

PYT Season 2020-2021 School of Performing Arts Update

This year has brought the unexpected to our doorstep and asked us to respond in unconventional ways. The importance of hand washing, use of sanitizer, social distancing and mask wearing are just a few things that helped us face the present. Yet, in all of this, there are still core services our PYT family is expecting. Thinking about the future forced staff and artists to implement the one guiding principle that outlines our approach to the performing arts: CREATIVE THINKING.

After analyzing guidelines from multiple sources, the decision was made to develop a reopening plan utilizing a hybrid schedule. Significant modification to our normal schedule is necessary to fulfill the needs of our students. Emphasis on their health and safety, as well as that of our faculty and staff, are at the center of our plan.

Drama and Voice Divisions will remain **VIRTUAL (PYTv!)** for the Fall of our 2020-2021 season. This decision was made for the following reasons:

1. To limit the number of PYT students in the building.
2. Masks are required at ALL times in the building. Acting is based primarily on facial expression, which is impossible when wearing a mask. Vocal work is also seriously inhibited.
3. Due to the potential amount of aerosols generated while singing and projecting, Actors and Singers are at high risk for transmission of COVID-19.
4. Drama is an interactive and collaborative art form. With students required to stay in a 6 ft. area at all times, students' ability to perform scenes, create stories or even play games is hindered.

IF and WHEN it is safe to return to in-person classes/lessons, we will make that determination for January.

Dance Division will be **IN-PERSON** starting in the Fall with limited class size and modified schedules. All CDC guidelines will be met to ensure the safety of our students including but not limited to:

- Masks required at all times (in and out of the studio)
- Temperature checks on arrival
- 6 ft. areas per student within the studios.

Dancers who find in-person classes undesirable will have the opportunity to participate through our **VIRTUAL option: PYTv!** Every effort will be made to provide an authentic in-person experience via our online platform.

Our plan may not be acceptable to all, but we respectfully ask for your support in our efforts to keep all students safe and happy while navigating these uncertain times. Regardless of one's choice to return, the success of any plan will be determined by the individuals' level of commitment. Remember, adults help determine a child's attitude. These changes may bring up feelings of anger and sadness, which is understandable. We ask that you please try your best to shield your child from this, as they take their cues from you. Set them up for success by teaching them to make the best of it. Be a sounding board for their worries and disappointments but stay positive and model perseverance.

We are thrilled for you and your family to join us in the "new" adventure. We hope that you take advantage of our tirelessly dedicated faculty, staff, and our ability to bring you the most professional theatrical experiences for youth in the Lehigh Valley. PYT has led the charge in providing a warm and safe environment for our students to explore, train and create through our classes in drama, dance and voice, as well as through our many productions.

Staff is always available to answer any questions/concerns you may have. We thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation.

We look forward to nurturing our growing PYT family and welcoming new friends.

Sincerely,

Jill Dunn Jones
Artistic Director

Valerie Reinhardt
Managing Director