Due to the heavy impact of COVID-19 on the performing arts and live events industry, we anticipate performers, backstage crews, theater directors, guests, and any role in between are beyond enthused for the return of theater this fall. But safety remains a major concern as the pandemic continues to be a lingering threat. No matter the venue size or location, performance halls will likely have to be more strategic and creative than ever in their spatial panning in order for the audience to feel safe and comfortable, while enjoying the performance.

by Jessica Ley
Many venues have found viable and cost-effective solutions that can be designed to work within their existing footprints while creating comfortable and compliant accommodations for the performers, crew, and audience. To help plan for a safe and spatially distanced space – whether temporary or permanent – Staging Concepts is ready to help you walk through that stage door once again.

Modular Solutions
Among the most noteworthy trends that has emerged because of the pandemic is heightened interest in modular solutions. Modularity and flexibility are proving to be critical considerations as performance venues look to adapt their settings to accommodate new safety protocols. Plus, modular setups permit theaters to host events beyond their typical musicals and concerts. With portable staging options, the space can also be used for fundraisers, corporate presentations, and even intimate ceremonies. Not only does this maximize the use of the space but provides valuable use of the space during any off season or between show choir and musical performances.

Modular solutions for any performance purpose are made possible with demountable platforms. With demountable designs, components and equipment can be set up and taken down as needed, providing complete flexibility to reconfigure for a band performance, local play or show choir. Demountable components provide the flexibility to transform the seating and entertainment layout to become a multi-purposeful facility.

Staging Accommodations
When more or expanded seating is needed, stage extensions can be customized to serve the dynamic needs of any venue. Built with platforms and appropriate supports, stage extensions are convenient to install or remove. We anticipate the need for stage extensions to continue coming back for 2021’s holiday season as people will likely be able to gather in large groups (or even at full capacity) once again. Regardless of the setup, portable platforms offer a convenient and cost-effective way to expand any performance or seating area. Additionally, roomy sections with more elbow room are trending among live entertainment venues of any kind. More space provides a luxurious, premium feel which leads the audience to feel that any seat is the best seat in the house.

Another attractive option for today’s performance space is a mobile stage. Built on casters, these portable stages can be easily moved within a location completely assembled, saving both time and manpower. Moving and setting up various configurations can be done with as little as two people, without the use of added tools. Additionally, multiple rolling stages can be combined to create a larger performance area or expanded space for safe distancing.

To accommodate a full show choir or musical performance, we imagine directors will want to fill their stage as much as possible, while keeping all artists safe. Tiered seating risers give each performer a dedicated space, while providing sufficient sightlines to the audience. Now more than ever we feel it’s important to shine the light on all performers and show our appreciation toward their talent. Seating risers can be setup in a multitude of arrangements to accommodate varying sizes of performances and varying needs.

Live Streaming
Even in a post-pandemic world, live streaming for home viewing of any performance is likely here to stay. Most likely, audiences or distant relatives have become accustomed to viewing their grandchild’s performance from around the globe via their computers and mobile devices. This means more film crews and more equipment at each venue. Plus, we know families want to record their student performing so camera crews are likely to be setup all around. As such, the demand
for camera platforms and media risers will likely continue to be on the rise to safely space out recording crews to ensure the entire audience, even those at home, have the best view.

We all know that COVID-19 has unquestionably led to a cultural shift that is requiring theaters to reimagine the entire performance and audience experience. Our team at Staging Concepts has been busy designing spacious seating areas to not only enhance the audience experience but to adhere to social distancing requirements. Modular staging allows venues to cater to the demands of today while being flexible for the needs of the future. With a little creativity and a lot of dedication, we look forward to helping theaters reopen and welcome back their favored performances this year. For more information, visit www.stagingconcepts.com.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Jessica Ley is the Senior Marketing Coordinator at Staging Concepts, with nearly a decade of experience in marketing and communications. After being on stage for 24 years as a dancer, Jessica was elated to join Staging Concepts in 2017 to now help set the stage for future performers and musicians at all levels.