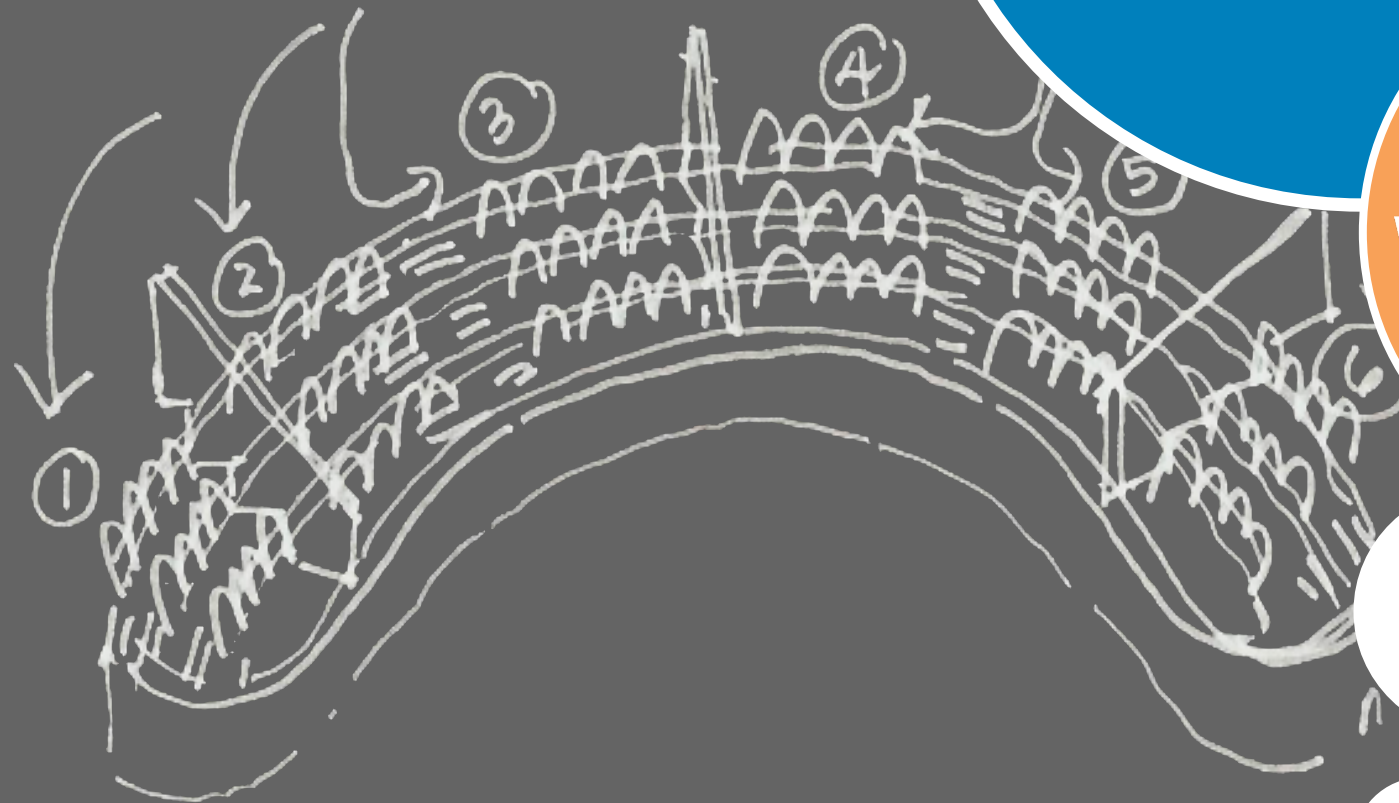


STAGING A COMEBACK

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR THEATERS AND
PERFORMING ARTS CENTERS AS THEY
ENTER THEIR RE-OPENING PHASE

**SNEAK
PEEK**

Wilson Butler Architects



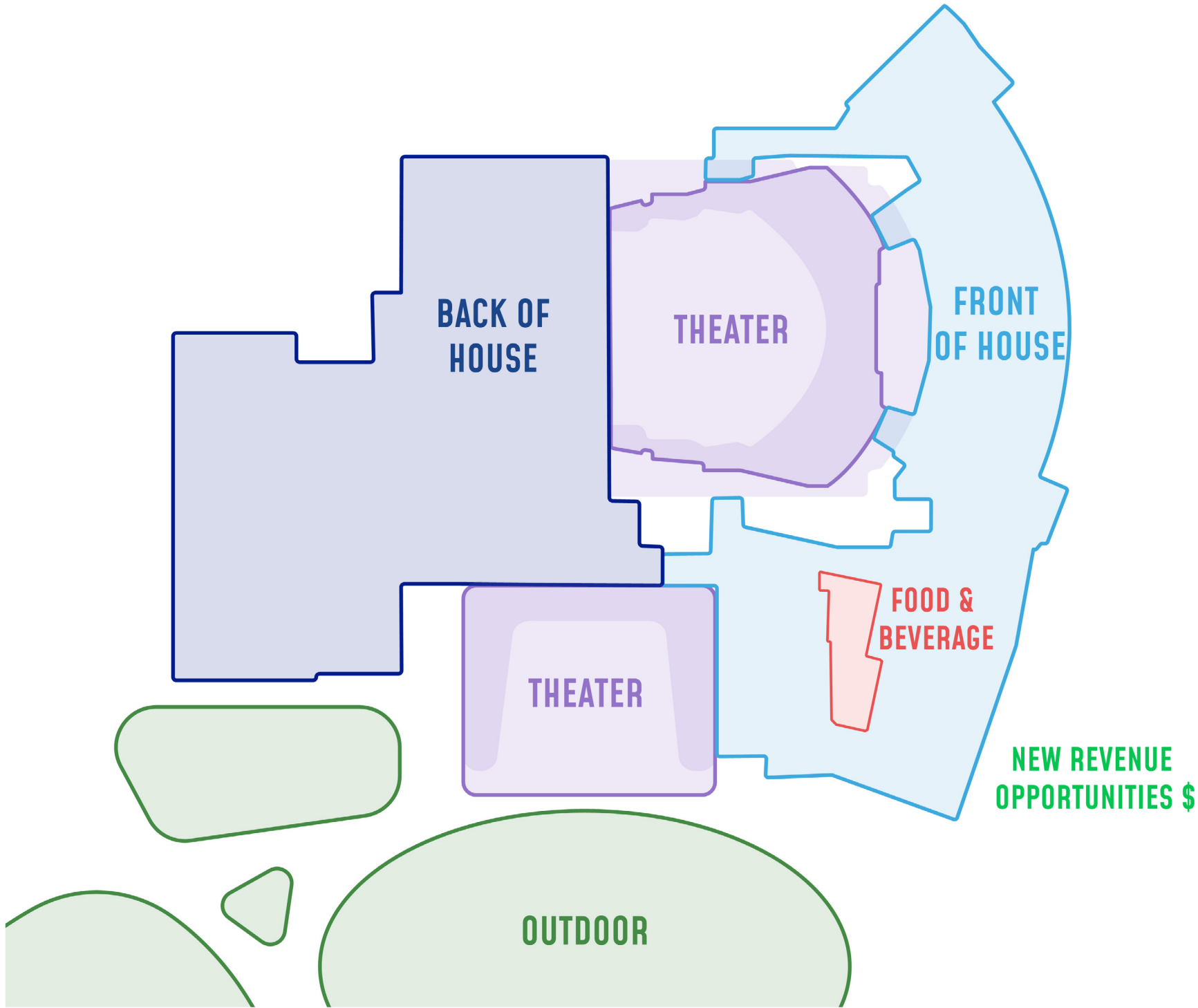


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INTRODUCTION

STAGING A COMEBACK

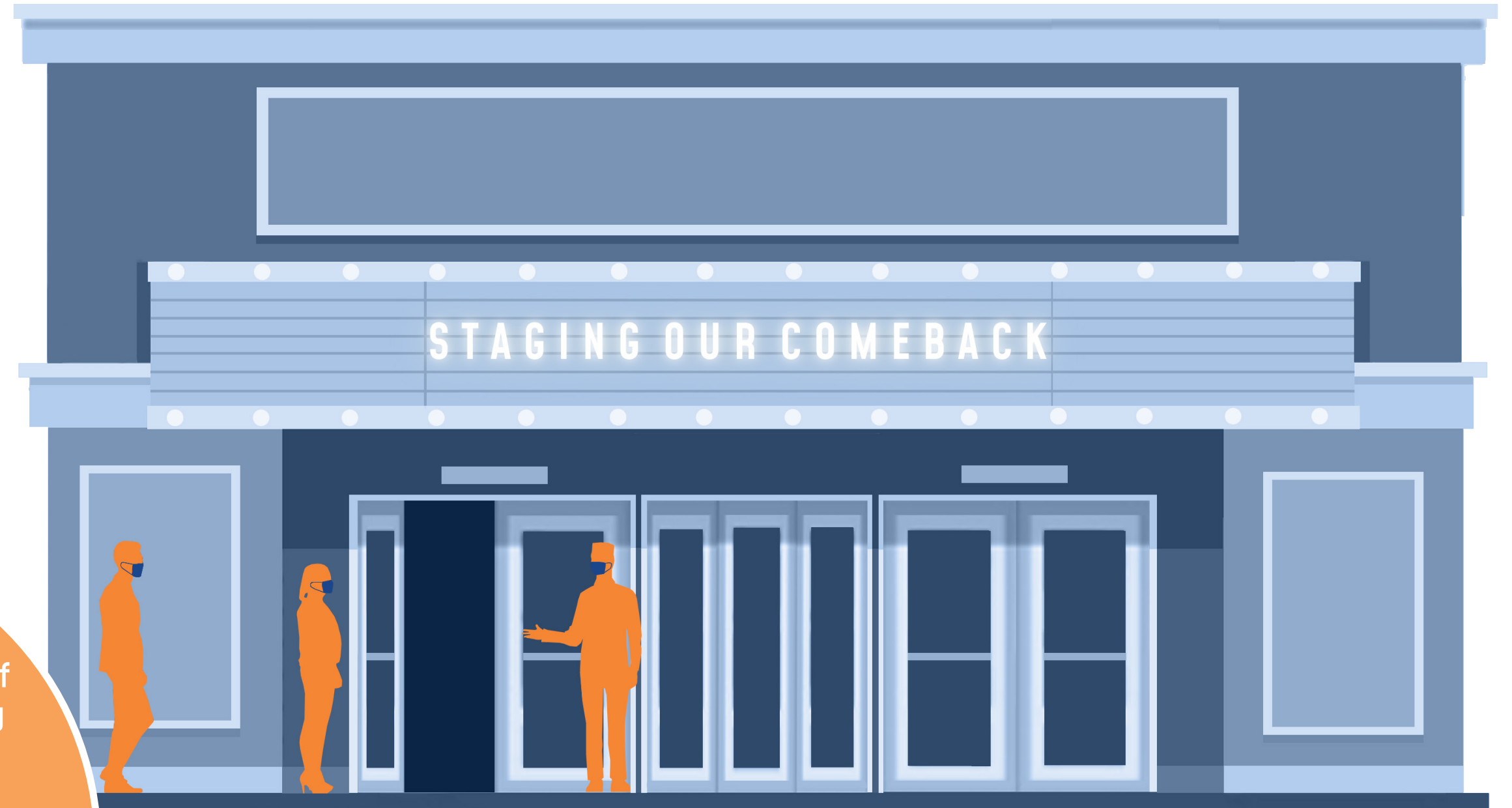
For centuries, theater has brought us together and now together we will find a way to bring theater back.

At Wilson Butler Architects, we create experiences through an engaging process with an eye for the theatrical. We push creative boundaries and create social spaces people want to experience time and time again. Qualities such as these are needed now more than ever as theaters, performing arts centers, and communal gatherings across the world have been shuttered due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The arts are critical to our well-being, and have been for thousands of years. As architects, it is our role to design places where the community can feel safe, feel welcomed, and enjoy themselves. These beliefs drive us to explore and curate operational and design solutions to help make public performance spaces safer as they reopen, while contributing to their long-term sustainability.

This PDF is a sneak peek version of a much larger document featuring numerous ideas on how to reopen theaters safely.

If you are interested in the full document please email us at
CONTACT@WILSONBUTLER.COM



GUIDING PRINCIPLES



HW

HW: PRIORITIZE HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- Safety of Patrons, Performers, Staff and Crew is paramount
- Concepts should be guided by the latest health science
- Decisions should be informed by Public Health Authorities rules and recommendations



MI

MI: MINIMIZE INTRUSION ON PATRON/GUEST EXPERIENCE

- To the greatest extent possible mitigation measures should not intrude on the Patron's experience
- When measures do impact the traditional experience consider alternative methods to further engage the audience
- A sanitized safe solution that interferes significantly will deter patrons from returning



AI

AI: ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE

- Physical changes should maintain the same level of accessibility for all patrons
- Operational changes should be inclusive and ensure enjoyment for a diverse audience



AD

AD: ADAPTABLE AS THE DISEASE DICTATES

- As the disease and its impacts evolve over time concepts should be able to adapt
- Physical alterations should be evaluated such that they might also be easily dismantled when allowed
- Operational changes may be the easiest methods to respond to increases and decreases in the level of risk



OS

OS: OPERATIONALLY SUSTAINABLE

- If the changes place excessive demands on the operations teams then there is a likelihood they will falter
- Consider measures that can be maintained without asking too much from patrons, performers and staff
- Less effort less chance of a breakdown in the mitigation effort



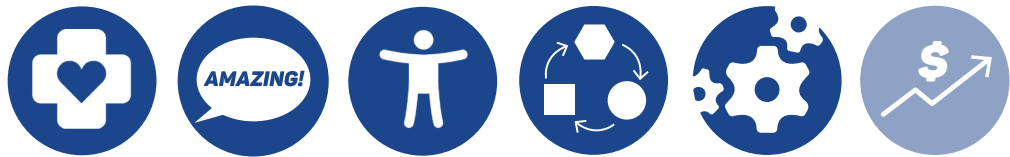
FV

FV: FINANCIALLY VIABLE

- While many changes will come at a price there still has to be a bottom-line ROI
- The costs must also consider future costs of reversing alterations
- Lastly the operation costs, including staffing, energy consumption, cleaning and maintenance must all be considered.

TRANSFORMING THE VESTIBULE

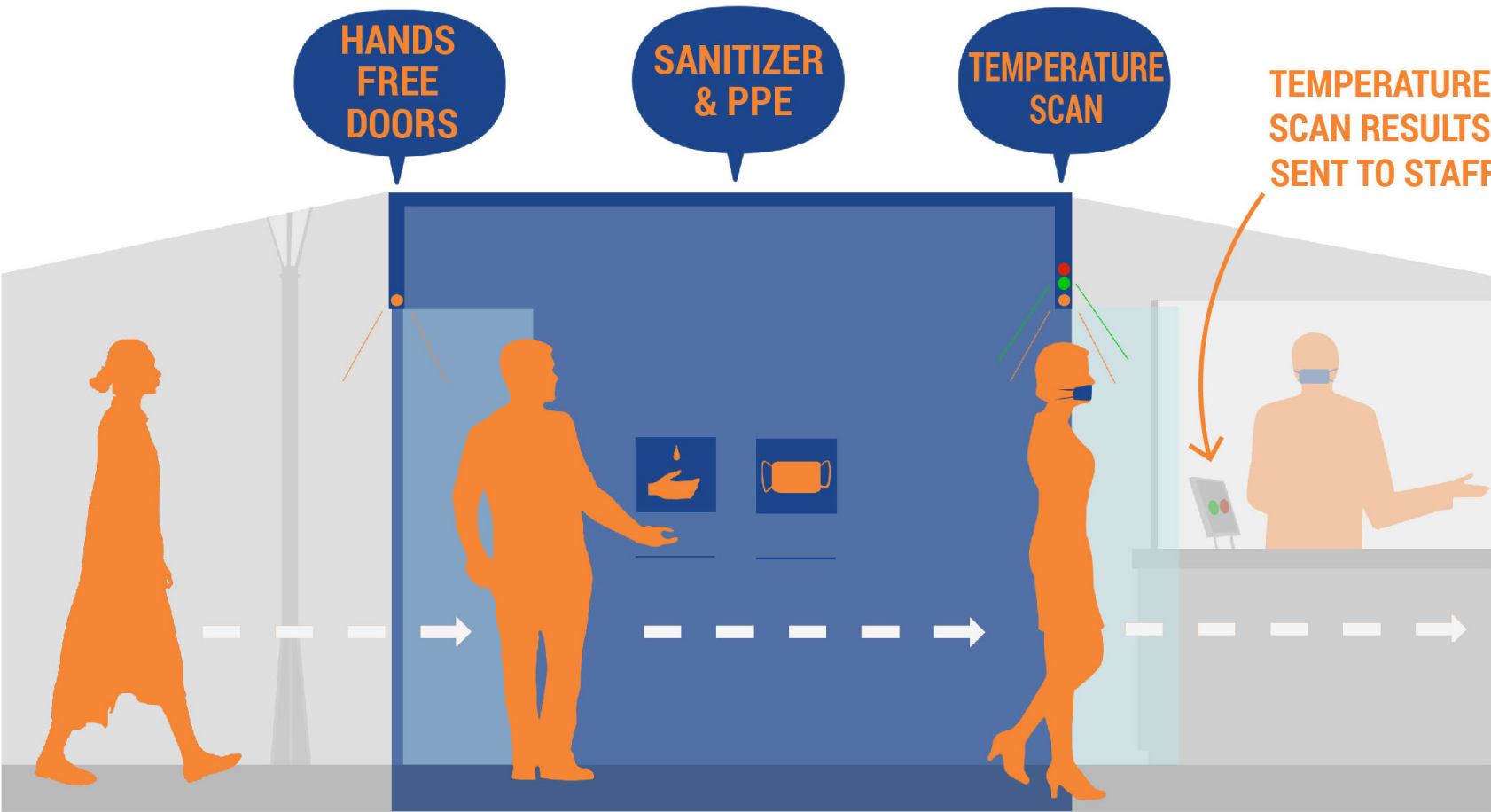
Entrances and vestibules can be retrofitted to incorporate new safety measures. By integrating hands-free devices such as automatic doors, sanitizer, and PPE dispensers, patrons have minimal opportunities for touch-surface interactions. Sensor based temperature checks at the entry portals identify elevated body temperatures and thus reduce the risk of virus transmission.



Alimed PPE Dispenser



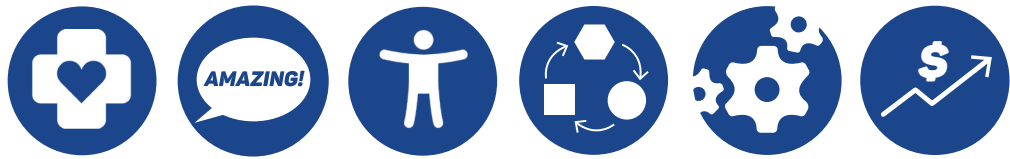
Gogue Performing Arts Center Vestibule



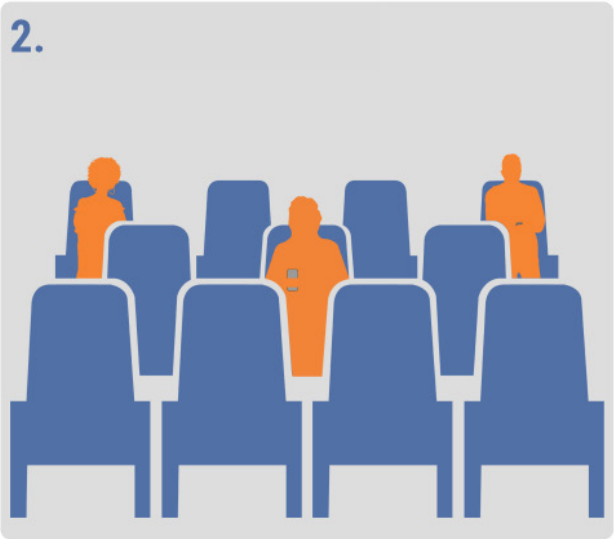
DING DING GOES THE APP!

Going to the theater is not just about the show. People like to mingle in the lobby and have drinks. But what about the lines at the bar? These are not safe during a pandemic. Theaters could use the social distancing floor decals, but then their lines would be out the door.

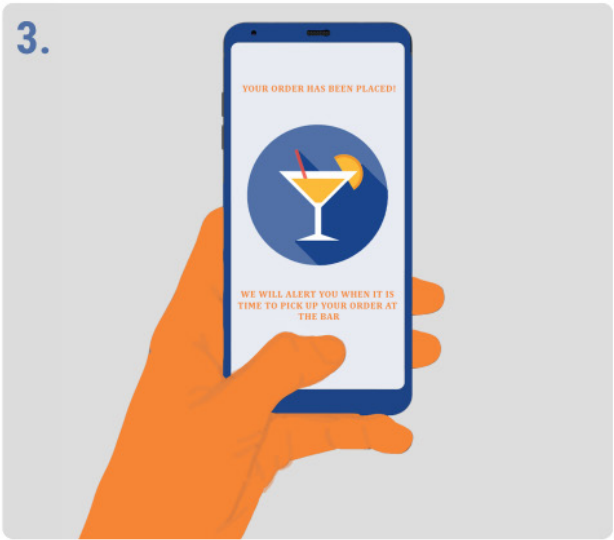
Instead, theaters can turn to the apps! Patrons download the ordering app upon arrival at the theater and once safely in their seats, place their orders through the app. After receiving an alert, they head to the bar at their designated time to pick up their drinks. This ensures one person or group goes up to the bar at a time and lines/crowds at the bar are eliminated.



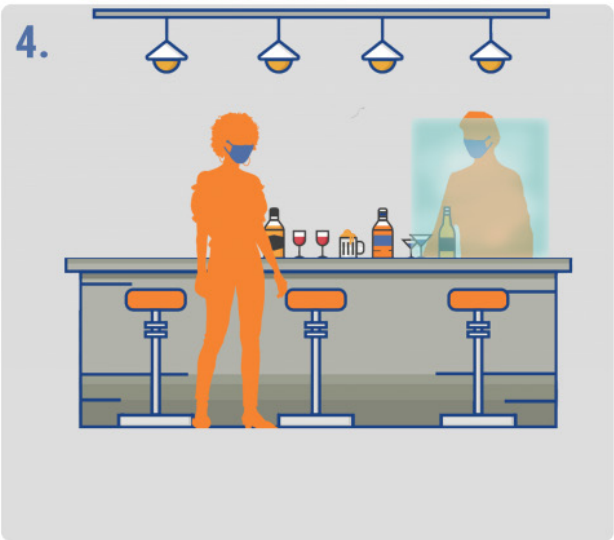
DOWNLOAD THE APP UPON ARRIVAL



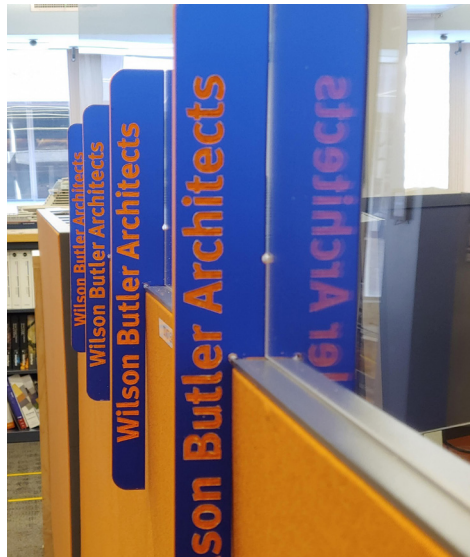
ORDER FROM THE SAFETY & COMFORT OF YOUR SEAT



GET AN ALERT WHEN YOUR ORDER IS READY



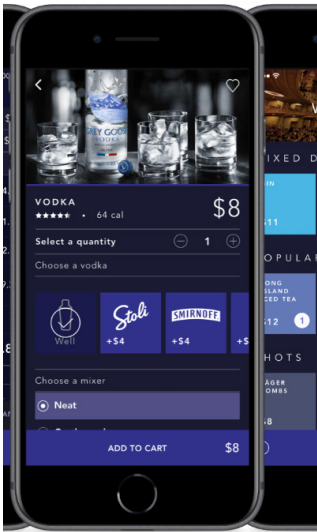
COME GET YOUR DRINKS AT YOUR DESIGNATED TIME



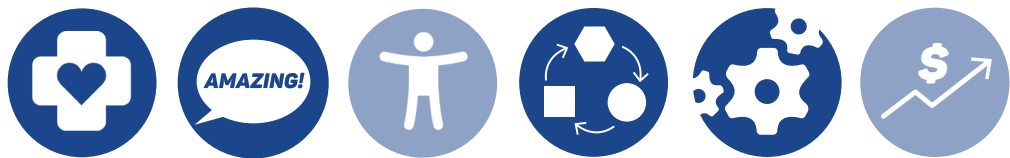
WBA Office Screens



Yellow Goat Design, Clear Cut Screen



Noble App



LOCALIZED AIR RETURN

For acoustical reasons, HVAC systems in performance spaces always strive for lower speeds (CFM) and larger cross-sectional area ductwork distributed throughout the audience chamber. But with the current COVID-19 pandemic, additional care and techniques must be implemented to minimize the spread of virus-containing droplets and aerosols.

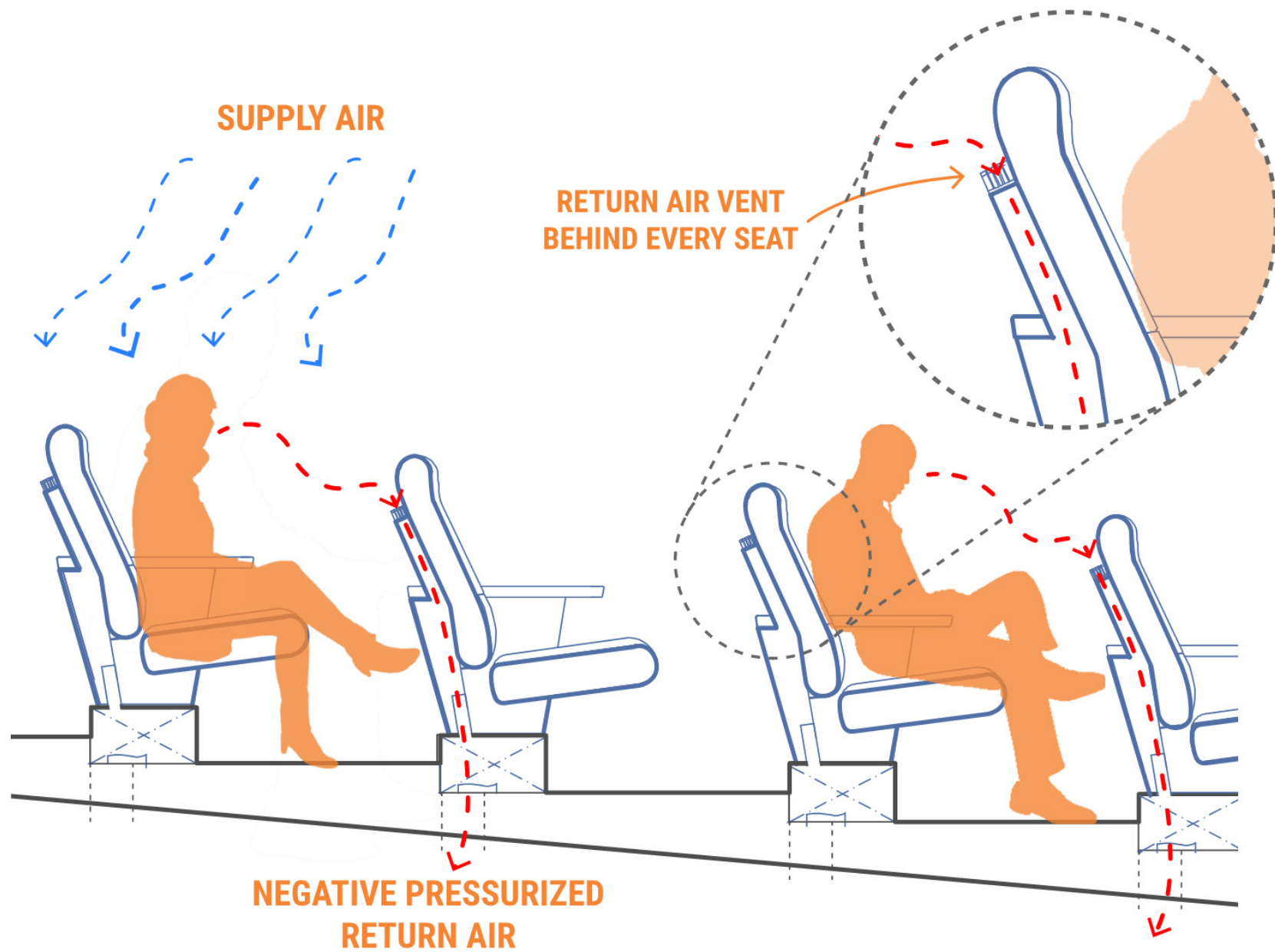
Instead of utilizing only a few larger return-air grilles positioned within the auditorium, this proposal introduces negative pressure, localized return-air at each seat back, joining to trunk return ductwork beneath the seats. This approach minimizes the chance of exhaled air spreading across the larger space.



Quantum of the Seas Royal Theater



Elbphilharmonie, Herzog & de Mueron



MODULAR REHEARSAL PODS

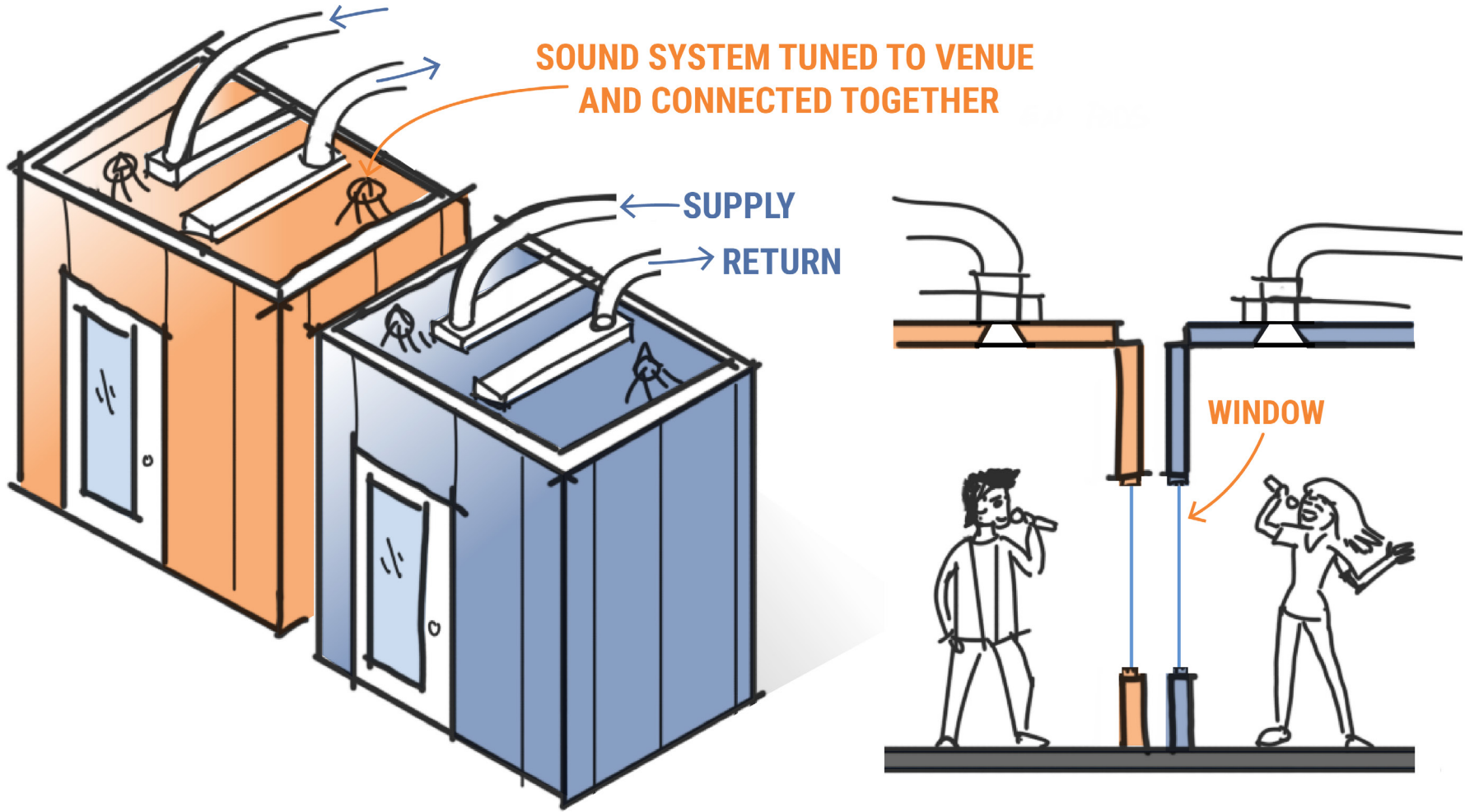
Given the difficulty of social distancing while rehearsing or singing with a mask on, venues could use modular practice rooms that have already existed for years, such as the Wenger Corp. Soundlok. These could be used as "pods" with individual AC ducting and windows between them. State of the art virtual acoustic sound systems could then be tuned to make each "Pod" sound as if the performers were rehearsing in the actual venue. These could be installed anywhere and easily taken down when the need no longer exists. They could also be used for education programs to give performing arts centers an additional stream of income and community outreach.

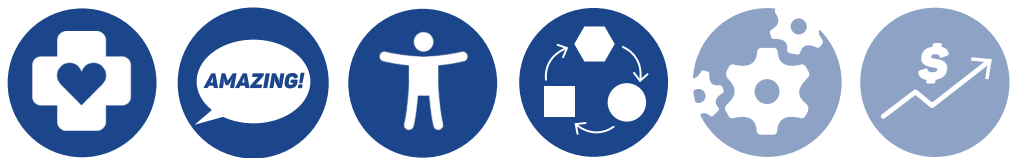


Wilson Butler Architects, Boston University College of Fine Arts



Wenger SoundLok Sound-Isolation Rooms





FLOATING STAGE

River or harbor cities can transform the waterfront into entertainment venues with floating stages. Designated points for viewing along the riverbank would allow for social distancing, and designated VIP groups could even rent small boats to serve as front row seats. This new guest experience would be a safe way to enjoy outdoor performances, while harnessing the city’s landscapes for the public good.



Doughboats

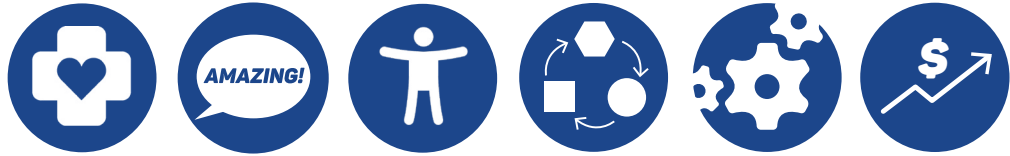


Bulldock



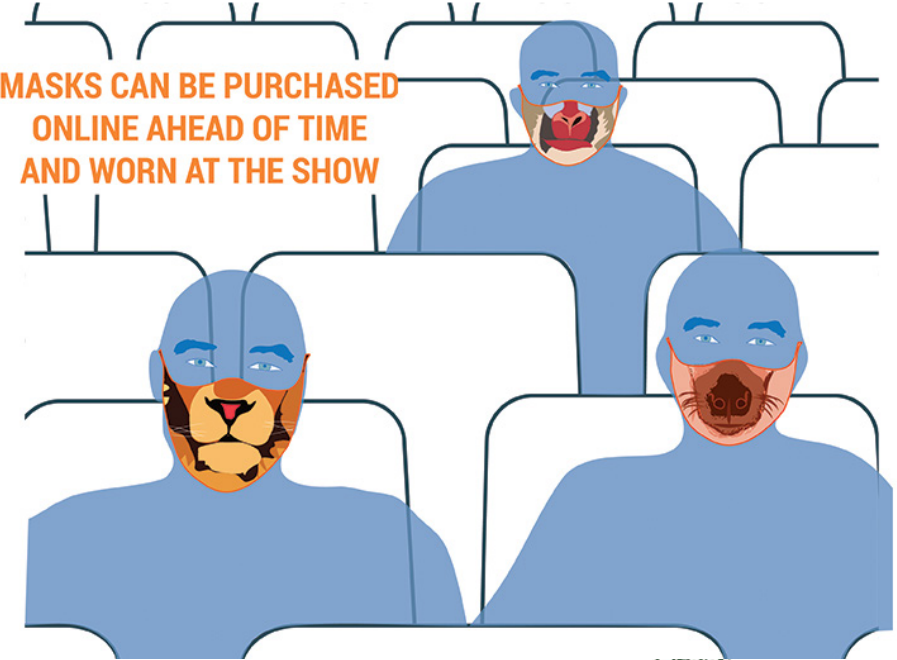
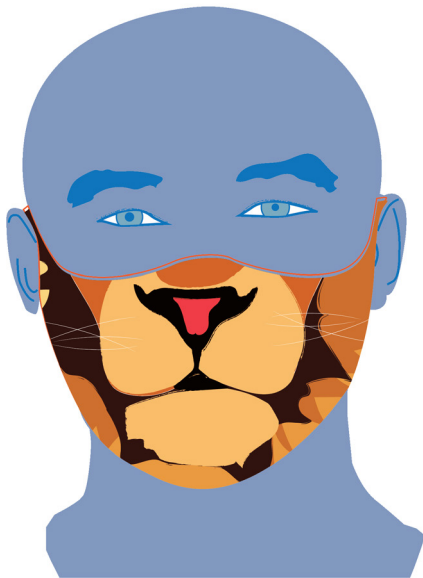
PART OF THE SHOW

As wearing masks will be a part of our daily lives for the foreseeable future, this concept seeks to encourage mask-wearing by using them to enhance the patron experience. Theater companies can design and sell masks that are tailored for the show they are producing. Guests will feel like a part of the ensemble during the show - and even help promote the show by wearing the masks outside the theater. The idea could be incorporated further by extending the set design into the empty seats and thus immersing guests into the show. Overall, these masks would help enhance safety and the guest experience, while also providing a potential additional revenue stream for production companies and venues.



THEMED MASKS ALLOW
AUDIENCE TO FEEL A PART
OF THE CAST

E.G. THE LION KING COULD
SELL ANIMAL MASKS



MOVING FORWARD

We believe that staging a successful comeback will come down to three important values:

UNDERSTANDING

of the situation and the protocols in place.

Designers, venue owners, and patrons will each need to have an understanding of the public health climate we will be opening into. Each of us must do our best to follow guidance from public health organizations, and local governments. As designers, part of our job will be making that guidance clear and implementing it properly in the spaces we collaborate on.

PATIENCE

to adjusting schedules, performances, ticket changes, new routines, and with the people around us.

We will all need to get used to a new way of operating in our entertainment spaces as society opens up again. This means we will occasionally make mistakes. Schedules may get delayed, performances may change, tickets might need to be refunded or shows re-scheduled. We may have to accommodate new requirements when entering venues. Most of all, some of the people around us may not get the message. It is important that we harbor patience and understanding for each other as we navigate this crisis, and its recovery, together.

OPTIMISM

for the future and innovating new ways for performing arts to engage with the audience within a safer space.

If we are going to move forward together, we need to believe that we can come out of this even better than we were before. Hardship can open the door for creativity, inventiveness and the confidence that comes from perseverance. With this in mind, those in the performing arts can find new and exciting ways to engage with audiences that will prove to be valuable long after we've healed from the Coronavirus pandemic.

As you can see, we are ready to get to work.

Our team has spent months cultivating creative ways venues can continue to remain open during this pandemic and we're not out of ideas yet. However, the best solutions come from partnership and mutual understanding. If you are looking for a partner to help you continue operating, please consider reaching out to us at CONTACT@WILSONBUTLER.COM. We would love the opportunity to help you get to opening night.



LET US ENTERTAIN YOU

Wilson Butler Architects