

Risk assessment for choir returning to St Giles Cripplegate

Access to church buildings for purposes of performance in live services

Risk: Transmission of virus through close personal contact

The choir enters at least an hour earlier than the congregation and Anne will warn them to take care when leaving, in order to avoid close contact with others at the exit.

Risk: Transmission of virus in enclosed space.

The windows are open 24/7 for ventilation, and the north door is open whenever possible.

Risk: Insufficient cleaning of shared spaces

The church's cleaner thoroughly cleans the church on a regular basis.

Risk: Additional risk of infection

Anne considers it unnecessary to cordon off the area used by the musicians, but she will ensure they sit at least 2 metres from the congregation and from each other.

Risk: Separated space is not observed for musicians

Anne will confirm to the musicians their seating and standing positions, which will be 2 metres (i.e. more generous than the recommended 1 metre).

Risk: Transmission of virus through close personal contact.

- Only one organist, and perhaps occasionally one singer, will be in the organ loft at any one time. Anne will explain to the musicians that they must not attempt to pass each other on the organ loft stairs. There are no other narrow staircases or corridors to navigate at St Giles.

Other RSCM advice in this category

- Anne will remind the musicians about safe practices (no physical contact; frequent handwashing/sanitising)
- Anne will be responsible for ensuring high-risk surfaces and touch points have been sanitised before the musicians arrive.
- The toilets are already provided with soap, disposable hand towels and a bin for towels.
- There are no unnecessary and removable items in thoroughfares.

Ensuring participants' safety

Risk: Attendee within the group is a virus carrier

Anne will emphasise to the musicians, in advance of their attendance, the current guidance on self-isolation.

Risk: Virus spread by hands

The church has provided hand sanitiser at the church entrance and Anne will provide more for musicians to use during rehearsal and the service.

Risk: Illness/ Unexpected absence

- Our library has a stock of vocal solos, duets and trios in case any singer is sick, and can change the music at the last minute.
- Both Elizabeth and Anne are usually on duty so it is unlikely that both would be ill simultaneously, and we also have Emma, the organ scholar.
- The musicians already know that they must contact Anne if they are unable to attend.

Risk: Venue unavailable (e.g. after a COVID occurrence)

The musicians' actions will be guided by the church in this event.

Risk: Virus transmitted via printed music

- Anne will set out the choir music 72 hours before use and not touch it once set out.
- Anne will remind singers to bring disposable gloves in case any of the music, despite planning, must be handled by more than one person on Sunday.
- Anne, Elizabeth and Emma will share responsibility for collecting and tidying the music after the service, either using disposable gloves or sanitising hands immediately afterwards.
- Anne will ask singers to bring their own pencils for marking the music.

Risk: Virus transmitted via keyboard instruments

We always sanitise the organs after use. On a Sunday morning no organ console will be shared between two or more people.

Anne has added hygiene instructions to each organ console.

Risk: Transmission of virus through close personal contact

Each organist must be responsible for their own page turns: no one else will turn her pages.

Anne will set out the choir chairs in advance.

The conductor will stand at least 2 metres from the singers and will wear a face shield.

Additional measures for those using our practice organ

An email sent to all the practisers lists the requirements, which are repeated in a notice on the practice organ's console. These are:

'We ask you, and anyone escorting you, to:

- Sanitise your hands when you arrive, before touching any part of the organ controls.
- Sanitise your hands again immediately before leaving.
- Report immediately to Anne or Elizabeth if you have been diagnosed with Covid-19, and you used the practice organ in the previous 7 days.
- Cancel your practice if you are suffering from any symptoms that could be Covid-19: fever, persistent cough, change of taste or smell.
- Cough or sneeze, if you need to, into a tissue. Immediately place the tissue in your own belongings and take it away for safe disposal.'

Anne Marsden Thomas
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