

Back in the day, I wrote a guide to auditioning for straight shows (non musicals). Since I am directing a musical and I know a few people may be new to auditioning, I thought I'd give some tips, as an actor and singer, to those who are either new to theatre and the auditioning process, or to those who wish to improve their chances by enhancing their audition.

1) Know your role: If the show you are auditioning for is unknown to you or several others, now is a great time to gain the upper hand by doing some homework. Google the name of the show and see what comes up. Check the images also, because this could also give you a clue as to what your set may look like and what costumes you may need.

2) Picking the perfect song: I usually like to pick obscure stuff. Usually something off the radar, but not in another hemisphere. Most guys will pick stuff like Music of the Night from Phantom of the Opera or Some Enchanted Evening from South Pacific. Girls tend to usually pick from an array of songs from Disney movies like The Little Mermaid, Aladdin, and Beauty and the Beast. Some choose the Broadway route and choose things like Suddenly Seymour, Think of Me, or something by a country artist (never a good choice). I was classically trained in high school and college in vocal performance, so I tend to pick something classical like O Sole Mio, but sing it in English as not to scare the production staff. To those "newbies" that have never auditioned, pick something easy to learn and makes you sound good. Stephen Sondheim and Andrew Lloyd Webber are great composers who write a great combination of music that can be sung in several different ranges. I usually don't like to pick Rodgers and Hammerstein so much, because they have been done to death. An impressive choice would be your school's Alma Mater.

3) Put some Stank on it! : This is a term I use when I tell people I am going to make the song and part mine. Get emotional about the selection you are going to sing. As a director, I can't stand someone getting on stage and singing Happy Birthday standing with their hands to their side looking like an idiot who doesn't have the slightest clue as to why there are here. I also can't stand hearing the same thing over and over again. When you get your song rehearse the words and learn it. Sell it to the audience, not the director or production staff. If you are singing And I Am Telling You... sing it like it's happening to you at that moment. Life may not be a musical, but the right emotions can make the difference between you getting the part or being passed up on it.

4) Get to the audition early : Get there early and introduce yourself around. Sell yourself, just not down the river! This will give you a chance to fill out paperwork, take pictures, and get used to your surroundings so that the butterflies will stay in their cocoons instead of bursting through when your name or number is called. Also, if you get there early enough, you could possibly get to see the audition pieces and maybe even read it a few times before anyone else gets to see it. This will help you ace your audition.

5) Bring Backup: I mean this is 2 ways.

a) Bring something as a back up piece in case someone sings your song. Make sure it's something you can pull off well. If someone sings your main piece and your back up, go with your gut. Whichever shows you off best is probably going to be your best bet.

b) Bring some morale support. A friend or two isn't bad, but leave the entourage at home! You are going to get applause no matter what. It's part of theatre etiquette at auditions. Even if you suck out loud, you will be applauded. Have 2 good friends there to boost your confidence, but don't get a swelled head. You never know what the director or production staff is looking for, so stay grounded.

I have given you some pretty good information. Break something at your audition. I don't like to tell people to break a leg, because I have been in several shows and several people have actually broken their legs during rehearsal.