

COVID-19 and Participatory Music-Making

Subjects: [Music](#)

Contributor: Esther M. Morgan-Ellis

Participatory music-making is any music-making activity in which individuals engage for the sake of the activity itself. It can be contrasted with presentational music-making, which takes the production of a performance or recording for consumption by an audience as a principal objective. During the COVID-19 pandemic, participatory musicians adopted a variety of technological means by which to make music together online. While virtual activities allowed these individuals to sustain their communities and grow as musicians, they did not satisfy all the needs met by in-person music-making. Additionally, online music-making increased access for some but posed barriers to access for others. Virtual participatory music-making remains relevant following the relaxation of pandemic restrictions, and it will likely grow in significance as communications technologies and internet access improve.

online music-making

virtual music-making

participatory performance

Irish traditional music

old-time music

shape-note singing

congregational singing

community singing

Introduction

Social distancing measures that were mandated or voluntarily adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic inevitably impacted the activities of all musicians, especially those who perform for live audiences and those who gather in groups to make music. Early in the pandemic, music ensembles made headlines following several “superspreader events” that took place at choir rehearsals ^{[1][2]}. The risk undertaken by singers was scrutinized most closely, given their reliance on breath for sound production and their habit of performing in close proximity to one another using resonant indoor spaces ^{[3][4]}. Emphasis was placed on the dispersal of aerosols and droplets, which also accompanies sound production in wind instruments ^{[5][6]}. While various in-person mitigation strategies were proposed ^{[7][8]}, most choral ensembles ultimately adopted virtual approaches to rehearsing and performing ^[9]. Other collaborative and performing musicians likewise turned to the internet as the most viable means of sustaining their practices. This entry will consider the full range of pandemic impacts on participatory musicians in particular, focusing on their uses of the internet to play and sing together.

References

1. Miller, S.L.; Nazaroff, W.W.; Jimenez, J.L.; Boerstra, A.; Buonanno, G.; Dancer, S.J.; Kurnitski, J.; Marr, L.C.; Morawska, L.; Noakes, C. Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 by inhalation of respiratory aerosol in the Skagit Valley Chorale superspreading event. *Indoor Air* 2021, 31, 314–323.

2. Charlotte, N. High Rate of SARS-CoV-2 Transmission Due to Choir Practice in France at the Beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic. *J. Voice* 2023, 37, 292.e9–292.e14.
3. O’Keeffe, J.; COVID-19 Risks and Precautions for Choirs. National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health 2020. Available online: <https://ncceh.ca/resources/evidence-reviews/covid-19-risks-and-precautions-choirs> (accessed on 8 February 2024).
4. Bahl, P.; de Silva, C.; Bhattacharjee, S.; Stone, H.; Doolan, C.; Chughtai, A.A.; MacIntyre, C.R. Droplets and Aerosols Generated by Singing and the Risk of Coronavirus Disease 2019 for Choirs. *Clin. Infect. Dis.* 2021, 72, e639–e641.
5. Alsved, M.; Matamis, A.; Bohlin, R.; Richter, M.; Bengtsson, P.E.; Fraenkel, C.J.; Medstrande, P.; Löndahl, J. Exhaled respiratory particles during singing and talking. *Aerosol. Sci. Technol.* 2020, 54, 1245–1248.
6. Becher, L.; Gena, A.W.; Alsaad, H.; Richter, B.; Spahn, C.; Voelker, C. The spread of breathing air from wind instruments and singers using schlieren techniques. *Indoor Air* 2021, 31, 1798–1814.
7. Nix, J.; Jers, H.; Ternström, S. Acoustical, Psychoacoustical, and Pedagogical Considerations for Choral Singing with COVID-19 Health Measures. *Choral J.* 2020, 61, 30–38.
8. Naunheim, M.R.; Bock, J.; Doucette, P.A.; Hoch, M.; Howell, I.; Johns, M.M.; Johnson, A.M.; Krishna, P.; Meyer, D.; Milstein, C.F.; et al. Safer Singing During the SARS-CoV-2 Pandemic: What We Know and What We Don’t. *J. Voice* 2021, 35, 765–771.
9. Daffern, H.; Balmer, K.; Brereton, J. Singing Together, Yet Apart: The Experience of UK Choir Members and Facilitators During the Covid-19 Pandemic. *Front. Psychol.* 2021, 12, 624474.

Retrieved from <https://encyclopedia.pub/entry/history/show/127442>