

HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR A SUCCESSFUL MUSICAL THEATRE AUDITION

Below you will find three sections filled with tips on how to have a successful musical theatre audition. The sections include acting tips from Ms. More, dance tips from Ms. Zandy, and vocal tips from Miss Briggs. Read through them – even if you already have – you never know what one ‘tip’ will stand out to you!

Ms. More’s Tips for a Successful ACTING Audition.

The secret to acting is RELATIONSHIPS. It is not about you the actor it is about the character. No one wants to see the actor ...people want to see a character. The best way for the audience to get to know your character is how your character interacts with the other characters on stage (i.e. relationships). For example, we know that someone is the ‘villain’ through the way that character interacts with the other characters on stage. The more you give on stage and the more you try to connect with the ‘other’ on stage, the better clearer your character will be to the audience.

What if you do not have anyone else to interact with (i.e. vocal audition)? **PRETEND** that you do. Still interact with them on stage (even if it’s Joseph talking to God). The ‘other’ on stage should be as real to your character as if there actually were another person on stage. If your character is supposed to talk to the audience, then talk to the audience...show me how you would do it IF someone else or the audience was really there.

There are no ‘wrong’ choices **UNLESS YOU tell me it’s the wrong choice.** The only time you will ever be ‘wrong’ or look ‘stupid’ is if you tell me those things. If you invest fully and honestly, if you PRETEND that it’s really happening the way you are making it happen, then all that you do on stage will look like a choice. If you feel stupid or awkward I will sense that and I won’t invest fully in what you are doing on stage. Make appropriate and strong choices on stage and you will never look ‘stupid’. Do not apologize for choices or your work on stage.

A note on Strong Choices: strong choices are those that make sense for the character and are executed fully by the actor. Choices become weak when they don’t make sense for the character and/or the actor does not execute them fully or completely.

How do you invest honestly on stage? **PRETEND. Believe** that the character exists outside of YOU the actor, and through practice and analysis figure out what that character would do, how they would act and how they would say the lines. Then pretend to be that character the best way you know how through actions, vocal technique and connecting with others on stage. Most importantly, never let the audience know that you’re pretending or that you don’t believe the character is real. If you believe, so will we.

What are you supposed to DO on stage? ‘Acting’ is action on stage. First, determine what is happening on stage? Is the narrator telling a part of the story? Then, IF you were a narrator telling a story, how might you best communicate that story with your FACE and your GESTURES and movement. The more SPECIFIC your choices are, the clearer your character and the stronger the choice. **Choose specific verbs that further relationship** (example: guilt, plead, charm, convince) for each line you say, then execute those actions.

1. What is my character feeling (**emotion**)? *she’s sad*
2. Why is my character singing this (**motivation**)? *She wants her dad to give her the toy.*
3. How am I going to manifest that through action (**intention** – to plead) *I’m going to say all of the lines while on my knees, holding on to his legs.*

Finally: Believe in yourself. Know that you are wonderful, yes YOU. **And let the rest go!** Control the things that you can: how you prepare, your acting choices, and how you execute them. Let go of what you cannot control: casting.

Mrs. Zandy's Dancing Tips for Auditions

Fully commit to your movement. All of your movement should start at the center of your body and move outward. So, every move you make should be engaging your entire body. No noodle arms!

Perform! I am not just interested in if you can learn the choreography, I want to see if you can perform and tell the story with your movement. Think of your facial expressions as well. I would rather you miss a step, but fully commit to and perform that mess up, rather than do all the steps perfectly but have no emotion behind your movement.

Dance Captains - I will also be looking for Dance Captains for the production. Dance Captains will most likely need to be at every rehearsal, so it is a big commitment. I am looking for students who memorize choreography well and have good leadership skills.

Miss Brigg's Helpful Hints for a Successful Musical Theatre Singing Audition...

- **Prepare. Prepare. Prepare. Practice the music. Make decisions. Plan. Prepare. Show the director you want this via your well-prepared, strong audition.** You need to impress the director(s). Be alive. Be engaging. Your eyes and smile can light up the stage. Your body language can own the stage. Do not hold back. You have 2-3 minutes to WIN a role. It is, for lack of a better word, a competition. The best auditions get cast.
- If your audition selection is not memorized already, start memorizing it NOW. Don't let all your beautiful singing be sabotaged by forgetting the words! Directors cannot see your facial expression if you are looking at music/words.
- Know the music. Know the notes. Know the rhythm. Know the words.
- Must haves: Diction, Projection, and Intonation. You need to be heard. People who cannot be heard will not be cast. You need to project and enunciate clearly. People who cannot be understood will not be cast. And you need to sing in tune. People who can't sing in tune will not be cast.
- Use good singing technique – but remember, this is THEATRE. You need to sing in *character*. Your character's voice may or may not be *your* singing voice. Use healthy vocal technique to achieve the *character's* voice.
- Move. Even if you don't move your feet, move your body. This can be as simple as expressive posture or hand placement, or as flamboyant as you feel the role/song demands. Just don't stand there, shoulders slumped, weight on one leg, looking like you are waiting for the bus.
- Act. You need to act while you sing. You need to BE the *character* singing, not *yourself* singing. You need to be expressive. You need to act.

- Know your audition piece. Do you know what your song is about? Who is your character? What is the mood of the piece? Which words are important? Where should you crescendo/decelerate? Where will you add character inflection? Where will you show beautiful singing tone? Where will you belt? Where will you add vibrato? Know your audition song and the character who is singing it – this should come across in EVERYTHING – your body language, your vocal color/tone, your facial expression, your movement, etc.
- Know the show. Know the time period, the characters, the plot, the style, etc. etc. The more you know about the show and your music, the more likely you are to show the director(s) what they are looking for.
- Appearance counts. How you look affects how you sound. Think about what you are going to wear to the audition and what that projects about you. Directors are looking at the whole package.
- Remember to ***breathe***. It's the most important thing for singing, and for calming your nerves.
- Allow yourself time to warm-up physically (stretch, release tension, activate the body, breath and vocal warm-ups) as well as mentally (going over words, intro, expression, finding your balance of inner calm + fierceness of wanting to get cast, etc. etc.). Don't overdo it by singing your song over and over and over again the day of your performance. Don't kill it, or wear yourself (or your vocal chords) out before the actual audition.
- Arrive at the audition early. Be ready.
- Practice your introduction. *Example*: "Hello/Good Morning/Good Afternoon. I am Kathryn Briggs, and I am a sophomore. I will be singing "I Could Have Danced All Night." Take a deep breath, prepare/get into character, and give the nod to your accompanist to start.
- After you perform smile graciously at the director(s). If there is applause from an audience in the room, acknowledge it with a modest nod. The director(s) may give you some direction and ask you to sing it again. DO WHAT HE/SHE ASKS. Show them you can take direction and apply it, show them you are versatile, show them you are flexible, show them you can adapt. He or she may ask you to sing a section of the song over again and try new things. Or he or she may say absolutely nothing at all – maybe just a "thank you" or a "next" and not even look up from their papers. Don't interpret this – they may be super impressed with you, and busy writing your name down for a role, or looked perplexed because you just showed them something unexpected and they are re-thinking their ideas on the show because they liked it. They may talk amongst each other and not say much to you at all. They are working, and they have a job to do, which is cast the best show possible. Regardless of feedback (or lack of feedback), be gracious and thank them for their time.
- This is what it is – a contest for the best singing actors for roles in a show. However, view this audition as a learning experience to help make yourself a better singer and actor, more prepared for future auditions, and an opportunity to get feed back... and not solely as a contest or competition. Do your best. Enjoy your self, your voice, and your music.

- Be proud of yourself for being brave enough to audition. Many people find this so terrifying that they would *never even consider* doing what you are about to do. You are brave and wonderful for going after something you want! This, in itself, is something that will help you in life, something to be proud of!

Show 'em what you got!