

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 9, 2022

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## **MILWAUKEE PERFORMING ARTS ORGANIZATIONS UPDATE COVID-19 SAFETY REQUIREMENTS**

*Florentine Opera, Marcus Performing Arts Center, Milwaukee Ballet, and  
Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra among organizations announcing COVID audience screening and  
mandatory masking to end in March*

**MILWAUKEE** - In alignment with new local and national guidance from the Milwaukee Health Department and the CDC, many of Milwaukee's performing arts organizations will **no longer require COVID-19 vaccinations or proof of negative test within 72 hours of events for all audience members attending performances beginning on March 14, 2022**. As part of a phased approach, most performing arts organizations will also shift to a **mask-optional policy on March 28, 2022**, replacing their current mask-mandatory venue policies. This announcement is made with the support of the City of Milwaukee Health Department and in alliance with the larger Milwaukee arts community.

Performing arts organizations ending vaccination requirements on March 14 and mask requirements on March 28 include: Bel Canto, Black Arts MKE, Florentine Opera, Marcus Performing Arts Center, Milwaukee Ballet, Present Music and Skylight Music Theatre.

Additional organizations have updated their COVID-19 venue policies for vaccinations and masks with the following timelines:

- First Stage: 3/14 end vaccination requirement; 4/3 end mask requirement
- Milwaukee Chamber Theatre: mask policies and vaccination requirements remain through April 3 or longer
- Milwaukee Film: 3/1 end mask requirement; 3/14 end vaccination requirement
- Milwaukee Repertory Theater: 4/4 end mask requirement; 4/4 end vaccination requirement
- Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra: 3/11 end mask requirement; 3/11 end vaccination requirement
- Next Act Theatre: April 14 end vaccination requirement; 5/9 end mask requirement
- Pabst Theater Group: 3/1 end mask requirement; 3/14 end vaccination requirement
- Renaissance Theaterworks: mask policies and vaccination requirements remain through April 3 or longer
- Danceworks: no change to current policies

Exact protocols may vary by organization, and audience members are encouraged to contact individual organizations for details or questions regarding policies for specific performance venues. Visit their individual websites for policy changes or call their box offices for details.

“Throughout the entirety of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have listened to the advice and recommendation of local and national public health experts, and our updated policies align with the new CDC guidelines put in place with the CDC Community Level data,” said Kendra Whitlock Ingram, Marcus Performing Arts Center President and CEO. “Taking a phased approach to rolling back our safety precautions provides an opportunity for patrons to adjust

to the new guidelines and make the decisions appropriate for their situation. The health and safety of our audiences, artists and staff remains the top priority for all of us, and we look forward to continuing to host live performances safely throughout the city.”

Other COVID-19 mitigation efforts such as state-of-the-art air filtration systems, paperless ticketing and a multitude of hand sanitizer stations were implemented during the pandemic to keep patrons safe and will continue to be used throughout Milwaukee performing arts venues.

For more information on individual organization policies, please visit:

Black Arts MKE: [www.blackartsmke.org/season/](http://www.blackartsmke.org/season/)

Bel Canto: <https://www.belcanto.org/covid-19-protocols.html>

Danceworks: <https://danceworksmke.org/covid-19-studio-policies/>

First Stage: [www.firststage.org/safety](http://www.firststage.org/safety)

Florentine Opera: [www.florentineopera.org/covid-19](http://www.florentineopera.org/covid-19)

Marcus Performing Arts Center: [www.marcuscenter.org/mpac-guide-reopening](http://www.marcuscenter.org/mpac-guide-reopening)

Milwaukee Ballet: [www.milwaukeeballet.org/entry](http://www.milwaukeeballet.org/entry)

Milwaukee Chamber Theatre: [www.milwaukeechambertheatre.org/safety](http://www.milwaukeechambertheatre.org/safety)

Milwaukee Film / Oriental Theater: [www.mkefilm.org/oriental-theatre/about/oriental-theatre-covid-protcols](http://www.mkefilm.org/oriental-theatre/about/oriental-theatre-covid-protcols)

Milwaukee Repertory Theater: [www.milwaukeerep.com/covid-19-update-center/](http://www.milwaukeerep.com/covid-19-update-center/)

Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra: [www.mso.org/patron-alerts/](http://www.mso.org/patron-alerts/)

Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra: <https://myso.org/myso-covid-policy-for-audiences-3-3-22/>

Next Act Theatre: <https://nextact.org/>

Pabst Theater Group: [www.pabsttheater.org/plan-your-visit/mask-policy](http://www.pabsttheater.org/plan-your-visit/mask-policy)

Present Music: [www.presentmusic.org](http://www.presentmusic.org)

Skylight Music Theatre: [www.skylightmusictheatre.org/about/health-and-safety-protocols/](http://www.skylightmusictheatre.org/about/health-and-safety-protocols/)

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### **About Black Arts MKE**

Black Arts MKE’s mission is to increase the availability and quality of African American arts and culture. Each year, we collaborate with over 100 local artists and arts organizations to bring to our community renowned and original performance arts works by African American authors, playwrights, poets, musicians, and composers. Our arts community outreach programs serve over 15,000 underserved neighborhood schools, youth and their families including our new Youth Performing Arts Camp. Black Arts MKE’s annual signature performance – Black Nativity by Langston Hughes is a holiday musical favorite in Milwaukee featuring an all-black, all local cast. Black Arts MKE is a recipient of the NEA Grant for Arts Works and The Black Seed national awards. We are a proud Member Group of the United Performing Arts Fund (UPAF) and Resident Group at the Marcus Performing Arts Center. Black Arts MKE is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation.

### **About Bel Canto**

Founded in 1931, Bel Canto Chorus is Southeastern Wisconsin’s oldest continually performing arts organization. The group includes an auditioned adult performance chorus of approximately 100 singers and a Senior Singers program for those 55 or better who want to sing in an organized performance chorus. Characterized by a heartfelt belief in the value of Bel Canto Chorus’s mission and vision, and supported by devoted singers and audiences, talented artistic and administrative staff, and dedicated Board members, the group’s passion for sharing the thrill of live choral music has remained steadfast throughout its long, proud history.

### **About Danceworks**

Founded in 1992, the mission of Danceworks, Inc., a 501(c)3 nonprofit, is to enhance joy, health and creativity by engaging the community through dance. Danceworks' vision is to be a driving force that builds community through movement and creative arts. Danceworks is committed to taking arts and arts learning beyond the studio and theatre and into the community by creating work that resonates with diverse groups of people. Danceworks contributes to Milwaukee's cultural vitality by sparking a lifelong interest and participation in the arts. Our classes, programs and performances are dedicated to helping every student of the arts reach their fullest potential, both physically and mentally. We believe that all people benefit from dance and other arts activities. We strive to create an environment in which each student develops self-discipline, self-confidence and enthusiasm for the performing arts.

### **About First Stage**

First Stage is one of the nation's leading theaters for young people and families. First Stage touches hearts, engages minds and transforms lives by creating extraordinary theater experiences through professional theater productions that inspire, enlighten and entertain. Its Theater Academy, the nation's largest high-impact theater training program for young people, fosters life skills through stage skills and serves nearly 2,000 students each year. As Wisconsin's leader in arts-integrated education in schools, First Stage's dynamic Theater in Education programs promote literacy, character building and experiential learning throughout the curriculum, serving over 20,000 students each year. First Stage was selected to participate in the Partners in Education program of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (2012) and was the recipient of the Milwaukee Business Journal's Eureka Award, recognizing creativity and innovation in business, education and the arts for its Next Steps program for students on the autism spectrum (2013, 2015). First Stage is a member of TYA/USA, the American Alliance for Theatre and Education, the Wisconsin Alliance for Arts Education, Milwaukee Arts Partners and is a cornerstone member of the United Performing Arts Fund (UPAF). Learn more at [firststage.org](http://firststage.org).

### **About Florentine Opera Company**

We've been bringing a little bit of the world to Milwaukee since 1933. We're on a journey of discovery, exploring the glory of the human voice. We're a powerhouse for all different voices and stories, which have endured through the centuries and resonate with our humanity and passion. We're alive, a supersized experience, created at the moment through theater, staging, lighting, lavish costumes, and beautiful song, bringing you the most immersive and all-encompassing artistic experience possible. The Florentine Opera Company is driven to produce the full range of operatic works reflecting the highest musical and theatrical standards, and to support community and education programs that foster the current and next generation of opera audiences and practitioners. Join us for a live performance that will sweep you off your feet. Learn more at [www.florentineopera.org](http://www.florentineopera.org).

### **About Marcus Performing Arts Center**

Established in 1969, the Marcus Performing Arts Center (MPAC) is the premier performing arts community gathering space in Southeastern Wisconsin, bringing high-quality arts and cultural programming to the region. As a mission-based 501(c)3 non-profit organization, MPAC strives to act as a bridge between cultures and an energizing force for collaboration and advocacy in the community. The touring Broadway series, sponsored by Johnson Financial Group, is recognized as bringing the best of Broadway entertainment to Milwaukee since 1996, and provides opportunities to educate, entertain, and engage audiences. As a presenter, MPAC offers its own diverse arts and cultural programming and outreach, such as MC Presents, Live At Peck, KidZ Days, ArtsConnect, and additional performances from internationally-renowned performing artists. The Marcus Center is also home to a variety of resident arts partners, including First Stage, Milwaukee Ballet, Florentine Opera Company, Black Arts MKE, Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra, and more. MPAC is proud to be a dedicated War Memorial facility, honoring those who bravely served our country. For more information, visit [www.marcuscenter.org](http://www.marcuscenter.org).

### **About Milwaukee Ballet**

Milwaukee Ballet was founded in 1970. Led by Artistic Director Michael Pink, Milwaukee Ballet transforms lives and connects communities through inspiring performance, community engagement, education, and training. Milwaukee Ballet hosts an international company of dancers and is one of the few dance organizations in the nation to maintain its own orchestra. Milwaukee Ballet School & Academy is the only professional dance school in the Midwest accredited by the National Association of Schools of Dance. Milwaukee Ballet's award-winning Community Engagement department serves nearly 30,000 people in Southeastern Wisconsin each year through original, interactive programs.

### **About Milwaukee Chamber Theatre**

Milwaukee Chamber Theatre (MCT) was founded in 1975 by two local actors who envisioned a space where audiences could open their minds to new theatrical ideas and theatre professionals could broaden their skills and apply their craft. Over the last five decades, MCT has produced more than 200 productions that have nurtured the careers of thousands of local actors, directors, designers, artisans, stage managers, playwrights, students, and administrators, and has made a tremendous positive impact in Milwaukee due to our unwavering commitment to building community and increasing quality of life for our city. The mission of the Milwaukee Chamber Theatre is to produce intimate, high-quality, professional theatrical works of literary merit that engage and challenge the audience, while employing and nurturing principally local theatre artists. Learn more at [www.milwaukeechambertheatre.org](http://www.milwaukeechambertheatre.org)

### **About Milwaukee Film**

Milwaukee Film is a nonprofit arts organization dedicated to entertaining, educating, and engaging our community through cinematic experiences, with a vision to make Milwaukee a center for film culture. Milwaukee Film operates the magnificent Oriental Theatre, a historic cinema palace committed to high-quality and accessible film and education programming. The 14th annual Milwaukee Film Festival will be held April 21-May 5, 2022. For more information or to become a Member, visit [mkefilm.org](http://mkefilm.org).

### **About Milwaukee Repertory Theater**

Milwaukee Rep is the largest performing arts organization in Wisconsin with three unique performance venues in the Patty & Jay Baker Theater Complex– the Quadracci Powerhouse, Stiemke Studio and Stackner Cabaret. For over six decades, Milwaukee Rep has been a centerpiece of Milwaukee’s vibrant arts and cultural scene with productions ranging from Broadway musicals to Shakespeare to American Classics and New Works that are entertaining, inclusive and impactful. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Mark Clements and Executive Director Chad Bauman, Milwaukee Repertory Theater ignites positive change in the cultural, social, and economic vitality of its community by creating world-class theater experiences that entertain, provoke, and inspire meaningful dialogue among an audience representative of Milwaukee’s rich diversity. Learn more at [www.MilwaukeeRep.com](http://www.MilwaukeeRep.com).

### **About Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra**

The Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, led by Music Director Ken-David Masur, is among the finest orchestras in the nation and the largest cultural institution in Wisconsin. Since its inception in 1959, the MSO has found innovative ways to give music a home in the region, develop music appreciation and talent among area youth, and raise the national reputation of Milwaukee. The MSO’s 70 full-time professional musicians perform over 135 classics, pops, family, education, and community concerts each season in the newly-renovated Bradley Symphony Center and other venues throughout the state. A pioneer among American orchestras, the MSO has performed world and American premieres of works by John Adams, Roberto Sierra, Phillip Glass, Geoffrey Gordon, Marc Neikrug, and Matthias Pintscher, as well as garnered national recognition as the first American orchestra to offer live recordings on iTunes. Now in its 50th season, the orchestra’s nationally syndicated radio broadcast series, the longest consecutive-running series of any U.S. orchestra, is heard annually by more than two million listeners. The MSO’s standard of excellence extends beyond the concert hall and into the community, reaching more than 70,000 children and their families through its Arts in Community Education (ACE) program, Youth and Teen concerts, and Family Series.

### **About Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra**

Since 1956, Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra (MYSO) has been nurturing, challenging, and inspiring young minds, profoundly changing lives and our community for the better. MYSO has grown from one orchestra and 30 students to become the largest after-school youth orchestra in the country, and one of the most respected. We serve 1,000 of the area’s young musicians who come from more than 200 schools, 90 zip codes, and as many as 14 counties throughout southeastern Wisconsin and northern Illinois. Each year we provide outreach programs to an additional 6,000 youth and reach an audience of 25,000 through more than 100 public performances. The importance of MYSO as a catalyst for youth development and community change has not gone unnoticed. In our 2015-16 season, MYSO received the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award, the country’s highest honor for after-school youth arts and humanities programs, presented by the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. Today we offer more than 40 ensemble and enrichment training options, ranging from symphony and string orchestras, and jazz and steel pan bands to music theory, composition, and international tours, providing quality musical experiences for a wide range of skill levels. For more information about MYSO and its many programs, please visit [myso.org](http://myso.org). MYSO is a proud founding member of the United Performing Arts Fund and is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

### **About Next Act Theatre**

Next Act Theatre believes that stories work best when they involve characters in the midst of a struggle or a quest. Audiences identify with them, becoming emotionally and intellectually invested. The character's situation, tragedy or triumph becomes the audiences' to endure, mourn or celebrate. The theatre proves itself, then, as essential to the nourishment of our human spirit by bringing us together to examine, experience and explore the human condition, perhaps coming away with knowledge and perspective that only a good story can deliver.

**About Pabst Theater Group:**

The Pabst Theater Group hosts close to 700 shows and events annually at its four venues, the Pabst Theater, the Riverside Theater, Turner Hall Ballroom and the Back Room @ Colectivo (in partnership with Colectivo Coffee). Additionally, the group hosts shows at the Fiserv Forum, Miller High Life Theatre, UW-Milwaukee Panther Arena and Warner Grand Theater. The Pabst Theater Group employs a total of 350 full and part-time staff.

**About Present Music**

Present Music is one of the nation's leading ensembles specializing in the commissioning and performance of new music. Its mission is to engage artists and audience members in imaginative and provocative experiences with new music through ensemble performance and education. Founded and based in Milwaukee since 1982, Present Music has worked closely with many of the nation's most exciting and important composers, and has firmly established one of the largest audiences for new music in the country.

**About Renaissance Theaterworks:**

Renaissance Theaterworks is the nation's second oldest professional theater dedicated to gender parity. With the support of our community, we create three productions and a new play development festival annually. We are dedicated to artistic excellence and to promoting the work of women onstage and off. Renaissance Theaterworks performs in our new artistic home at 255 S Water St.

**About Skylight Music Theatre**

Founded in 1959, Skylight is Milwaukee's professional Equity music theatre company and the largest employer of Wisconsin actors in the State. Skylight produces the full spectrum of music theatre ranging from blockbuster Broadway musicals to reimagined operas, and from exciting world premieres to contemporary off-Broadway hits. Skylight's mainstage home is the Cabot Theatre in the Broadway Theatre Center, which was built by Skylight in Milwaukee's Historic Third Ward in 1992. Considered to be one of Milwaukee's most beautiful theatres, the Cabot Theatre is based on the design of an 18<sup>th</sup>-century French opera house. With just 350 seats, it offers audiences great views of the action onstage. Skylight Music Theatre marks its 62nd season in 2021-2022.