



WHEN AUDITIONING FOR A MUSICAL, WHAT TYPE OF SONG SHOULD I PREPARE TO BEST SHOW WHAT I CAN DO? (WHAT IF I'M A FIRST-TIME AUDITIONER AND/OR SINGING IS NOT MY GREATEST TALENT?)

ALLI VILLINES. Actor, Singer, Dancer

- My number one rule is style-appropriate and age-appropriate. Do your research and at the very least know what the style of the music of the show is; this will inform your song choice.
- Sing something you love and know like the back of your hand because when nerves kick in, the first thing to go is breath followed by words.

BETSY TUCKER. Director

- Something in your range
- Something like a song from the show (from same composer?)
- If you're new at this, practice singing "Happy Birthday" confidently in front of dear friends before auditioning.

GERI CARLSON SAULS. Choreographer, Actor, Dancer & Singer

- RESEARCH THE SHOW. Listen to the CD, or get on YouTube and listen/watch some video (caution: as you don't want to imitate what you see - we want you to be yourself and bring what you can to each character). Most libraries have many CD's available, and online you can almost always find snippets of songs. Also ask the theater where you are auditioning - they may have something available.
- MATCH STYLE. Then, once you've heard what type of music the show is, try to match that style. For example, if you are auditioning for OKLAHOMA, you would want a more traditional musical theater song if possible - Rogers and Hammerstein, Lerner and Loewe, Cole Porter, etc. If you are auditioning for RENT you'd want more of a rock vibe.
- KNOW IT. The main thing I tell people is to choose a song that you are very familiar with, or get very familiar with it. Auditions are scary (after over 30 years auditioning I still get nervous) so you want to sing something you know well and like. It's good to have 4 or 5 songs that you go to for auditions - then you will always be ready.
- NOT YOUR STRONG SUIT? For those that feel singing isn't their strong point, again, have 1 or 2 songs that you really know. Ask a friend to help you. Sing along with a CD to practice, but make sure you have the sheet music in the same key so when you get to auditions you are ready.
- SHEET MUSIC GO-TO. As for sheet music, I go to www.musicnotes.com, they have tons of music and many of them you can transpose to your key. Plus once you transpose it sometimes

you can play it. You can also use a karaoke track (you can get those on iTunes or amazon.com) - great for practice, and in a pinch many auditions will allow a karaoke, though sheet music is the best. [Live Arts uses sheet music- ed.]

- o BEST 32 BARS. [Live Arts is usually 16! – ed.] You want to find the best 32 bars (measures) or so of the song. Unfortunately we don't have time to sing a full song! So if your song has a long introduction, cut it. We want to hear the "money notes": the part of the song in which you sound best. That's usually one verse and the chorus. For example, if you chose "My Favorite Things" from SOUND OF MUSIC - you could start with the "Girls in white dresses..." verse, then go into the "when the dog bites..." part, then finish. This would give the low and high of the song.

KATE BENNIS. Actor

- o I am an actor who sings, not a singer who acts. So I make sure the way I convey the emotion of the song is strong and hope that the notes find their way!
- o I always choose song that fits the genre of the musical, that I know very well and can sing a cappella. I only sing one verse. I have 3 songs in my pocket that I can pull out at any time.
- o Warm up your voice. Just humming in the bathroom is enough.
- o Breathe! Breath affects your vocal timbre, strength, and pitch. It also effects your emotions and releases tension. Breathe!

KATE MONAGHAN. Director, Actor, SM, Playwright & Musical writer

- o There is usually guidance given in an audition notice about the type of song the director prefers. Heed it.
- o Also heed directions about the length of your selection. If you need to cut your song to fit the number of measures you're asked to prepare, start from the song's emotional high point (often at or near the end) and work back.
- o The best advice I ever got about singing onstage or at an audition is "move as much air as you can past your vocal cords, especially if you're reaching for a note that's a challenge for you."

LYDIA HORAN. Director, Actor & Singer

- o When auditioning for a musical, choose something that is in your range and that you are familiar with, especially if you don't have a lot of time to prepare. It's better to sing "Happy Birthday" well than to screw up a Sondheim song that you haven't worked on.
- o When choosing a song, look for something that is similar in style and character to songs in the show for which you are auditioning. Unless the director has specifically asked you to prepare a song from the show, it's best not to do it.
- o If asked to sing 16 bars (measures) of a song, find the 16 bars of that song that best show off your voice.
- o If you are a first time singer, find a song that requires more acting, character or humor and less "pretty" singing.

MARTY MOORE. Director & Actor

- o Sing a song that is well within your Vocal range, the 'type' of song, depends on the 'type' of show or role you are going for. For instance, if the show is a musical comedy, your song should be upbeat and fun. If it is a drama musical, perhaps a ballad is best. If you auditioning for a specific role, you should find a song that is similar to that character's songs.

MATTHEW JONES. Music Director

- o Absolutely no Sondheim (also no ANNIE, CATS, EVITA, A CHORUS LINE, or LES MIS is a good rule of thumb for Live Arts and any professional audition)
- o Do not audition with a song from the show [unless asked to do so in the audition notice]
- o In general, you want to pick a song that is stylistically similar to the show. It can even be by the same composer (unless that composer is Sondheim)
- o Pick 16 bars ONLY unless otherwise instructed. Have a contrasting second (or third) audition example (no more than 16 bars) on hand in case they director(s) want to hear more
- o Aim for a 16 bar segment that demonstrates your strong points: your range, your control over dynamics, and your ability to build up to a dramatic conclusion. This can be difficult, especially for first time/new actors. It never hurts to work with a vocal coach to pick out audition material
- o In general, avoid numbers that have been performed by extremely famous singers (Streisand, LuPone, etc) and avoid pop songs that aren't part of a Broadway show unless you really know what you're doing when it comes to making a selection
- o Bring a piano score (not an Ipod or CD) because it is essential that you demonstrate your ability to sing with live accompaniment
- o Practice with a live pianist *before* your audition [if possible]

RAY NEDZEL. Director, Actor & Producer

- o Follow the audition requests. And beyond that, pick a song that you know, a song that you like. Pick a song that is in the same period of the show or role you're auditioning for.
- o If singing isn't your strength, it's OK to tell the director/musical director - but you don't need to, and you definitely don't need to apologize. But if you're going to point out a weakness also work in a strength. Keep your song simple, comfortable.
- o Relax and Breathe. It takes guts to sing when you don't think you are the strongest.
- o Know that the director and musical director want you to succeed.
- o Also, often, there are light singing and non-singing roles in musicals.
- o Just sing; sing a song.

SHAWN HIRABAYASHI. Playwright

- o If you're not going to sing a song from the musical/character you're auditioning for, then sing a song you enjoy singing. Might as well have a good time -- particularly if you're a first-time auditioner and/or singing is not your greatest talent.