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The Performing Arts, Their Patrons and the Virus

By Clayton "Skip" Poole - Director of Client Relations



The performing arts community has waited almost two years to take the stage once again. A lot of pent-up energy has been festering to what will hopefully become some of the best performances given in years. Everyone is excited and there is great optimism that the concert going audiences will be equally anxious to support those presentations. That said, there is a growing groundswell of doomsaying about the Delta variant. At this point in the pandemic, it's hard to know what and who to believe. Do we wear masks? How do we know if everyone has been vaccinated? Why aren't people willing to be vaccinated? Do we need to present our vaccination card showing we have been immunized? The headlines scream about the percentage of increases in cases, but not much is written concerning the actual number of people or the reasons why they are now infected. There is little discussion over the types of people getting the new strain, except for the most part, they are the unvaccinated. Clearly the message here and the numbers indicate that you should at least consider getting vaccinated if you haven't already.

All this uncertainty may cause patrons to think twice about their return-to-the-theater plans. It's important that you call your performance venue and ask what requirements are imposed for the specific ticket you have purchased. Some may require masks, some may not, etc. Obviously, it's paramount that you take caution and care when you go into any public place whether it be a performance venue or your local supermarket. It's apparent to me, however, that people are becoming more adaptable to the "new normal" and attempting to get back to their regular activities. In short, they will be buying tickets and attending various events once again, just with a bit of prepared precaution. After almost a two-year hiatus, the positive energy generated between the performers and their audiences is both greatly anticipated and sorely needed.

When Will it Ever End?

By James G. Steproe, J.D. - President



So, when is this darn thing going to end? I am referring to the pandemic, of course. Like you, I am eagerly looking forward to a return to normalcy (whatever that might be). Hoping for some insight, I checked into how the Great Pandemic of 1918 ended.

As I mentioned in a previous article, my parents named me after my father, and my grandparents named him after his Uncle Jimmy. Doughboy James Sullivan sadly died of the Spanish Flu (as it was otherwise known) as he returned home from France in 1919.

He was far from alone; fifty to one hundred million people worldwide died from the "Spanish Flu". It was the deadliest global pandemic since the Black Death. Rare among flu viruses, it struck down the young and healthy, like my Great Uncle Jimmy.

OK, so how did it end? This is where the story takes a surprising turn. It never did! That's right, after infecting 500 million people worldwide, the Spanish Flu receded into the background and stuck around as the regular seasonal Flu.

Indeed, you can still find the genetic traces of the 1918 virus in the seasonal cases of Flu that circulate today. Every human infection with influenza A is derived from the Pandemic of 1918.

These annual outbreaks, controlled to some degree by annual vaccines, is bearable; however, seasonal attacks can be accompanied by viral genes from the animal kingdom, sometimes creating a brand new virus that never existed before.

That's what happened in 1957 when the 1918 flu, an H1N1 virus, swapped genes with another bird flu giving us the H2N2 pandemic. It was called the "Asian Flu" and claimed a million lives worldwide.

Indeed, I was nearly one of them. I was ten years old when I contracted the "Asian Flu" and have memories of being home from school very sick with a high fever. I even recall hallucinating during that time. - *Continued on pg. 3*

When Will it Ever End? - cont.

By the way, the same thing happened in 1968, creating the so-called "Hong-Kong Flu". That year I was traveling to Nassau in The Bahamas to celebrate Christmas when my traveling companion told me that she did not feel well and then spent a week sick, regaining strength only in time to fly home. On that trip from the hotel roof, I got to see Frank Borman and crew overfly Nassau on their way to circumnavigating the moon for the first time. Unfortunately, she does not have that memory of having spent that time sick in her hotel room. Speaking of her memories, she may have forgotten me, but I am sure she has not forgotten Christmas 1968.

One branch of the 1918 flu permanently adapted to pigs and became swine influenza seen in pigs in the US every year after 1918. In 2009, a strain of this swine flu swapped genes with both human flu and avian influenza to create a new variety of Flu, creating the 2009 flu pandemic.

So, when will this ever end? It beats the heck out of me. Frankly, opinions on the matter range from belief that it will never end to what I personally believe: It will end when it reaches about the same level, we are accustomed to seeing from the Flu each year.

Apparently, an old virus never dies; it just fades away.