

DOs and DON'Ts for Children's Musical Auditions

DO

- Sing something UPTempo
- Bring your music in a binder or other “supportive” system that minimizes page turns and keeps music stable on the piano’s music stand
- Bring music that has **piano accompaniment!**
- Sing something in your range that shows off *your* voice
- Bring music in the correct key (generally A below middle C – *A3*you’re your lowest note – and highest note not above a D, two above middle C – *D5*)
- Choose the **best** 16 bars of the song – typically *NOT* the first 16 bars
- Mark your music clearly and speak succinctly to the accompanist
- SAY THANK YOU!

DON'T

- Rush
- Bring loose leaf sheet music
- Sing anything from HAMILTON!
- Choose songs with difficult accompaniment (Jason Robert Brown, Sondheim)
- Approach the Director’s Table
- End your piece awkwardly (find a good stopping place in the music, even if it goes slightly over 16 bars)
- Sing pop songs (unless they are from “juke box” musicals – even then, be judicious. They don’t always translate)
- Stop in the middle unless it’s a complete train wreck
- Forget to say THANK YOU!

CHOOSING AN AUDITION SONG

Be sure to keep in mind the following tips when choosing your audition song:

1. Range

- o It is important to show your vocal range in the piece you are performing. If your “top note” or “bottom note” is not featured in the song, you should have an idea of what those notes are in case the musical director asks.
- o When choosing which 16 bars to sing, always go for the “climax” or end of the song, which will often contain the highest note. Rarely should you choose a cutting from the first 16 measures.
- o Always choose a song that is within your range or, if you’ve done your homework, is within the same range as the role you are auditioning for.

2. Personality...

- o ...of the character in the song. You want to represent a clear understanding of the motivations and emotional content of the material you are singing. Go beyond the actual 16 bars of the song to the bigger picture. Who is the audience? What does the character want? What has happened in the moment just before the character starts singing? What are the obstacles or conflicts involved?
- o ...of the piece of music. Is the song uptempo or ballad? Who are the composer and lyricist? Doing the research on the song you are presenting will only help you be more comfortable with the piece and, ultimately, make you more castable.
- o ...of YOU! First impressions are everything! The audition is the time for the artistic staff to see you and get to know a little bit about what you have to offer. Make sure that a little bit of your own personality shines through in your performance.

3. Style

- o Again, be sure to understand the song and where it fits in the life of the character who sings it and the play that it is from. It’s not just a bunch of notes with a bunch of words. What time period is involved? Where does the action in the song take place?
- o Treat the song like a monologue and rehearse it that way. This will help you find important word and phrases that may not be apparent when you are singing it.
- o Doing research on the material before you audition is crucial to one’s understanding and complete performance. Listening to recordings of pieces similar to the one you are singing is a great help as is learning about the era in which the piece was written.

4. Difficulty of the song

- o Make sure that you are not walking into an audition with a song you have not worked on and researched. You are assured of a quick “thank you” and “don’t call us, we’ll call you” treatment. Those sitting behind the table are looking for hard-working performers who have taken time to memorize, analyze and not compromise the material they are presenting.
- o Also note how difficult the accompaniment for your piece is and how readable it is. If you don’t know, ask an accompanist!

5. Originality

- o Choose your piece(s) wisely. Finding an audition song that shows you off perfectly and is not being used by anyone else can sometimes take years, but that should be the goal of all performers. Some specific songs/shows to avoid: WICKED, PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, anything by Jason Robert Brown (the accompaniment is very challenging), “Gimme, Gimme” from THROUGHLY MODERN MILLIE and, for god’s sake, don’t sing from HAMILTON.
- o With all of the above in mind, it is also very highly suggested that you go into an audition with more than one piece of music. Having a varied portfolio will help when the director asks, “Do you have anything else? Something more uptempo? Something less belt-y? Etc...”

6. Connect to the material

- o Giving the best performance you can is what everyone wants for you. Connecting to the material shows those holding the audition what you, as a performer, are capable of. Connecting to the material on as many levels as possible can only help them connect to you. Be prepared and everything else will fall into place.

7. BREAK-A-LEG!

Websites for sheet music: www.musicnotes.com; www.sheetmusicdirect.com;
www.sheetmusicplus.com; www.onlinesheetmusic.com

MUSICAL AUDITION TIPS: HOW TO HELP THE ACCOMPANIST HELP YOU!

By Brent E. Marty

USE THESE POINTERS TO GAIN THE MOST FROM YOUR SINGING AUDITION EXPERIENCE.

- **ACCOMPANIST** (uh-kuhmp-uh-nist)
- Always remember you are the one auditioning - your job/role is on the line - and be professional when speaking with the accompanist. You never know when the artistic team may ask his/her opinion!
- **NEVER ASSUME.** Just because you are familiar with a certain work doesn't mean others are.
- Anyone seriously auditioning for a musical role should have at least a basic understanding of music. If you don't understand musical terms, find someone to help you (i.e. a vocal coach) or get a reference book of some kind. Being able to communicate with the accompanist in a quick and efficient manner is crucial to a successful audition. Remember, you are the one auditioning, not the accompanist. You want to make the audition work for **YOU**.
- Try to have as few page turns as possible. As a general rule, if you have more than two pages use a binder. If you use a three ring-binder for your music, get *non-glare* plastic sheet covers. They are inexpensive and are easier to turn. Glossy covers reflect light and are hard to see, so make sure to get *non-glare*.
- Transpositions – don't assume that the accompanist can transpose on sight. Do your best to come in with your music in **YOUR** key. The internet is a great place to start!
(www.musicnotes.com; www.sheetmusicdirect.com)
- Cutting – Finding the right section of a song to use can be tricky. Generally, the end of a song is a much better choice than the beginning. Or, look for the “money note” and try to find a good cutting that shows that off. Again, finding someone who is knowledgeable about music might be a wise decision if you are unsure about your 16 bars.
- **KNOW YOUR MATERIAL** and try to have rehearsed it with live (piano) accompaniment. The accompanist may not play the song exactly as you know it or the arrangement may be different. The more comfortable you are with the song, the easier it will be to adjust.
- To indicate tempo, sing a bit of the song for the accompanist. **RELAX!** Nerves can cause you to give an incorrect tempo. This is only one reason to **KNOW YOUR MATERIAL**.
- Don't stop unless you absolutely have to. If an accompanist is good he or she will catch you and be able to follow. Remember, an audition is just as much about how you react under pressure as it is how well you act and sing.
- **NEVER** snap your fingers or slap your leg or otherwise indicate tempo while you are singing. If nothing else it is rude. If you are comfortable with your song, you should be able to control the tempo merely by singing at a faster or slower tempo—the accompanist should adjust.
- Above all, try to relax and focus on your work, know your material well enough to relate it to a stranger, and you will have a successful audition.

10 tips for delivering a successful dance audition

1) Have energy – Eat something. It's important to be healthy and ready to "perform" for your audition. If you are afraid nerves will upset your stomach, eat early enough as to avoid that.

2) Appearance – Wear appropriate attire that shows your body, preferably in a color that you are comfortable wearing and that attracts attention. It's also a good idea to layer so you can easily change into "dance attire" after your vocal audition (or vice versa).

If you have long hair or hair that hangs in your face, tie it back, so your face is open. You need to present as much as possible with your look. Plus, hair in the face while dancing will get on your nerves, as well as the team's.

3) Don't be the person that is ALWAYS in front – Everyone has the same idea – "get to the front, so I can see what is being taught and can nail the choreo." A good and fair choreographer will want to find good dancers and when it's crowded, they will most likely switch lines during the audition so everyone can see what is going on, or in other scenarios, send half of the room away and teach two separate groups.

4) The combination is taught fast –focus! Pay attention, listen, look, learn, take note of the style immediately and copy that what is being shown, it is for a reason, it is what is required for that particular production. A choreographer will be looking for this immediately. Are you a person that can pick up this style? How would you fit in the show?

5) Think for yourself – If you don't think for yourself, it means you are not focused on yourself, you are focused on the other people around you in the studio. Are you worried you are not good enough? Are you checking the others out? You will be looking at those "other people" and copying their movements and not thinking and executing the movements yourself. Copying others means your movements will be a beat behind the real time choreography – you will be dancing late and no doubt have a blank expression on your face.

6) Questions – If something is not clear: ask! Questions are mostly always welcome and even if you're not the one asking them, **LISTEN**, the answer will most definitely help, even if you know the answer already.

8) After you have danced, stay on your mark until a team member says thank you. You will be out of breath, control it, keep your stance, look strong, don't collapse on the floor, no matter how tired you are. Look positive and open.

9) Etiquette during the audition - never stand at the back of the studio (behind the dancers), always stand on the sides and never dance full out until it is your turn. It distracts the team and is very disrespectful to the people who are on at that point. Keep warm, keep your brain focused on the routine and dance the choreo with your toes in your shoes, at the most with light arms movements only. This helps the team so much. **And don't chat!**

10) Best advice: practice, the more classes you do with different teachers and choreographers with their own individual styles and the more auditions you do, the easier it becomes, (it never becomes easy, but easier). The more you get used to doing this process, the more you can really dig in and have a successful audition.