

Young People's Theater



Audition Techniques

So, you're auditioning for YPT's *Shrek*? Have you ever wondered what makes a fabulous audition? Here are some helpful hints to guide you as you prepare...

HELPFUL HINTS FOR YOUR AUDITION

- Present yourself in the best possible way. Directors are looking to cast young people who are eager to learn, ready to work hard, and willing to try something new.
 - Show your personality! Directors are not only listening for a pretty voice — they are looking for people who are not afraid to take risks. Try to step beyond any shyness you might feel!
 - Wear comfortable, put-together clothing. Wear something that you love. Ensure that your outfit is more presentable than sweatpants and flip-flops. There is no need to wear a fancy dress or suit. Remember that you have a dance audition, and you want to be able to move comfortably and look appropriate.
- Listen to your directors. Be in the moment! Even if you are nervous, challenge yourself to take a few deep breaths and converse naturally with the directors.
- During your song or reading, find a focus point right above the directors' heads to look at rather than looking directors in the eye.
- Follow directions. If you are asked to act like an elephant, act like an elephant! Sometimes directors ask you to do things to make sure you are willing to try new things. Always say YES in an audition!
- NEVER apologize or make excuses for yourself — perform and have fun!
- Get to know the show!
 - Know the characters and some of the music beforehand. Be open to play any role (don't have your heart set on one role!).
- Directors will likely be writing/typing as you audition. They need to write notes to remind them of who you are, what you sang, what your vocal range is, etc...

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- Be kind and courteous to EVERYONE in the studio at your audition. That includes directors, instructors, assistants, people collecting papers, other people auditioning, etc... They are all part of the audition process, and they all deserve respect.

YOUR MUSIC AUDITION

- Choose 16-bars (16 measures) of a song to present. If your song is extremely fast, it may be okay to choose more, but keep it under 30 seconds. It is okay to have a little less or a little more than 16 bars if it makes your cut more appropriate (don't stop in the middle of a thought).
- Choose a song that you can relate to. It will help you tell the story better!
- Choose a song that shows your vocal range. This means that you can sing the highest and lowest notes even if you are nervous!
- Choose a song in the style of the show. SHREK is a contemporary musical, so find something that shows that you can sing in that style.
- Avoid songs that are likely to be overused. Song choice can make you stand out!
- Make sure your sheet music is in the correct key. You are expected to sing with accompaniment instead of singing *a cappella*. Directors want to make sure you can stay on key and in tempo.
- Practice your audition song.
- Musicnotes.com is a resource to find your music and a place to practice it with your computer as your accompanist. You can also pick your key!
- It is good to learn your entire audition song. You may be asked to sing more of the song. You may also be cut off before you finish your cut.
- Don't just sing – ACT! It's called "musical theater." Directors look for people who have vocal ability, but they also look for people who tell a story and bring emotion to their singing. Look at yourself in the mirror as you practice and make sure your face is engaged and your body is relaxed. If you want to use physical gestures, use them with energy, control and confidence!

YOUR DANCE AUDITION

- Choreographers look for the best dancers to use as specialty/featured dancers, but they are also looking for people who are willing to try, enjoy what they are doing, and work hard.
- Smile as you perform your dance combination, and have fun with it! Mistakes are completely okay! The directors are not expecting perfection; they are looking for potential.
- Be on your best behavior for your choreographer. This is the best opportunity the directors to see how you will act in a rehearsal situation. If you can't listen for a half hour dancing with a choreographer, it is highly unlikely that you are ready for the demands of a rehearsal process.

YOUR ACTING AUDITION

- Make sure you are projecting and speaking clearly.
- Perform with expression! Go beyond just reading.

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- Make a specific choice in your reading. Bring emotion and action to your performance.
- Take a big breath before you speak and allow your air to support your sound.
- Use pauses to give your performance more meaning.
- Be willing to change your emotion and style if the directors ask you to.

THE AUDITION PROCESS

You will be singing and acting individually in the Black Box Theater. You should bring:

- 3 copies of your music. One copy is for the pianist and the other two are for the directors.
- You don't need to bring anything else into the room. We will provide you with a notecard with the reading(s) on it.

Generally, this is the procedure you will follow for this part of the audition:

1. Walk in the room, say hello, and go straight to the pianist.
2. Give the pianist your tempo (sing them a few bars at the speed you would like to perform) and point out where you will be starting and stopping. Be prepared to answer any other questions the pianist may ask.
3. Give your extra copies of music to the directors.
4. Find the X on the floor and stand on it.
5. Introduce yourself: "My name is [your name] and I will be singing [song title] from [musical]."
6. After you sing, the directors will ask to hear your readings.
7. Be prepared to answer any other questions that may be asked to you by the directors.
8. At the end of your audition, thank the directors, collect your music from the pianist and exit the room.

The most important piece of advice to remember as you audition is that the directors are rooting **for** you. The directors want to see you shine. Casting a show is like putting a jigsaw puzzle together. Directors need to find actors for all the scenes within a script and story.

Remember that auditioning is a process and a learning adventure! The more you audition, the more you learn about the process and how to be comfortable presenting yourself.

Take a few deep breathes before your audition. Remind yourself why you are auditioning and think of three great things about yourself (or ask someone close to you to tell you three great things). Muster up the confidence you need to walk through those doors and audition.

Break a leg and enjoy the process of auditioning!