

How to Audition

Tips for preparing and doing your best!

- Practice the ENTIRE audition packet – memorizing the piece shows you are devoted to the audition, however is not required.
- Face the panel when you perform (not your peers).
- Take a deep breath before you start. Remember: the panel wants you to succeed – just do your best.
- For a musical audition, be ready to sing a short vocalize or scale to determine range.
- Sing/speak at a well-projected volume as if you were performing without a microphone to the back of the theatre.
- Remain in the audition room for the entire audition.
- You will be questioned on your availability to attend all rehearsals. Limit all conflicts.

Audition Criteria: projection, singing voice, blocking and movement, articulation and clarity, characterization, dramatic expression, musical interpretation, cooperation and adaptability (if known), overall preparedness, and rehearsal availability.

At a typical audition for a musical theatre production, realistically you might only be able to sing 16 bars of a prepared song. That's not much time to impress an auditioner who is determined to quickly judge you. Choosing the right song, preparing it for an audition and performing it well become paramount to your ultimate success. In fact, these factors can determine the outcome of your audition as much or even more than your vocal quality itself.

MUSICAL AUDITION MATERIALS

The musical selection will be taught to everyone the night of the theatre workshop, reviewed at auditions, and then you will audition with that piece of music. It is attached on the next page for your reference.

** The musical selection must be performed in the key provided with the audition materials. **

Preparing Your Song

Preparing a song to perform at an audition is different than preparing it to perform in a show. To begin with, you don't have the same context at an audition as you do in a show. The auditioners have not had a chance to see you develop a character. You need to show them through your

presentation of the song that you have a character in mind and that you can deliver powerful emotion through song alone, without props or other actors.

To achieve this, the song needs to be delivered as if it were a monologue. The song itself is only a part of the story, underneath the lyrics there should be an inner monologue or “subtext” that you develop which is your motivation for each lyric you sing. In the case of an audition piece, the subtext does not have to be at all related to the character or show that the piece came from. No matter what the song, you can write it as yourself, talking about issues from your own life.

Preparing Your Performance

Knowing how to sing a song amazingly well isn't enough. You need to not only sing that song, but *perform* it. That is where the subtext comes in. When you sing a line of the song, you must be thinking and acting like you are saying the subtext. It should shape your facial expressions, your emotions and your movements.

Determine where the “audience” of your monologue is situated. Is it at the right side of the stage? In front of the stage? Above the auditioners' heads? (Hint: Never use an auditioner as your monologue audience!)

Start at the center of the stage, which may be your bedroom floor when you're practicing at home. For each line of the song, look at your subtext and determine:

1. Does this line motivate me to physically move? For example, on a line where you're pleading with your audience, you might be motivated to move a step or two closer to them, wherever you have determined that they are. Perhaps another line shows that you are embarrassed, so you might move away from your audience. Be careful with this, you do not want to move too much. Not every line needs physical movement. As a guideline, less than half of the lines should have movement attached. Try to finish the piece back at center stage. You should never have traveled more than a few feet in any direction from your starting point.
2. What emotion does this line raise in me? Hatred? Sadness? Regret? Joy? How should my face reflect this?
3. Where am I motivated to look for this line? Am I talking directly to my audience? Or is this line more about me talking to myself, so I might look slightly down instead of out? Perhaps the line is more of a daydream, so I would stare off into the distance. There are many possibilities. You don't have to change your focus for every line; many consecutive lines may all focus in the same location. However, you should change your focus at least a few times throughout the piece.

Practice Makes Perfect

As with all things, practice makes perfect. Practice not just singing your piece, but performing it with your subtext in mind to motivate movements and facial expressions. There is a wonderful phrase from Stanislavski: “The difficult must become easy, the easy become habit, and the habit become beautiful.”

Keep this in mind while you practice! Your piece will eventually become so habitual that you won't need to explicitly think about the words or the subtext; you will just feel them and be moved by them. That is when you will achieve the real beauty of the piece, and **that** is what the auditioners are looking for!