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Chicagoland Performing Arts Venues and Producers Unify around Vaccination and Mask Requirements for Audiences

Dance, Improv, Music, Opera and Theater Operators Announce Audience, Artist Safety Plans

Chicago, IL (August 17, 2021) -- The League of Chicago Theatres shared today that a growing coalition of more than 65 performing arts venues and producers across Chicagoland have agreed upon Covid-19 Vaccination and Mask Requirements for audiences through the end of 2021. This unified COVID-19 protection protocol will be in effect by September 1, 2021, for indoor productions, **requiring audience members to provide proof of vaccination or negative test certification upon entry and to wear masks.**

These venues and their performers, backstage crew and staff will comply with vaccination requirements and testing protocols to further ensure the safety of all guests and company members.

Organizations will begin notifying ticket holders for performances scheduled through December 2021 to ensure awareness of the new policies. **Specific guidance and other venue specific requirements can be found on the organizations' respective websites.** The current protocols were developed by the coalition in consultation with public health officials. They will be reviewed regularly and may include an extension or relaxation of certain provisions if the science dictates.

League of Chicago Theatres Executive Director Deb Clapp shared, "The arts and cultural community is embedded in the fabric of Chicago. Not all of the League's more than 200 member theatres will be able to open this Fall. We are pleased that many members of our vibrant performing arts community that will be opening have come together to craft a unified response to this crisis so that audiences can once again experience the joy of live performance without future disruption."

Specific protocols may vary by venue, but in general, patrons will need to be masked and fully vaccinated with an FDA authorized vaccine in order to attend an indoor performance and must show proof of vaccination and identification at their time of entry into the venue with their valid ticket. "Fully vaccinated" means the performance date must be at least 14 days after the second dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine, or at least 14 days after a single-dose vaccine. Where negative tests are accepted, guests may provide proof of a COVID-19 PCR test taken within 72 hours of the performance start time, or a negative COVID-19 antigen test taken within 6 hours of the performance start time. This includes accommodations for children under 12 and people with a medical condition or closely held religious belief that prevents vaccination. All patrons will have to wear a mask throughout the performance and during their time in the venue. Where refreshments are available certain restrictions may apply based on the organization you are attending.

The growing coalition includes: 16th Street Theater, A Red Orchid Theatre, About Face Theatre, Aguijón Theatre, Albany Park Theatre Project, American Blues Theater, Apollo Theater Chicago, Artemesia Theatre, The Artistic Home, Aston Rep Theatre Company, Athenaeum Theatre, Auditorium Theatre, Babes with Blades, Black Button Eyes Productions, Bluebird Arts, Brightside Theatre, Broadway In Chicago, Chicago Danztheatre Ensemble, Chicago Humanities Festival, Chicago Magic Lounge, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association, Chicago Youth Shakespeare, Court Theatre, First Floor Theatre, First Folio Theater, Goodman Theatre, Greenhouse Theatre Center, Harris Theater for Music and Dance, Hell in a Handbag, Her Story Theatre, High Concept Labs, House Theatre of Chicago, International Voices Project, The Joffrey Ballet, Lookingglass Theatre Company, Lyric Opera of Chicago, The Marriott Theatre, Midsommer Flight, The Neo Futurists, The New Coordinates, Northlight Theatre, Oak Park Festival Theatre, Oil Lamp Theater, Old Town School of Folk Music, Paramount Theatre, Piven Theatre Workshop, Pivot Arts, Playmakers Laboratory, Porchlight Music Theatre, Pridearts, Promethean Theatre Ensemble, Raven Theatre, Red Tape Theatre, Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, Saint Sebastian Players, Saltbox Theatre Collective, The Second City, Shattered Globe Theatre, Skokie Theatre, Stage Left Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Theatre Wit, Three Brothers Theatre, Timeline Theatre Company, UrbanTheater Company, Victory Gardens Theater, WildClaw Theatre, Williams Street Repertory Theatre and Writers Theatre.

For further details about these and other COVID-related preventative measures that each theatre is providing for the safety of their audiences and artists, it is important that patrons confirm the details of the venue they are attending.

About Chicago theatre

Chicago theatre is the leader in the U.S. with more than 250 theatres throughout Chicagoland, comprising a rich and varied community ranging from storefront, non-union theatres to the most renowned resident theatres in the country, including 5 which have been honored with Regional Tony Awards, and the largest touring Broadway organization in the nation. Chicago's theatres serve 5 million audience members annually and have a combined budget of more than \$250 million. Chicago produces and/or presents more world premieres annually than any other city in the nation. Each year Chicago theatres send new work to resident theatres across the country, to Broadway, and around the world.

The League of Chicago Theatres' Mission Statement

Theatre is essential to the life of a great city and to its citizens. The League of Chicago Theatres is an alliance of theatres, which leverages its collective strength to support, promote and advocate for Chicago's theatre industry. Through our work, we ensure that theatre continues to thrive in our city.

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STATEMENTS FROM SELECT COALITION MEMBERS

Auditorium Theatre, Rich Regan, Chief Executive Officer

"We are thrilled to welcome audiences back to our National Historic Landmark as we join with our colleagues in creating a safe environment where live performance may thrive once again. The Auditorium Theatre has been a foundation in Chicago's cultural landscape since 1889, and we look forward to our next 131 years."

Broadway In Chicago, Lou Raizin, President

“The health and safety of our patrons is our main concern. The theatre community was the first to close and the last to reopen and this has been a tremendous loss for the City of Chicago and the economic generator that the arts provide. On an annual basis pre-pandemic Chicago’s creative industries produced more than \$17.6 billion in economic output, supported 81,300 jobs and generated more than \$4.8 billion in household earnings—delivering \$336.5 million in local and state government revenue. Given the necessity for theatres to open with 100% capacity our working together with fellow Chicago arts organizations has given us the opportunity to chart our way back to opening our doors and bringing our stages alive again safely.”

Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Criss Henderson, Executive Director

“We are all excited to welcome back audiences and once again enjoy the power and connection of live performances. Throughout the pandemic, we have prioritized the health and well-being of our staff, artists and patrons. This collective decision is the next step in that commitment so that we all can get safely back to what we miss and love.”

Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association, Jeff Alexander, President

“The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association is delighted to be welcoming audiences back to Symphony Center this fall. Our focus remains on the health and safety of our audiences, artists, stage crew and staff. Implementing these protocols allows us to bring people together safely to once again experience the transformative and life-enriching power of music during a very challenging time.”

Goodman Theatre, Roche Schulfer, Executive Director

“Goodman Theatre is proud to be one of the first theatres in the country to safely re-open with our hit production of *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play*, utilizing reduced capacity and physical distancing to ensure a healthy and comfortable experience for artists, audiences and staff. Now, as we prepare to operate at full capacity beginning with *American Mariachi*, we will maintain that level of safety by adopting these new protocols, developed in accordance with expert guidance and in alignment with Chicago’s performing arts sector.”

Harris Theater for Music and Dance, Lori Dimun, President and CEO

“For the past 17 months performing arts organizations and venues in our city have planned and painstakingly prepared to welcome artists, crew, staff, and audiences back to the stage. As our seasons of indoor performances approach, our greatest priority is to ensure a safe return for everyone entering our spaces so that we can once again, in community with each other, experience the power and exhilaration of live performance.”

Lookingglass Theatre Company, Heidi Stillman, Artistic Director

“We at Lookingglass believe in togetherness and in presence. The measures we are taking in solidarity with our sibling institutions are to help ensure that togetherness and presence will come back and stay back and that theatre itself will survive.”

Lyric Opera of Chicago, Anthony Freud, General Director, President and CEO

“We are united in our efforts to keep the health and safety of our audiences, artists and staff paramount. Though the policies of individual artistic companies across the city may vary, depending on their audiences and facilities, our goal is clearly the same as we build the safest path back to live performances.”

The Marriott Theatre, Terry James, Executive Producer

“As we make plans to welcome audiences back, we are following expert scientific advice as well as our audience’s wishes and concerns. In conjunction with the Chicago arts community, we are thrilled to welcome audiences back, and look forward to gathering safely and joyfully once again.”

Paramount Theatre, Tim Rater, President and CEO

“Chicago theatre is back. The August 18th opening of the Broadway spectacular *Kinky Boots* will mark the first in-person show at the Paramount in the last 524 days and will be among the first productions in the Chicago area since live theater was shut down. Tremendous gratitude to our kin theaters and the League. We look forward to seeing you in person at the theater.”

The Second City, Parisa Jalili, Chief Operating Officer

“Chicago venues are all working together towards the same goal: to create great art for great audiences—and doing it safely. Committing to a vaccination requirement is one important step forward in our journey back to the stage. While all of us at The Second City love to improvise, this is one time when we’re all in agreement to commit to the script: get vaccinated...and keep our casts, staff, and patrons safe.”

Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Glenn Davis and Audrey Francis, Co-Artistic Directors

“As both artists and Artistic Directors, we support the coalition’s work to do everything within our power to keep Chicago performers, stage crews and audiences safe. These new vaccine and masking guidelines will help us launch a season of live performance, following 17 months of forced closure, while keeping public health at the forefront of our commitment as a cultural citizen.”

Victory Gardens Theater, Roxanna Conner, Acting Managing Director

“Victory Gardens is honored to join our colleagues across the city in establishing protocols to ensure the safety of our artists, patrons, and staff. This unified approach allows arts organizations of all sizes and genres to commit to a cohesive standard as we navigate reopening our spaces. “

Writers Theatre, Kate Lipuma, Executive Director

“We are immensely grateful to our audiences to have been with us every step of the way during the last year. Now, as we prepare to welcome our community back, we must do so thoughtfully and responsibly, with measures in place that take into account the health, comfort and safety of everyone. We want to reopen, but as an industry that was hit so hard by this pandemic, our futures will be determined by our ability to stay open. And this is just the right thing to do – for our staffs, artists and of course, our patrons.”