



## WHAT ARE A FEW TIPS TO MAKE MY AUDITION THE BEST IT CAN BE?

### **ALLI VILLINES.** Actor, Singer, Dancer

- Be confident! Hold your head up and don't apologize for being there.
- Take a moment to center yourself beforehand. And be sure to warm yourself up physically and vocally. It can be as simple as a few jumping jacks and humming/buzzing.
- SINGING . For goodness sake, PREPARE! You should pick your song at least a month in advance and sing it everyday. And practice with an accompanist or karaoke track beforehand because hearing accompaniment for the first time can be jarring, so you don't want the audition to be your first time hearing the music!
- DANCING . Dance auditions are all about trying. Show the choreographer and director that you are willing to try your best and not give up no matter how hard the moves or how high or low your skill-level. And have FUN!
- There is no shortage of talented people in the area who enjoy helping others; tap into the community and find the resources that can help you have the best possible audition.

### **BETSY TUCKER.** Director

- Let us see you care.
- Make sure you have read the script.
- Read a character you're interested in OUT LOUD before auditioning.
- Smile, look at us.
- Pretend (act) as if you are confident.

### **BILL ROUGH,** Playwright, Director, Actor

- What directors want to see at auditions:
  - Variety, range, clarity, confidence. They don't want to watch you read something. They don't care if you "get it right."
  - Speak up, and speak clearly. Be heard at the back of the room you are in.
  - Make yourself visible. Step forward. "Take the stage." Be sure your listeners can see your body, your face, and your eyes.
  - Where possible, justify a variety of body positions and stage levels. Get up. Sit down.
  - To know if you can and are willing to reveal feeling -- a whole range of feeling and mood from bitter anger to giddy silliness. Try to reveal at least two contrasting emotions consistent with your character.
  - Make a choice and commit at the outset to character, and follow through.

- Don't forget to breathe!
- If you will take direction, and may redirect you specifically to do the scene over, trying something different. DO NOT repeat what you have just done. Vary it with body language, age, attitude, etc. Be creative.
- Take risks with your choices. Let yourself be vulnerable.
- About your work ethic: if you care enough to be as prepared as possible, if you will be reliable, if you can work together, if they can trust you.
- o Just prior to the audition, warm up your voice. Limber up your body. Do some relaxation exercises. It makes a huge difference.
- o Audition Ethics
  - If you've made an appointment, be prompt. Timing is crucial.
  - If you must cancel, let the production contact know ASAP - in time for the theatre to give your time slot to another actor
  - Accepting a role is a commitment to the director, cast, and the future audience. Unless it is a dire emergency, do not change your mind after being cast.
  - BRING YOUR CALENDAR to auditions.
  - If you are auditioning for practice only, say so.
  - If you only want to play this or that character, and not this other one, say so.

**GERI CARLSON SAULS.** Choreographer, Actor, Dancer, Singer

- o Remember first and foremost that the staff wants you to do well. We are not there to judge how good you are or aren't, just to see if you are right for that particular show.
- o My main goal at a dance audition is for people to tell me they had fun. So go into it with an attitude that you'll do the best you can, maybe learn a few things (I always learn something at each audition) and realize that each time it gets a bit easier.
- o You will never NOT be nervous, but it does get easier!
- o Then, prepare. Listen to the music, check out the script and read it ahead of time.
- o If there is dance, stretch out beforehand.
- o If you know far enough in advance that they are looking for a particular talent, try and take a class or two in that area (such as tap, or belly dance, or some voice lessons).
- o Go into it with a positive attitude. We all have our strengths and weaknesses, so remember your strengths and you will be fine for the rest!

**JULIE HAMBERG.** Artistic Director, Director

- o Some basics:
  - Every single person watching auditions wants 1) you to have a great time, 2) to get the part, 3) come back and audition again. We're pulling for you!
  - Don't chew gum... All those watching can do is watch that gum!
  - Be pleasant from the moment you arrive. Your nerves can be perceived as rudeness – and rudeness always gets reported to those making casting decisions.
- o Think about what your character WANTS in the scene and go fully after that Want.
- o Make bold choices. Don't worry about if it's "right" or "wrong." Take RISKS.
- o Move around! Use the space. If you start in a chair, get up. We need to see your physicality. Don't just act from your shoulders up.

- Engage with your partner. Dare them to go further. It'll make YOU go further.
- When reading a monologue, do not use the director as the other character. It makes us want to "act" with you – when we need to watch you
- Ways to pump up the volume when you get handed a scene:
  - Make the stakes the very highest they can be.
  - Whatever is happening, it is happening for the very first time.
  - From Michael Shurtleff's classic book "Audition": Always "look for the love" in a scene. It's an immediate way in. Who do you love? Who loves you or doesn't?

### **KATE BENNIS**. Actor

- Read the script.
- If there is a particular scene ["side"] you have time to prepare, read it again and again until you are almost off book. There is an old piece of audition lore that says you should be off-book (have it memorized), but still hold the script. The reason is that you want to be able to play and interact with the reader, but you want to remind the director that you are still flexible and can take direction. Directors may worry that this performance is all you can do.
- Actors sometimes blame their own performance on the other actors. And in auditions, you may be reading your scene with a stage-manager or someone who doesn't give you much. My belief is that the best actors do not depend on anyone else to make their performance sing. That is not to say that they act in a box, do their own perfected performance despite what else is going on on stage. NO. An actor must take whatever comes their way, the truth and reality of what the other actor or reader is giving, and react to that. Then the performance will always be unusual, memorable, human.
- If the director gives you something to try, DO IT FULLY! Even if you don't agree or it goes against your best instincts. By trying anything fully, you are showing freedom in your craft, that you are easy to work with, that you are courageous, that you are flexible, that you are fun!
- HAVE FUN! Truly. I rarely have the chance to do theater, so for me, an audition is a chance to act and I love any chance I get. I remember an audition with a woman I had met in the waiting room at many auditions and seen on stage, but had never worked with her. At the call-backs for a French farce, we faced each other across the stage, scripts in hand. She leaned forward like she was straining against the starting line, with a gleeful grin and said, "OK! Let's go!" We broke into the scene with such joy and play that we couldn't bear to leave! I finally got to act with her and never feared auditions again.

### **KATE MONAGHAN**. Director, Actor, SM, Playwright, Music Writer

- Get familiar with the whole script and, if available, with the sides that will be used for the audition.
- Commit to the characterization you believe in and lay it all out there for the director to see.
- If you're lucky enough to have a director who then asks you to re-read using a different characterization, take 10 seconds or so to think about the change she's asking for, then do your darndest to give her what she wants.
- Use your audition nerves (EVERYONE has them) to energize your audition, not to intimidate yourself.
- Auditions are like job interviews - the more you do, the better you get at it.

**LYDIA HORAN.** Director, Actor, Singer

- Be open and generous. Take a risk when the director gives you a direction or asks you to make a choice. The director wants to see that you're willing to try new possibilities.
- Be friendly but don't chat a lot (unless the director is soliciting information from you.) Instead, just focus on the task at hand - telling the story either through the monologue, scene or the song you are singing depending on what type of play for which you are auditioning.
- Remind yourself to relax, take a breath and take your time. Remind yourself to have fun. This is not a life or death situation. The director is rooting for you.
- When reading from the script make strong acting and character choices and commit to them. Also, make the stakes high for your character when reading a scene...it will give you energy and force you to make stronger choices.
- When auditioning with a song for a musical or if asked to prepare a monologue, take the time to really memorize the material or you'll find yourself flustered at the audition and not able to do your best. Knowing the song or monologue well also tells the director that you are someone who works hard and knows how to prepare.

**MARTY MOORE.** Director, Actor

- Relax. Breathe.
- Try to remember that the folks you are auditioning are nice people who want you to shine.
- Often when auditioning, people let their anxieties overwhelm them, perfectly understandable. If you do feel that way, take a moment to gather yourself.
- A good tip is to clench your fists as tight as you can about five minutes before your audition, this focuses the nervous energy out of you - it really works.

**MATTHEW JONES.** Music Director

- Practice, practice, practice.
- Be prepared. Work with a vocal coach, an acting coach, and practice with a pianist before your audition. Everyone gets nervous, but asking if you can start over makes you look unprepared.
- A singer and/or actor should have a diverse repertoire of audition material from old and current shows that you know cold, that you can open up, glance over, and perform. Keep this notebook of audition materials current and practice it regularly so you know your stuff.
- In your musical audition, don't ham it up or over-dramatize. Just sing your song. Let your voice stand for itself because you'll have lots of rehearsal time to work on show-appropriate character stuff.
- Enjoy yourself. The confidence of someone who is actually having a good time is really great to see.
- If something goes wrong, own it. Don't apologize or offer a laundry list of excuses. Mistakes happen, and while a mistake on your part seems like the end of the world, it's important to keep things in perspective. Auditions are not about perfection. They are about possibility.

**MENDY ST. OURS.** Director, Actor

- Prepare. Read the script. Read it again. Practice aloud with a friend.
- Enter the room with a willingness to play. Try to remember those days of childhood when you would just play, just throw yourself into a make-believe game or world and didn't give a damn what you looked like to other people. That's what we need to see. A certain fearlessness and

willingness to play. Let the director worry about what you look like from the outside. You give it your all.

- And if the director gives you direction in an audition, take it lightly and try it with an open mind. Sometimes I love what a person is doing, but I want to see if they are going to be stubborn about taking direction in rehearsals. There are many different ways to do a role truthfully, but the director is there to mold the character into her greater vision of this incarnation of the play.
- Remember to check the ego at the door. We'd much rather work with a generous actor with less experience but a big dose of humility and willingness than the ex-L.A. actor who can't stop talking about herself and her resume. We are going to be spending weeks together, and we won't cast anyone who doesn't seem like they can play on a team.

**RAY NEDZEL** . Director, Actor, Producer

- Prepare. Read the script. Know the play and the characters. Read or see other plays by the playwright. Be able to talk with the director about the play (even though you might not get the chance). Preparation on your part is seen as commitment and dedication from the director's POV.
- Be clear. Know what roles you would take and would not. Know any commitments from audition to close of the show.
- Ask a question. Remember you are also auditioning the director.
- Be nice. Be friendly. Everyone likes to work with people who are nice.
- Have something memorized. Just in case. And, keep it short.
- Relax. It's just an audition. Breathe.

**SHAWN HIRABAYASHI**, Playwright

- Read the play/musical beforehand.
- Have an opinion about who the character is.
- Be flexible enough to let that opinion go.
- Do what the director asks you to do even if it makes no sense (though if it makes no sense, feel free to ask for clarification).

**WILL KERNER** . Artist, Director

- Be familiar with the material.
- Devote some thought to the character. Attempt to bring that knowledge.