

AUDITION TRAINING SESSIONS

by Professor Ken Albers, Associate Artistic Director, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre

1. Require the development of an audition repertory. Require the student to prepare pieces and to present them consistently.
2. Begin a file of audition pieces. Each audition piece that is chosen for presentation by an actor should be logged, including name of the play, author, name of role, actor, scene, beginning line, ending line.
3. Vary auditions for productions within the training situation. Change the type of audition that is used. It is a very simple fact that most auditions in college or community theatre are very boring and uninteresting because the audition process itself never changes. There are several types of auditions that can be employed:
 - a. open vs. closed
 - b. prepared auditions vs. cold readings
 - c. auditions from the play vs. auditions from a comparable play
 - d. improvised auditions vs. textual
 - e. monologues vs. scenes
 - f. auditions with other actors who are auditioning vs. auditions with "readers"
 - g. don't be afraid to pre-cast a show -- the student might as well learn what it's like to simply not have auditions and to have roles assigned
4. Do the student a favor and don't use callbacks or the position of assistant director as a kindness, as a consolation prize.
5. See auditions. The most valuable training that can be gleaned in an audition process is to see the process as employed by other theatres and to see unknown actors involved in the audition process. It is a valuable and surprising experience.

If you know after the first round of auditions that there are certain actors you do not intend to use, don't create false images or false hope by calling them back another round in order to be nice to them.

Audition time is valuable. Don't waste their time by having them read for roles that they won't play and don't waste your time by having to sit there and listen to them. That is a lie which they will not appreciate and which will do them no good.

By the same token, the actor must use all the tools that he has and display as many assets as he possesses in the audition.

A caution to the "coach" -- never lie to an actor. Do not give him a mistaken awareness of himself because you don't wish to hurt his feelings or because you wish to encourage him. Encouragement, understanding, and kindness are all based on truth.

And do not pass the buck by saying to yourself that it's only your opinion which probably doesn't matter anyway. Your opinion is all the actor has. It does not matter whether your opinion of the actor's work is right or wrong. It only matters that it is an honest opinion as you perceive it.