow.
- All personnel involved in a Wirtz process are required to take three (3) rapid antigen or PCR tests during rehearsals and performances, with at least one of those tests taken at a Northwestern testing site.

Rehearsal Protocols

- All persons involved in production must wear masks in indoor shared public spaces.
- Masks are required at all times for the crew, management, directors or other artistic or production personnel.
- During tech and performances, actors may remove masks ONLY when actively performing.
- Confirmation of a green Symptom Tracker of everyone in the cast and crew is required.
- In moments of choreographed intimacy, violence or closeness participants may not touch the eyes, nose or mouth of any other participant.

Hygiene

- Under University policy, participants must wear masks at all times (exceptions are noted above)
  - Participants should bring multiple masks
  - Masks must be changed if they become damp or saturated
- Participants must engage in frequent hand washing or sanitizing if running water is not available
  - Wash or sanitize before using the space or after coughing, sneezing, using the restroom, or touching your face
Sanitize hands before and after handling props
• Participants must avoid touching the eyes, nose or mouth of their colleagues
• Practice good cough and sneeze protocols
  o Use a tissue; cover the mouth with an elbow or shoulder
  o Wash hands afterward

Documentation
• Participant/production must have confirmed room use through 25Live with name, date, and time accurately documented
• The stage manager, or a designated member of the production team, must maintain a list of all individuals participating in an in-person work session, including date and time
• Stage managers, actor deputy or Covid Compliance Officer will check Symptom Tracker surveys at the top of each rehearsal; be prepared to show your green badge
• Wirtz production staff or Covid Compliance Officer will check Negative Covid test results at the beginning and middle of each week of rehearsal or performance

Additional Guidance
• No food or drinks in the space, besides water
• Participants must bring their own water bottle
• When possible, participants must take their breaks outside
• Choreographed close-range fight scenes, dance numbers and intimacy scenes must be masked during all rehearsals before dress rehearsal/s
• Choreographed close-range fight scenes, dance numbers and intimacy scenes must receive approval of Wirtz staff to perform without masks.

Performance Protocols
• Cast and crew must complete the Symptom Tracker each day of performance/rehearsal
• Cast and crew must remain masked at all times backstage, including in dressing rooms
• Cast members may remove their masks only when they are actively on stage performing
• The cast should maintain a 6-foot distance in dressing and makeup rooms whenever possible
• When possible, hair and make-up should be applied at home before arriving at the theater
• Members of the orchestra whose instruments allow it must remain masked at all times.
• Musicians who require mask removal to play must replace masks at any time they are not actively playing.

Testing
• All personnel involved in a Wirtz process are required to take three (3) rapid antigen or PCR tests during rehearsals and performances, with at least one of those tests taken at a Northwestern testing site.
• All cast and crew members will need to complete a COVID-19 test at least 48 hours before the first technical rehearsal and again 48 hours before the brush-up rehearsal during the second week of the run
• In the event of a positive test, the stage manager and production manager should be notified, and all NU quarantine and health monitoring policies must be followed

Conclusion
This document is a living document; as information develops, these protocols may be adjusted to reflect the most contemporary knowledge and best practices.

Sources
Wirtz Center guidelines are sourced from the Northwestern University COVID Safety guidelines and the Theatre Production & Theatre Patron – CCO Certificate & COVID Safety Training provided by Arts & Science.

Wirtz Contacts

Kelly Helgeson, Associate Managing Director
k-helgeson@northwestern.edu  847-491-5146

Heather Basarab, Production Manager
Heather.basarab@northwestern.edu  847-467-6932

Valerie Tu, Associate Production Manager
Valerie.tu@northwestern.edu  847-467-6932