

NJIT Pandemic Recovery Plan

CSLA Phased Recovery for Theatre
Jim Wise Theatre Operations
Theatre Arts and Technology
Music Initiative at NJIT

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Our report covers how the Jim Wise Theatre Operations (JWTTO), the Theatre Arts and Technology (THAT) Program within the Rutgers-NJIT Theatre Program, and the NJIT Music Initiative (M.I.) plan to proceed through Phases 1, 2, and 3 guidelines laid out by the [Core State Preparedness Responsibilities](#) going into the Academic Year 2021.

This is a ‘brainstorm’ document that covers all of the processes that require personal interaction and creates a plan to deliver operations to the best of our ability. Our goal is to work with each of the three areas within our Program to determine the best practices for on campus events (rentals, campus events, and academic theatre and music events). This includes interactive teaching, rehearsing, set constructions and performances.

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NJIT Pandemic Recovery Plan (Submitted by CSLA)

Introduction to Theatre Continuity: Phased Recovery Operations

This document refers to operations conducted on the NJIT campus in Newark, NJ, including the physical campus and activities that have direct contact with individuals anywhere. Activities at partnering locations, such as Rutgers University Newark, must follow a similar phased approach informed by local conditions.

NJIT faculty, staff, and students at theatre facilities must follow the specific social distancing and safety protocols including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) as required by the institutional, state and federal guidelines in the respective phase of the theatre continuity plan. State and national information regarding current conditions can be found at:

- New Jersey's COVID-19 information hub: <https://covid19.nj.gov/index.html>
- New Jersey's "The Road Back: Restoring Economic Health through Public Health": <https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562020/approved/20200427b.shtml>
- White House Plan for Opening up America Again: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Guidelines-for-Opening-Up-America-Again.pdf>

The following guidelines should be adapted with each respective phase for the recovery of theatre operations.

Recovery Phase 0: All non-essential theatre operations halted. Essential theatre operations follow strictest social distancing and safety protocols with only essential staff.

- Safety must be rigorously maintained with adequate access to PPE and other safety related supplies. Workshops and rehearsal spaces will not be authorized for access unless adequate safety supplies are identified as being available. Theatre Director must identify by name the people that will be considered essential personnel (including replacements/backups). During this time all essential operations (ERO) must be approved by chair, dean, and provost through the emergency theatre continuity plan process currently in place.
- Any activity that requires face-to-face interactions is halted.
- Activities that can be conducted remotely should be continued to the extent possible.

Recovery Phase 1: Minimal theatre operations approved through chairs, deans and provost to pursue time-sensitive projects and involving students with graduation requirements.

- Requests for projects considered time-sensitive should be directed to departmental chairs. The dean and provost will provide guidance as needed.
- All operations at NJIT facilities in this phase must follow the highest possible level of social distancing implemented.
- Activities that can be conducted remotely should be continued to the extent possible.

Recovery Phase 2: Most theatre operations, whether sponsored externally or internally, may be restarted through the approval of department chairs using significant social distancing and safety protocols with restrictions on the number of participants and staff present in facilities at one time.

- The Phase 2 restart may require developing flexible work schedules, plan for supply chain issues, and prepare facilities in advance of need. To ensure social distancing requirements and to reduce density of personnel in university theatre spaces, the Director should consider permitting flexible access schedules, work shifts or staggered workdays. Under no circumstances should safety be sacrificed.
- Activities that can be conducted completely remotely or in addition to the on-campus operations should continue to be conducted in that manner.

Recovery Phase 3: Most theatre operations are restored with minimal social distancing and personnel safety protocols.

- Group activities with faculty, staff and students should be restricted and kept to a minimal size protecting any vulnerable participants. If possible, these meetings should continue to be held online until we reach a state of full recovery.
- Other safety protocols must be strictly followed.
- Activities that can be conducted completely remotely or in addition to the on-campus operations should continue to be conducted in that manner.

Full Recovery: All theatre operations are restored fully with no specific social distancing requirements. However, all facility and personnel safety protocols must be strictly followed.

Addendum for Theatre Arts and Technology Program

Jim Wise Theatre Operations Recovery Plan

Operational Milestones

It is time to start looking forward to the resumption of normal Theatre Operations. Prior examples by the Federal and State governments, as well as Dean Belfield's and Dr. Deek's guidance advocate a step by step data driven approach to restarting normal activity.

This section uses the prior guidance to estimate the level of Theatre Operations that can be expected at each phase of the reopening. It is focused upon the activities of the professional and administrative staff. Limiting the density of the workforce may require additional delays or other accommodations for the student work study staff or general student population.

This chart is a random sampling of the myriad activities pursued by Theatre Operations, an assessment of when that activity can be expected to resume, and any critical limitations that either must be fulfilled to proceed safely, or that prevent starting the activity at an earlier phase. The phases referred to are defined by Dr Belfield's "NJIT Pandemic Recovery Plan: Theatre Continuity, Phased Recovery Operations"

Activity	Startup Phase	Critical Limitation
Administrative Function	Phase 0	Viable utilities service at home
Digital Archive Maintenance	Phase 0	Viable utilities service at home
Audio, single person operation	Phase 1	Audience remains distant from Audio Engineer
Audio, under 6 hand held mics	Phase 1	Existence of effective disinfection protocol for the equipment.
Equipment Maintenance	Phase 1	Tasks must not require teamwork
Lighting, small adjustments	Phase 1	Tasks must not require teamwork
Lighting, operation	Phase 1	Operator must remain isolated in booth
Projection, single source	Phase 1	Existence of effective disinfection protocol for the equipment.
Simple Scene Shop Operations	Phase 1	Tasks must not require teamwork

Event Setup	Phase 1	Tasks must not require teamwork
Event, Lecture style	Phase 1	Stage party size and separation distance. May not allow an audience of a practical size, but may allow video recording
Client Meetings	Phase 2	Must be conducted carefully
Post Musical Restoration (Completion of Spring's Work)	Phase 2	Separation distance of teams moving heavy equipment
Audio, multiple wired mics	Phase 2	Existence of effective disinfection protocol for the equipment.
Lighting, custom hang	Phase 2	Tasks must not require teamwork
Projection, multi-source	Phase 2	Existence of effective disinfection protocol for the equipment.
Movement of props, stock parts, equipment to/from storage.	Phase 2	Separation distance of teams moving heavy equipment
Audio, multi-person operation	Phase 3	Density of staff at mix position
Audio, Body mics	Phase 3	Audio Technician must touch the performers
Set Changes	Phase 3	Density of backstage crew
Set Construction	Phase 3	Separation distance and density of student workers. Requirement of hands-on-instruction
Event, Panel style	Phase 3	Density of stage party
Event, Group Performance	Phase 3	Density of backstage crews and performers.
Traditional Theatre Production	Full Recovery	Density of backstage crews and performers.

Operational Protocols

These Operational Protocols are intended to describe methods that can be used to work safely during recovery. They are organized across several categories. Specific tasks may naturally call upon protocols from several categories. For instance, a Theatre Operations Staff member using equipment for a production will call upon the protocols in all three sections.

Theatre Operations Staff

- The Theatre Operations Staff will be expected to self-monitor their health status before coming to work each day. Staff members that are not feeling well or are actively sick will be expected to make use of the university's leave policies and seek appropriate treatment.
- The staff will follow CDC recommendations regarding frequent hand washing. Staff should wash their hands at the beginning and end of each shift and break, after using the restroom, sneezing, touching their face, blowing their nose, cleaning, sweeping, mopping, smoking, eating, or drinking.
- The staff will follow CDC recommendations, covering their cough or sneeze with a tissue, or an elbow or shoulder if no tissue is available, followed by thorough hand washing

Health Manager

- Every event that involves five or more artists will be required to designate a Health Manager. He or she will monitor the health status of every artist before every rehearsal or performance, and before resuming work after any break greater than fifteen minutes in duration. If an artist is found to be unwell, he or she will be sent away to seek appropriate attention.
- The Health Manager will maintain a record of every health check performed, the subject of the check, the time and date it was performed, as well as its outcome. These records will be treated as confidential information.
- The Health Manager will be responsible for ensuring the dressing rooms and any other gathering area used by the artists are properly cleaned and disinfected prior to each day's use.
- He or she will also be responsible for ensuring that any properties or other equipment used in a performance or rehearsal is properly cleaned and disinfected prior to initial use and after every use thereafter.

Technical Equipment

- Furniture used on stage during an event is considered equipment as part of this protocol. Selection preference will be given to hard surfaces, avoiding upholstered or soft surfaces because of the difficulty in disinfecting them.
- The equipment used by an artist or technician will be disinfected after each event.
- Artists or technicians cannot share equipment that has not been disinfected.
- As much as possible, equipment will be assigned to individuals and will not be shared.
- Equipment assigned to a specific individual will be stored isolated from the equipment assigned to others.

- All equipment used within six feet of an artist will require disinfection after the event.

Production

- During Phase 1 performances will be limited to streamed or recorded events only. Only one artist at a time will be allowed on the stage.
- Phase one and two social distancing requirements are likely to severely limit the ability to conduct Technical Rehearsals or live performances.
- Artists will maintain a minimum of six foot social distancing at all times during phases one and two.
- Musicians will likely require more than six feet of social distance to accommodate the fact that they often breathe deeply and expel aerosols further than people engaged in non-physical activities.
- The theatre, control rooms, stage, dressing rooms, and any other areas used will require cleaning & disinfection after each usage session. Please refer to the Facilities Services protocols for high touch surfaces and other issues.
- Expect the need for additional time for artist preparations. Microphones, hair, makeup, etc. will likely take additional time due to distancing requirements.

Back Stage

- During Phase 1 scene shop operations will be limited to a single carpenter per project. Strict social distancing will be required between projects.
- During Phase 3 theatre students may resume work in the scene shop. All participants will wear face masks, and attempt to limit close interactions to those needed for instruction and guidance.
- During Phase 1 and 2, all stage operations will be limited to two crew members maintaining strict social distancing.
- Phase three will allow stage crew members to form work “work teams” in which people routinely work together, but they keep their distance from everyone else.
- Stage crew members will wear face coverings and gloves while working. OSHA regulations may determine the type of PPE required under specific circumstances.
- Expect the need for additional setup and strike time in order to allow the stage crew the time and space necessary to maintain social distancing

Box Office

- The box office line should be marked in 6’ intervals to promote Social Distancing.
- The House should open earlier to limit the size of the pre-show gathering in the lobby.

- Adequate waiting space, with 6' distancing, must be available in the lobby and nearby the lobby.
- Audience Members should sign in with name and contact info to facilitate contact tracing should it become necessary. The sign in process should use individual index cards dropped by the audience member into a box, or some other method to avoid interactions over a common clipboard, computer, or other equipment.
- Cash transactions should be avoided; prefer electronic ticket sales. If cash, credit cards, or anything else is accepted from an audience member, upon completion of the transaction the worker's gloves should be discarded, the hands sanitized, and gloves replaced.
- Ticket checking should be touch-less: cut them with scissors, mark them with a sharpie, etc: the ticket taker should not handle them directly.
- Ushers, ticket takers, and box office staff must wear face coverings and gloves to interact with the audience.

Audience Management

- The Auditorium and Lobby will be cleaned and disinfected by Facilities Services after every event.
- A House Manager and at least two ushers will be required to monitor the audience and enforce the rules.
- Signs describing the rules of assembly will be posted near the theatre entrance in the lobby for the audience to reference.
- Organizations hosting events will be required to widely publish the official rules of assembly. They should be accessible at the same location as any publicity produced to advertise the event.
- The seating chart will be modified to maintain six foot distancing while seated in the auditorium. (Question: What about family groups?)
- Audience members will be expected to wear face coverings.
- TBD by the university: individual screening protocols. (There was some talk of temperature scanning)
- Individual chairs will be clearly marked to indicate which ones can be used.
- The audience will remain seated at the conclusion of the performance, so that the ushers can guide them from their seats in an orderly manner and maintain social distancing. The audience will leave the auditorium starting from the back of the house.
- Hand sanitizer should be available at every theatre entrance.
- The audience should use the available hand sanitizer before entering the auditorium. The Health Manager should appoint hand sanitizer monitors at points of ingress to ensure that all patrons enter with clean hands.

Dressing Rooms

- Occupancy of the dressing rooms will be limited to (3?) to enable Social Distancing.
- The Health Manager will oversee the cleaning and disinfection of the dressing rooms after each performance. There is some fear that this cleaning function might create a grievable situation for AFSCME, but we have been reassured by Ron and Mitchel that this should not be a concern.
- Additional space will likely be required for any performance: consider asking the registrar to leave a classroom or two free in the evening if at all possible.

Office

- Remove arm chairs to encourage social distancing.
- Figure out how to space Danny, Dan, and I 6' apart.
- Put a coat rack near the door to facilitate Malcolm and the work study students; they will not work in the office.
- Keep disinfectant wipes (or equivalent) for per-use cleaning of the refrigerator, microwave, drawing board, and similar office equipment.
- Desks, computers, phones, etc. are assigned to each employee, and sharing is not allowed.
- Virtual meetings will be preferred over in person meetings.
- In person meetings will be conducted in the theatre or other larger space to allow six foot social distancing between participants.

Community Rentals

- Rentals to the community are not expected to resume until phase four, full recovery. If this is an inaccurate interpretation, or if this is changed, additional protocols governing the relevant production issues will need to be developed and approved.
- TODO: Advance reservations/ contracts?
- TODO: Allowances for rescheduling/refunds in the event of cancellation?
- TODO: Confirm new/changed requirements from Risk Management, Legal

Auditions Protocols

- TODO by the main office. Auditions and Rehearsals are managed by the academic office, but are listed here because they are also operational issues.
- Rehearsal Protocols
- TODO by main office

Definitions

These definitions were used in the production of the Theatre Operations section. The definitions of the Recovery Phases are taken from Dr. Deek's Pandemic Recovery Plan.

Artist

Person using the stage for presentation. Specific examples include an actor in a play, musician in a band, or a lecturer giving a presentation.

Recovery phase 3

Minimal social distancing with all classes and campus events occurring but with attention given to restricting unnecessarily large gatherings and protecting vulnerable populations

Recovery phase 2

Significant social distancing with classes operating at or below 50% occupancy limits and strict limits on gathering/meeting size, plus reduced campus staffing with some people working remotely

Recovery phase 1

Minimal campus activities, no standard face-to-face classes but continuing research and special classes such as laboratories and studios operating on an as required basis, with the highest possible level of social distancing implemented, most campus personnel working remotely

Recovery phase 0

Campus closure, except for essential staff

Theatre Season and Teaching Studio Courses:

Theatre Season

Phase One:

- Work with short remote presentations and experiment with possibilities.
- Post on NJIT YouTube and website.

Phase Two:

- Remote play for fall.
- Workshops for Directing I and Stage management will be done as remote plays and posted on the website.
- Move the musical to April Slot and work with remote presentation until further notice.
- Remote casting, rehearsals, performance. Performances will be done remote live to comply with the licensing agreement.
- Students will have proper screens or backing in their homes/dorms location.
- All will need good-high speed internet access, perhaps a cell/smartphone, stands and a good mic. We will work with them as we can.
- Costuming and set pieces, and light effects will be from home accessibility, if possible.

Phase Three:

- All shows in the Jim Wise Theatre to comply with social distancing, if on-stage productions are possible. If not, then see guidelines for Phase Two.
 - Will follow strict guidelines laid out for Theatre Operations.
 - Small cast productions to keep social distancing and limited set and crew needs will be taken into consideration for the play or musical if deemed safe. If not, then see guidelines for Phase Two.
 - Either recorded music or live broadcast. We will explore distancing for a small pit orchestra also. If not, then see guidelines for Phase Two.
 - Here is an article to describe possible transitional needs for stage performances.(Broadway Symposium)
1. A new member of the management team will need to be created to manage company health issues & concerns.

2. Temperature checks at the top of every call: rehearsals, half hour, etc... and anyone with a temperature is sent home.
3. We need much more understudy and swing coverage.
4. Testing: early and often.
5. No more full company meet and greets.
6. And only virtual production and design meetings.
7. Video submissions for auditions.
8. No sharing headsets, belt packs or mics.
9. Reports to input temperature checks and testing results and/or the health manager will have to submit daily reports with this information.
10. Need a lot of hand sanitizer, wipes, masks, gloves, etc...

Teaching On-Campus and Remote Courses

Phase One:

- All Theatre courses will be taught remotely.

Phase Two:

- Most Theatre courses will be taught remotely whenever possible.
- Studio courses will be in a large studio, 207 Bradley Hall, RU Campus, using social distancing if safe. To be determined. Otherwise taught remotely.

Phase Three:

- Some Theatre courses will be taught remotely.
- Some will incorporate the converged learning model.

Music Initiative Rehearsals and Concerts at NJIT

Due to the differences in size and nature of performance with each music ensemble, jazz, string, and wind, the conductors have come up with plans on how to handle the rehearsals and concerts for the fall semester. These guidelines may go into the spring semester.

Based on university policy for distancing and wearing face masks at all times, all rehearsals and performances during the three phases will be remote.

This is a phased generic layout on how the ensembles will proceed into AY 21.

Phase One:

- Remote rehearsals are conducted with small groups of musicians remotely.
- A short performance is recorded, edited and presented on the NJIT YouTube site.

Phase Two:

- Rehearsals are conducted remotely, then each ensemble will be broken into smaller groups in order to fairly accommodate the lessons. They would essentially become master classes for those sections. Each small group working toward a short piece of music. In some cases, a full band might be coordinated remotely for a short concert.
- Toward the end of the semester each musician group with the help of a music technician (brought in for this job) would perform remotely and record, and the work would be edited and prepared for launching onto the website and NJIT YouTube channel. There could be a series of short pieces posted in one site.

Phase Three:

- Phase Two guidelines may be repeated based on university guidelines.

Otherwise:

- Social distancing will be kept between the musicians when in the rehearsal room CKB 116. The jazz and string ensemble sizes can be worked out safely. Wind ensemble, being over 80 students may be broken into smaller groups for the first and second half of the rehearsal period.
- For the final concert in the Atrium each separate ensemble would have a distance set up, just like rehearsal. It would be filmed and recorded by the theatre work-students with theatre equipment. No audience. Post online. (no fee)

Conductors' Notes on Handling Remote Rehearsals

Wind Ensemble, conductor Nick Santoro

- Working remotely.
- Working master classes in technique.
- Creating small ensembles that will rehearse remotely and be put together as a video.

String Ensemble, conductor Christine Sweet

- Project based online concert including ensemble repertoire culminating in a virtual concert.
- Instrumental sectionals, virtual rehearsals weekly during class times using break-out rooms and main room
- Music appreciation and history seminar, focusing on string solo and orchestral repertoire
- Music theory

Jazz Band, conductor Dave Rimelis

- Have virtual lessons and rehearsals with a plan to create a virtual video concert in December. This may occur in May depending on state and federal guidelines.
- Work more individually with students on things like Improvisation and Jazz theory.
- To play instruments in a Jazz setting reading music and improvising solos. To expose students to standard Jazz repertoire as well as contemporary popular songs in the jazz setting.
- Learn new techniques for improvisation and ways of negotiating various styles of jazz and popular music.
- Become familiar with using basic harmonic and rhythmic structures commonly used in jazz idi.

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