

# C<sub>o</sub>llege Audition Guidelines:

The guidelines below apply to both classical voice auditions and musical theatre auditions:

- Schedule auditions in 3 categories. Reach schools, Hopefuls, and Safe schools. Reach schools accept very few students annually, Hopefuls accept a larger number, but are still competitive. Safe schools accept large numbers of applicants, but don't be deceived. These schools often weed students out of the program later if they do not meet a certain standard.
- **Do NOT** schedule your first audition at your top choice school.
  1. You will need time to feel acclimated to the audition process, and you will not want that learning curve to be at the expense of your most important audition.
  2. Unlike academic programs, performance programs are very likely to wait list you if you try for early action or early decision. It is in the music program's best interest not to accept the majority students until they hear from most of their candidates in any given year.
- **Do** memorize your material at least a full month ahead of your first scheduled audition.
- **Do NOT** change your audition material immediately before auditions.

## DO PREPARE A SPREADSHEET OR CHART

Each school's requirements will be different, so it is important to organize information early. Ultimately, you should prepare a spread sheet which clearly shows the school, the audition date and requirements specific to that audition. In order to take advantage of our experience and expertise, Please share that spreadsheet with your voice teacher.



We will select and prepare audition material in voice lessons. If advice is received from friends, accompanists, or other instructors in class, be gracious and respectful, but remember that the ultimate decisions must be made here in the voice studio. By the time you are auditioning for college, I will have the advantage of knowing your voice intimately. We have had 20 years of success in this arena, and while no one can offer a guarantee, we have had students accepted to many top conservatories in the country and we take our responsibility to you seriously.

- Your audition material must be age appropriate. In other words, the character who would sing your piece should be approximately your age.
- If you are a female who has a good belt/mix and can also sing “legit” soprano repertoire, it is to your benefit to demonstrate each of these skills clearly. Usually, this would mean a belty up tempo alongside a soprano ballad.
- Your piece must not be from a musical which is currently on Broadway, was recently made into a movie, or which recently did a national tour. Never sing from Les Miserables, Wicked, or Grease. We will be looking for repertoire that suits your “type” and your performance skills. The pieces we select should be recognizable to the adjudicators, but not overdone.
- Most schools will ask for 2 contrasting pieces, an up-tempo and a ballad. Some will want the full song, but most will want 16 to 32 bars. The combinations will vary, so you must be well organized.
- Some schools will require that one of the pieces be before a specific year, often the early 1960s, but sometimes earlier. Certain programs emphasize classical training and may request a third piece from classical repertoire. Generally, we will design your audition material to have one traditional cut and one contemporary cut.
- There is a growing trend among musical theatre programs to require their freshmen and sophomores to work exclusively on early era musical theatre in order to gain more solid singing technique with a foundation in classical vocal production. Successful audition results are reflecting this trend. It is advisable to include at least one early Broadway piece in your audition selections whether it is required or not.

#### **THE SONDEHEIM RULES:**

- Generally you can take Sondheim to a college audition. You will be in a music school environment, which means your pianist will be more than competent. Remember, the same people are usually playing for the classical voice auditions. That being said, only use Sondheim for a college audition if the character is your age, you understand and can deliver the text effectively, and you can handle the intonation and phrasing.
- Do not take Sondheim to amateur or semi-professional level auditions. The accompanist will not be able to play it.

# **Y**our Accompanist and Your Notebook

Most college auditions will take place in established music school environments, which means your pianist is likely to be of the highest professional caliber. However, it is important to take any steps you can to ensure that your audition goes well. See the list below for specific pointers on this subject.

- Do prepare an audition notebook. Today's standard for both classical and musical theatre college auditions is a 3-ring binder with clean copies of your music arranged back to back in book fashion. It is best to avoid sheet protectors, as even the non-glare plastic reflects light. The preference is music that is taped at the outside corners and hole punched.
- You will need a 3-hole punch and scotch tape. The corners should be taped in both directions so that the entire corners top and bottom are covered with tape. You can also "dog-ear" the corners ahead of time for easy page turning. I will demonstrate for you in lessons.
- Do prepare your various musical theatre cuts as "cut & paste" copies. It is important that they be prepared as cleanly and concisely as possible. If there are measures that need to be blacked out, use a sharpie pen and completely cover the cut measures. The fewer pages you need, the better. If a page turn is necessary and is going to be awkward due to blacked out measures, you might consider an additional preparation with your individual music pages attached to pieces of card stock so that they are stiff and supported. You can offer your accompanist the option of using the notebook, or laying the music out on the cardstock sheets.
- Do discuss any tempo changes and cuts with your audition accompanist. Keep this discussion respectful and brief by planning ahead of time exactly what you'll need to say.

**D**o arrange to rehearse your audition pieces with one of the professional accompanists on our list prior to your first audition. In voice lessons, we are working with pre-recorded accompaniments which we alter to provide you with a custom fit. These accompaniments are wonderful tools, but they do not entirely prepare you for working with a live pianist. Your piece will feel slightly different with each pianist at each school so rehearsing with at least one professional will help prepare you. Allow the pianist to use the notebook you will be giving to your audition accompanists so that they can give you feedback. This will help ensure that your audition notebook is prepared in a pianist friendly fashion.

# W hat To Wear

## Musical Theatre Auditions

The following tips are published on the Southeastern Theatre Conference Site. You can refer to that site for advice on other aspects of your audition as well. The link is:

<http://www.setc.org/auditions/index.asp>

- Keep your hair off your face during your audition-wear it tied or neatly pulled back.
- Dress in solid and neutral colors
- Ladies, keep your skirts at knee length or below.
- Dress in clothes that are neat, not overly formal, and most of all, flattering to your physique.

If there is a dance audition, you should consider a second outfit that allows for greater movement. If your dance audition connects directly to your voice and monologue audition, plan on clothing that allows a very quick shift from dressy to dance by simply removing a jacket and changing shoes.