



UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA

Hugh Hodgson School of Music
250 River Road
Athens, Georgia 30602
706-542-3737
music.uga.edu

Franklin College of Arts & Sciences
Hugh Hodgson School of Music

August 14, 2021

Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff,

We are all excited about welcoming you to the Hugh Hodgson School this Year. This will be a year of wonderful music-making and I can't wait to see all of you, hear your performances, and watch what you achieve on stage, in the classroom, and in our community.

We are also watching the current developments surrounding COVID-19 and the Delta variant. As always, our goals are to provide you with a world-class musical experience while keeping everyone healthy and safe. Please read the following information about the start of the semester carefully.

At the direction of the University System of Georgia, all educational activities on campus will resume without requirements of social distancing. The University System of Georgia, in accordance with CDC guidelines, is recommending that all individuals wear face coverings when in campus facilities, regardless of vaccination status.

The Preventive Measures Advisory Board at the University of Georgia (a panel consisting of top medical and workplace safety experts) says the following:

The PMAB recommends that the HHSOM strongly encourage faculty, staff and students to be fully vaccinated and wear face coverings indoors. To prevent the spread of COVID-19 during higher risk activities, such as wind and vocal lessons and performances, the HHSOM should strongly encourage preventative measures that lower risk based on the available guidance for schools of music. Encouraging the use of bell covers, utilizing well ventilated spaces or outdoor areas, and controlling the time/frequency a high risk activity takes place are recommended whenever possible at HHSOM. Promoting a culture of COVID-19 safety among faculty, staff and students is very important for reducing risk as we begin the semester.

In accordance with these recommendations, we ask that all of you consider the following:

We urge you to get vaccinated.

<https://apps.dar.uga.edu/html-emails/-/gail-email/july-29-urge>

In the School of Music, playing instruments and singing in close proximity generates unique levels of aerosols. Vaccination is our best defense against contraction and spread of COVID-19, and it is a strong and effective defense against the Delta variant, illness, hospitalization, and death. For your own safety and the safety of those around you, *we urge you to get vaccinated*. If you are not currently vaccinated, UGA is providing easy access to the vaccine through walk-up appointments. There are also special incentives in place. Please see this page for more information:

<https://coronavirus.uga.edu/>

We urge you to use masks and bell covers in all classes, lessons, and rehearsals, including while singing and playing.

We urge everyone to use masks in all lessons, ensemble rehearsals, chamber music, and other interactions. Musician's masks and bell covers are readily available online at a low cost. If cost is a barrier, let us know and we will help provide resources.

We urge you to be responsible.

It takes a collective effort to keep everyone safe. Continue to wash your hands regularly, sanitize common surfaces, and practice good hygiene. When off-campus, make smart decisions about social gatherings, and avoid large indoor, unmasked crowds. Act judiciously when in public spaces. Outdoor activities are much safer than indoor activities.

Air exchange and air circulation are two of the strongest tools for mitigating the spread of COVID-19. Last year, the overall rate of air exchange in the HHSOM was increased, and we installed medical-grade HEPA air filters in classrooms, practice rooms, rehearsal spaces, and studios. We urge you to use these filters, and to allow time for air exchange when working with others indoors.

- Ensembles will meet in-person, at pre-COVID capacities. Masks, bell covers, and distancing are strongly encouraged. Directors have discretion to make adjustments as necessary.
- Classes will meet in-person, at pre-COVID capacities. Masks and bell covers are strongly encouraged, and distancing is encouraged using available space.
- Applied lessons will take place in-person. Piano, string, and percussion lessons are encouraged to employ masks and distancing. For wind, brass, and voice lessons, the following options are available and strongly encouraged during the current surge of cases:
 - Outdoor lessons
 - Lessons in HHSOM classrooms (as space allows; space will be limited)
 - In-studio lessons of 30-minute duration, with air exchange in between lessons
 - Use of HEPA air filters, masks, and bell covers during applied lessons
- Practice rooms will continue to be reserved and scheduled with periods of air exchange, allowing for unmasked practicing. Please contact Dr. Stephen Fischer at sfischer@uga.edu
- We are currently monitoring the situation with respect to public concerts and performances, and stand ready to provide additional guidance as appropriate.

All of these recommendations may be adjusted as the situation changes, and we hope that our collective efforts to vaccinate and mitigate spread will change the situation for the better. We all want nothing more than a return to "normal" where everyone is safe, healthy, and comfortable. I'm so proud of all that you did to keep our community safe during the last 18 months. I know we are tired of COVID-19 and exhausted from its effects. I'm also confident that we can work through the current surge and continue to make music that helps the world. The faculty, staff, and administration of the HHSOM are committed to your education and well-being. Please help us by working together and protecting our family. We can do this and we will get through this!!

With best wishes,



Peter J. Jutras, Ph.D, NCTM
Professor and Director