

AUDITIONS TIP SHEET

by Cynthia A. Ballard, Kellogg Community College, Battle Creek, Michigan

Here are some things to think about when you are preparing for an audition:

A. Preparation

1. Select appropriate pieces. They should be contrasting pieces, but not necessarily Shakespeare. Suit the selections to the types of theatres and productions for which you are auditioning.
2. Choose pieces that are within your character range. Try to stick with pieces that you have done before and with which you are comfortable. Untried pieces seldom work well. Remember that good dramatic material can help to sell your skills to prospective employers.
3. Pick a song that fits and shows your range. Don't do overdone selections. Eight bars is sufficient. Have more ready to go for callbacks.
4. Avoid weird or overdone selections, or selections not easily represented in a short speech.
5. Your selections should be fully memorized. No scripts!
6. Don't have someone come in and read with you. Do a selection that works as a monologue, or patch together several short speeches which are logically consistent.
7. Time your pieces. Stay within the limit. In general, be too short rather than too long.
8. If you plan to use a tape recording for your musical number, practice with it. It should be of the best quality you can afford. Know how to work the tape machine. It will be to your advantage to practice with the equipment.
9. Practice your audition from beginning to end including your introduction. Practice in front of a group of people to get reactions, and work with a coach.
10. Fill out the audition forms completely, including the important points of your resume. Often that is all the theatre has to look at until you present your full resume at an interview. Fill in accurate availability dates. Use a typewriter or print legibly.
11. Try to find out something about the theatres for which you are auditioning.
12. Make your resume as impressive as possible. Look for examples of the professional resume. It should be one page, neatly typed. Be honest about roles you have played and about your union affiliations. Have available some references with phone numbers and addresses. Ask those people if they would mind recommending you. Remember that your resume can help to sell you, once you've left the audition.
13. Get a good night's sleep. That's better than cramming. Get up early to prepare.
14. Be careful what you eat and drink before an audition!
15. Most of all, be positive about the experience. Look on the audition as further experience and as beneficial in and of itself. And remember that the worst that could happen is that you won't get the job you already don't have!

B. The Performance

1. Arrive early to warm up and acquaint yourself with the audition area.
2. The right clothing is very important. Visual identification is important to make you stand out. Strong, solid colors make a statement. Look your best!
 - a. Women should wear skirts or dresses; if dancers, dance attire.
 - b. Juvenile and young leading men should wear dance attire or simple shirt and pants and/or sweater.
 - c. Character men should wear a sports jacket and sweater or suit and tie.
 - d. Pay attention to your hair. Have an attractive hairdo.
 - e. Avoid clutter. No coins in pockets or jangling bracelets or keys.
 - f. Use basic stage makeup but not too much. Eyes are important.
 - g. Wear the right shoes. Clogs are rather noisy! Wear shoes that help you to move well.
3. Remember that you start your audition from the moment that you enter. Sell yourself from start to finish. Remember also that in addition to the stage characters you present in your monologues, the other "character" you'll present is yourself.
4. Clearly state your name and number at the beginning of the audition.

5. You don't need a great deal of introduction. Don't go into the story of the whole play.
6. Try not to take too long to "get into character." You'll go over your time limit.
7. Do your best piece first. Do your song first or second so you are sure to get it in.
8. Try not to make a major production out of costumes or props. You are auditioning, not your special effects.
9. Don't ask the musician to transpose music. Make it as easy as possible for the accompanist and your audition will be more successful.
10. Be simple and direct. Don't be static, yet don't block an entire scene.
11. Don't begin by apologizing for your material. It's a bad start.
12. Find your light and take the stage.
13. Keep your volume up.
14. Keep within your time limit. Stop when the time indicates your time is up.
15. Relate to the audience as a group. Don't ignore them. Communicate with them.