

## **Tone Cluster -- Quite a Queer Choir - COVID 19 Policy and Guidelines - August 2021**

Last updated September 3, 2021

Considering the current state of COVID transmission and vaccination rates in Ottawa, provincial and local public health guidelines, as well as the results of TC's survey of the choir in July 2021, (Summary of survey results attached as Annex A) the Choir will adopt a hybrid approach for the 2020-2021 season, beginning in-person rehearsals in smaller cohorts while allowing those not wishing or able to participate in-person to continue to participate in a virtual manner. This approach will be reviewed after the first virtual concert, in light of our experience with the fall term and in consideration of changing realities of COVID infection in our community.

Our top priority, as we resume in-person singing, remains the safety of our singers, artistic team, volunteers and audience. We will continue to monitor changing circumstances of COVID transmission in Ottawa, will meet or exceed local and provincial public health guidelines and will remain flexible to change course as required.

The following sets out the elements of our COVID Policy and describes how it will work:

- **Vaccinations mandated for all in-person rehearsals and activities:**
  - All choir members participating in in-person rehearsals and activities (e.g. meetings, concerts) must show proof of having been fully vaccinated against COVID 19 (i.e. complete series of doses as defined by Ontario Public Health, completed not less than 2 weeks from attendance at an in-person choir activity).
  - The Membership Coordinator will be responsible for viewing vaccine information provided by participants prior to any participation in an in-person rehearsal or meeting and placing a check mark beside their name to record that vaccine data has been verified. Vaccine certificates may be shared in person or sent electronically to the Membership Coordinator or by alternate arrangements (e.g. Zoom call) worked out with the Membership Coordinator. This information will be kept in a confidential folder and shared only on a need-to-know basis. No copies of personal vaccine data will be retained by the choir. Persons who do not show evidence of having been fully vaccinated will not be permitted to participate in in-person events but will be able to participate in virtual rehearsals. No exceptions will be made.
  
- **Masks mandated at all times inside**
  - All singers will be provided with a specially designed **singers' mask** which must be used at all times throughout the rehearsal or other in-person activity, except when drinking water.
  - Masks will be issued at the first in-person rehearsal.
  
- **Self-assessment prior to attending an in-person event**
  - Singers will be asked to stay at home if they are feeling unwell

- At the entry to our rehearsal room singers would be asked to review a set of questions about their health and possible exposure to COVID. If they do not meet the self-assessment standard they will be expected to not attend the in-person rehearsal or activity.
- **Compliance with other safe singing measures**
  - **Distancing** of two meters will be maintained throughout rehearsals. Chairs will be staggered and **a seating plan** will be established by the Artistic Director. Singers would be at least 4 meters from the conductor and accompanist.
  - **Cohorts** will be established so that no more than twenty singers are singing together at any one time.
  - Rehearsals of each cohort will be **time-limited** to no more than one hour. After each cohort has rehearsed the room will be cleared for a period of time before a second cohort begins.
  - **Hand sanitizer** will be available at the entrance to the rehearsal space, cleaning materials will be provided for each singer to sanitize their chair, and protocols of the venue will be followed for sanitization of high-touch surfaces.
  - **No food or drink** other than water will be consumed during rehearsals.
  - **No sharing** between singers of pencils, music or other materials will take place during rehearsals.
  - Reasonable efforts will be made, in collaboration with the venue owner, to maximize air circulation and filtration in the venue.
- **Informed consent**
  - Choristers participating in Tone Cluster's in-person activities will need to have read and agree to abide by Tone Cluster's COVID 19 policy and guidelines as part of the registration process.
  - Part of that consent will be to comply with public health and choir-specific requirements in support of contact tracing and mitigation measures, should a member of the choir be infected by COVID. In particular:
    - Individuals must report any COVID symptoms, positive test results or their personal self-isolation status as soon as possible but maximally within 24 hours to the Membership Coordinator.
    - Individuals with symptoms and those who have been asked to self-isolate cannot return to activities until they have presented a negative test result to the Membership Coordinator.
    - Individuals who test positive cannot return to activities until the longer of 14 days after the negative test result or resolution of symptoms.
    - The Membership Coordinator will contact individuals who were in close proximity to those who test positive or those who have been asked to self-isolate with recommendations regarding symptom monitoring and testing. A general message to the Choir would also

be made if/when a positive case occurs or an individual has been asked to self-isolate so that members can make their own risk assessments with regard to continued participation/attendance.

- Prior to the first in-person rehearsal, singers will also be asked to sign a waiver form, acknowledging that, despite the vaccination policy and other safety measures being taken by the choir, they accept that there is a small degree of risk of contracting COVID 19 through in-person choir activities.
- **Sharing the responsibilities**
  - It will be important that each chorister do their part to allow us to come back to in-person singing in as safe a manner as possible. Each singer will be asked to assume a volunteer task in the choir, be it setting up chairs, setting up a sanitization station, or a non-COVID task such as sitting on a Board committee or contributing to our fundraising efforts.

## Annex 1: Summary of Survey Results

39 responses were received (Please note that an average of 32 singers participated throughout last season):

- 74% of respondents plan to return, 26% are uncertain, 0% say they will not return
- 100% of the respondents report having received two vaccine doses
- 100% of the respondents report willingness to show proof of vaccination status
- Significant majority of singers are moderately or completely comfortable with in-person activities – both indoor and outdoor – provided that masking and health protocols are followed. There are nonetheless small numbers who are moderately uncomfortable or not at all comfortable with in person activities. The greatest levels of uncertainty and discomfort were reported around indoor concerts.
- 64% of respondents are moderately or completely comfortable with a live version of STS 2022. 36% are uncertain. In general, comments expressing uncertainty reflected geographic distance from Ottawa and questions around the feasibility of large gatherings in general.
- 62% of respondents are moderately or completely comfortable with participation in Unison 2022. 5% moderately or completely uncomfortable and 33% uncertain. In general, comments on the uncomfortable or uncertain responses reflected uncertainty about travel and gatherings, concerns about resurgent variants of COVID-19, the connotation that Unison would be connected to Canada Day, and some personal circumstances (geographic location, unique health conditions, etc.)
- Respondents expressed greater comfort resuming in-person choral activities when most or all of the members are vaccinated. This should be relatively straightforward to fulfill with the high reported rates of vaccination among choir members, and universal reported willingness to show proof of vaccination.

“I am comfortable participating in in-person choral activities...

... with safety precautions when public health guidelines allow it, even though not everyone may be vaccinated.”	4 responses (10.2%)
... once I have been vaccinated.”	1 response (2.6%)
... once I and the majority of members have been vaccinated.”	15 responses (38.4%)
... only when I am assured that all participating members have been vaccinated.”	19 responses (48.7%)

