

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE MUSICAL THEATRE AUDITIONS

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SINGING

Choosing a song:

- Find a song that demonstrates your vocal range and ability
- Find a song that is appropriate to the show you are auditioning for; do some research into the show and pick something similar in style
- You only have a short time to sing, so pick a piece that doesn't have a lot of rests
- Avoid songs that are talked more than sung
- Avoid heavy-duty "character" songs so that you don't pigeon-hole yourself in to one character type
- Find a song you enjoy singing!!! Do this and you have already done half of the work :-)

Preparing a song:

- Do not sing a cappella. Use accompaniment either on tape, CD or live
- If you choose to use an accompanist, practicing your piece with one before the audition date can ease some of the stress and help you perform the piece more confidently
- Ensure that you are practicing with some form of vocal technique (you don't have to be a trained singer, but make sure that you are not straining when singing the song...ask yourself if you could comfortably sing this song several times)
- If you are cutting a longer piece in to a one-minute segment, choose the part(s) of the song that are the most interesting or climactic musically and emotionally
- Don't embellish the printed music too much (i.e. adding riffs, trills, etc)
- Remember, you must ACT a song as well as sing it...to prepare for this component, ask yourself these questions:
 - Who sings the song?
 - What do you know about this character?
 - Where is the character in terms of location and time period?
 - Who is the character singing to and where is this person located?
 - What is the relationship between the character and the person to whom he/she is singing?
 - Where in the show does this song occur?
 - What has happened just before the character started singing?
 - Why does the character feel compelled to sing in this moment?
 - What are the primary ideas/emotions the character is expressing in the song?
 - How does the character change from beginning to end of the song?
 - What does singing the song accomplish for the character?

- Try speaking the song lyrics as if they are a monologue to make sure you understand what the character is expressing, then take what you discover from that and apply it to your singing of the text

Performing a song:

- If using the accompanist, bring your sheet music neatly organized in a binder or folder so that the accompanist can easily read it
- Before singing, take a few moments to set the tempo for your song with the accompanist; make sure they know where you will be starting and stopping your piece by marking it on your sheet music and verbally confirming with them
- Before starting, introduce your song to the audition panel by stating the name of the song and the show it is from, and the name of the character singing it if you wish
- Read more in the "General Performance Tips" below

MONOLOGUES

Choosing a monologue:

- Find a monologue that is appropriate to the show you are auditioning for
- Generally, it is a good idea to choose a piece appropriate for your own age
- It is advised that you avoid finding monologues on the internet or in books of "stand-alone" monologues that are not from plays
- Choose a monologue in which the character has an active goal or objective to accomplish; these tend to show what you can do more effectively than monologues that tell a story or recount an experience
- Find a monologue that intrigues you, excites you and that you enjoy performing!!!

Preparing a monologue:

- **KNOW WHAT PLAY THE MONOLOGUE HAS COME FROM!!!!** If you have taken your piece from a monologue book, it will usually tell you the name of the playwright, the play, the character's name and hopefully the act and scene from which the monologue comes
- Find the play and read it!!! How else will you be able to answer the following crucial questions:
 - What do you know about this character?
 - Where is the character in terms of location and time period?
 - Who is the character talking to and where is this person located?
 - Is this a soliloquy?
 - If not, what is the relationship between the character and the people to whom he/she is speaking?
 - What has happened just before the character starts speaking?
 - What provokes the character to speak?
 - How does the character change from beginning to end of the monologue?

- What is the character's objective during the monologue? What does he/she hope to accomplish by saying it and what different tactics does he/she use during it to accomplish the goal?
- Memorize your monologue; reading off of a piece of paper will demonstrate that you have not dedicated adequate time to the preparation of your monologue
- As an exercise, break the monologue in to smaller chunks and figure out what idea the character is working through in that chunk or what they are trying to accomplish in that chunk...this will help you to clarify and specify the monologue
- Make sure you understand each line in the monologue and that you approach each line with specificity; avoid generalizing or glazing over the whole monologue as if it is one big thought
- Make physical choices about the character's posture and the way he/she moves

Performing a monologue:

- Before starting, introduce your monologue to the audition panel by stating from what play the piece comes and what character you will be playing...if desired, you may want to briefly explain what has happened in the scene just prior to your monologue, but keep this to a minimum...do NOT summarize what happens in the monologue before you start; that is what the monologue is for
- Take your time; don't rush just to get it over with
- Speak clearly and project your voice

GENERAL PERFORMANCE TIPS:

- Warm up your voice with breathing and range exercises before heading to the audition
- Arrive at least 10-15 minutes early for your audition
- Bring a bottle of water in to your audition
- Take a few moments to focus yourself before starting your monologue/song: take some breaths, think about the first line of the monologue/song, visualize the circumstances your character is in right before he/she is about to speak/sing
- It is advised that you not look directly at the audition panel during your monologue/song; you don't want to be thrown off by watching them take notes or scratch their nose, etc - imagine the character(s) you are speaking to above and behind the heads of the audition panel, or slightly to the side of them and look there
- Stay relaxed, be confident that you have prepared yourself as best you can, and HAVE FUN!