

AUDITION WORKSHOP

Saturday, July 20, 2024 @ Magic Circle Players

- Master classes for interested members of the community who would like to **improve their auditioning skills.**
- Whether you have auditioned before, or are brand new, **all are welcome!**
- Techniques to improve your auditions.
- Find out more about what directors are looking for in casting plays & musicals.
- **Free of Charge**

Youth Workshop. - 2pm to 3:30pm. Ages 8 to 18

Adult Workshop - 4pm to 5:30pm. Ages 19 and over

This is an open forum led by Allyson Crosby, a music teacher, who has directed concerts, plays and musicals for 40 years. No need to register ahead of time or prepare an audition piece. Just come at the correct time for your age category! (Parents of younger children are welcome to sit in on your child's workshop.)

“10 Pieces of Audition Advice That Directors Wish You Knew!”

Our Audition topics being discussed for today are:

- 1. How Do You Enter the Room? - First Impressions Matter!**
- 2. Don't Make Excuses! Just Get On With It!**
- 3. Be Prepared - “Preparation = Confidence”**
- 4. Memorization - Know Your Stuff!**
- 5. Your Wardrobe Choices – Dress for Success!**
- 6. Project and Enunciate – If We Can't Hear You, We Won't Care!**
- 7. Slow Down – No Word Vomiting!**
- 8. Record Yourself – Do You See What We See?**
- 9. How Well Do You Follow Directions? We All Have a Job to Do!**
- 10. How Well Do You Treat Others? - Kindness Counts!**

Bonus Tip to Increase Your Value in the Theatre: Be Willing to Do Anything

1. How Do You Enter the Room? - First Impressions Matter!

- A. Move at a normal pace
- B. Confident posture...shoulders back, chin up
- C. Smile and make eye contact
- D. Create positive energy to show you are excited to be here
- E. Give a strong "Slate"

What is a "Slate"? This is what we call your personal introduction to the director's panel. You should give us the following information in this order...

- A. Give a greeting with eye contact "Hello! I am glad to be here!" or "Good Evening! It is a pleasure to be here!" or something of the sort.
- B. Give your first name followed by your last name, strongly and clearly.
- C. Give the name of the song you are singing
- D. Give the title of the musical it comes from.

Example: "Hello! Thank you for this opportunity! My name is Pat Schmidt. I am singing "My Favorite Things" from "The Sound of Music". Then, you look at your accompanist and nod.

Where should you look while you are singing, (or saying your monologue)? While singing your song, or giving your monologue, sing or speak to the **"Invisible Other"**. (This means to look behind the directors and above their heads so they can see the emotion and expression in your face.)

What do you do with your hands?

- A. Decide what is natural to what your character would do with THEIR hands.
- B. Don't let your hands distract the attention away from your facial expressions.
- C. Your hands should only be an accessory not the main attraction (distraction).

What do you do with your feet? Stand still? Pace? Walk around? Determine what your character is saying and thinking. Consider these questions...

- A. What is their objective?
- B. Is there any obstacle standing in their way?
- C. What tactics are they willing to use to get to the place that they want to be?
- D. If you decide to move, keep the movement to a minimum. Usually, a hint of movement is more desirable.

Should I cry if it is a sad or deeply emotional song or monologue? Generally, no. To quote John Leonard, "If you can fight back the tears, your audience will cry for you!" But, if you happen to cry a few tears, don't apologize!

How should you end? Just freeze your final expression. Count 1, 2, 3, in your head, then smile and say, "Thank you."

2. Don't Make Excuses Or Apologize! Get On With It!

It doesn't instill a feeling of confidence in your abilities for a lead role if you start your audition by apologizing or making excuses.

"I'm sorry. I just learned this song." "I'm so sorry, I am just getting over a cold." "I have allergies, so my voice is not very strong right now." "I apologize if I seem sad. My hamster just died."

Just go in strong as discussed in Audition Point #1! Walk in the room, give your slate, as strongly and confidently as you can. Then GO FOR IT!

The director and their panel are rooting for you! We WANT you to do well! You have our support! We can usually tell if you are not up to your full strength, and we really appreciate it when you are showing confidence and preparedness despite being less than 100%! We are on your side! We believe in you---so you should believe in yourself!

You will impress us because you...

- A. Showed up
- B. Did the work
- C. Muscled through
- D. And persevered

These are qualities we look for in leading role potential!

If you forget your words, or your lyrics, or stumble over a phrase, ***PLEASE KEEP GOING!***

When you stop and say, "Sorry.", you lose your momentum, and your confidence breaks. The best thing to do is to keep moving forward. But if you truly cannot and are stuck, the desirable thing we want to see you do, is to pause, gather your thoughts while staying in character, back up if you need to, and then move forward.

Apologies cause the directors to remember your mistakes. Pushing through your mistakes without apologies will cause us to remember your strength!

3. Be Prepared! Preparedness = Confidence

If you remember nothing else from this workshop, remember this! “Preparedness = Confidence!”

In some theatres, schools, and universities, the audition requirement is for you to have a monologue memorized and ready to speak, as well as a song clipping of about 32 measures of music.

If the director asks, “What would you like to perform first?” Do NOT say anything like, “I don’t care.” or “It really doesn’t matter.” or even worse, “Whatever...”

The directors must make a lot of difficult decisions in casting the show. Please help make our jobs just a little easier by knowing what you want to start with, if they give you an option to make a choice!

Here at Magic Circle, most of our shows have an audition packet with clippings for the songs and the readings that the directors hope you will use for your audition to help streamline the decision-making process. Those audition packets can be downloaded from our Magic Circle website.

At our MCP auditions, most of the time, the directors will tell you the order of the audition parts. They may have everyone sing or do a monologue first before doing a reading from the show. Then they may have you work on choreography if any is required. So, in those cases it is up to the director to decide the order of audition flow.

Be sure you have looked at the packet ahead of time and practiced the songs/readings at home and are familiar with them. That way, you are prepared, and that preparedness will bring you a lot more confidence. And directors love a confident auditioner!

4. Memorization – Know Your Stuff!

This is especially important if it is a popular show and there is a lot of competition for the lead roles that you may want. To stand out in the memory of the director, you need to have the audition pieces you have chosen memorized, or at least, be so familiar with the material that you only need the paper for a reference.

The directors will find it easier to see you as a lead role possibility if you don’t have your nose buried in a paper the whole time!

5. Your Wardrobe Choices – Dress for Success!

What would you think is the best way to dress for an audition?

- A. Wear something that is spot on and literal to the character you want most.
- B. Wear something that fits well, is comfortable, and you can move easily in.
- C. Wear something that has a hint of the character you want most but is comfortable.

The best choice is either B or C. You can wear something that fits well, is comfortable, and you can move easily in. Or you can wear something that has a hint of the character you want most but is comfortable. NEVER show up to an audition in pajama pants or sloppy t-shirt. Look like you care and show respect for the process through the way you dress. Also, being too literal will possibly backfire.

For shoes, be sure to wear something that is comfortable, and you can move in without pain, or slipping or tripping on the stage.

For hair and makeup, a more natural look is preferred. If you have brightly dyed hair, the director will want to know if you are willing to dye your hair to a natural color, or possibly wear a wig. The more flexible you can be with your appearance, the better!

6. Project & Enunciate–If We Can’t Hear You, We Won’t Care!

7. Slow Down! No Word Vomiting!

It seems like pretty basic, well-known information to say that you need to be heard and understood, Right? However, some people tend to freeze up when nervous and speak so softly that the audience can’t hear their voice! Others, may speak loudly enough, but just go so fast that the audience is asking, “What did they just say?” Being too quiet or speaking too fast are equally bad for an audition.

The Art of Theatre and Musical Theatre is all about telling a story! If the audience can’t hear or understand the story you are telling, they will get bored and stop caring about the show. They will want to walk out in frustration!

Remember to TELL THE STORY!!! You as a person need to forget about who you are and be the character that is important to the telling of the story!

Unless you can show you are able to Project, AND Speak Clearly, your chances of being cast are very slim. An actor may or may not have a microphone to help your voice be louder, and sometimes there are technical issues where the microphone quits working as you are on stage. You STILL must be heard by the audience! Unless the director wants a lot of extra work teaching you how to project and slow down, you most likely won't be cast in the show,

Your speaking ability on stage is vitally important! If you walk into an audition and show the director that you can speak strongly on stage, you have shown that they can consider you for a lead role!

8. Record Yourself – Do You See What We See?

Do yourself a HUGE favor and record yourself on video doing your entire audition that you intend to present to the director's panel. By watching yourself, you may catch on to things you are doing that you weren't even aware of!

Start the video to show how you look and sound from how you walk in, how you introduce yourself in your slate, how you look in your wardrobe choice, how your voice volume and speed and pitch sound. Check to see how your expression and emotion come across. Are your hand movements and body motion distracting, or do they add to the story?

It can be very intimidating and scary to think about watching yourself audition on video, but it is seriously one of the most accurate sources of feedback we have at our disposal.

After you have watched and critiqued yourself, ask a supportive family member to watch it with you and ask for their honest, and helpful feedback. Then, instead of getting defensive, look for ways to take their advice and incorporate their suggestions, and your own observations into improving your audition.

9. How Well Do You Follow Directions?- We All Have a Job To Do!

If the audition packet says to sing a song of your choice, then absolutely do that. It means a song or monologue from the show is not required. However, if it says to give a 1-minute monologue or song selection from the show, and you drone on with a 3-minute monologue or an off-show song that you have memorized, that isn't following the directions, and it wastes time.

Fill out your audition form with neat writing. Print is preferred over cursive. You want the director to be able to read your information easily so they can contact you with the cast list.

Be sure to come prepared with all your possible work conflicts and planned absences and vacation days to help the director see if your schedule will be compatible with rehearsals and performance dates. There is nothing more frustrating to a director than having a lot of people who don't come to rehearsals and no heads up about it. We understand sometimes things happen that you can't help, but PLEASE follow the directions about contacting the person responsible for tracking attendance.

10. How Well Do You Treat Others? Kindness Counts!

Many times, in school theatrical productions, or those at a community or professional theatre, people know you because they have worked with you, or they know you by reputation. It is our hope that you have conducted yourself in a way that makes a director want you in their production because you are a hard worker, and a kind person toward others. Makes sense, right?

- **Bonus Tip To Increase Your Value In The Theatre – Be Willing To Do Anything!**

There are so many ways you can be involved in a show besides being a character on the stage! You can help in a huge way by being someone who helps build and paint the set. Organizing costumes and gathering/making props is another way to help. Being a backstage hand is a much-needed way to help people get on and off stage, help them to do quick costume changes, and moving the sets and scenery are big jobs!

Learning to be trained as a spotlight operator, a projection specialist, and a sound tech are very much needed.

Helping to clean up the dressing rooms each night, picking up trash in the auditorium after a show, and taking out the trash when needed without being asked to is especially indicative of good character and shows a director you can be trusted for future shows.

Never underestimate the power of seeing a need and volunteering willingly!

Tips on How To Handle Disappointment

One of the things we risk as a would-be theatre performer when we put ourselves out there in an audition for a part in a show, is the possibility of being disappointed with the results of how the show is cast.

Keep these things in mind as a reality of putting on a show...

A. The process is NOT in your control

1. You control how prepared you are and how you handle yourself for your audition. But that is it! The best you can do is the best you can do!

B. The Director has a very specific vision in mind

1. If you fit the director's vision of the character roles they are trying to cast for their show, then you have a good chance from the start.
2. If you have a "certain something" that the director sees, that goes a long way, even though the other people watching the auditions didn't see that "certain something" that the director saw.
3. Sometimes a director might change their vision if you audition with a strength and uniqueness that their original vision didn't have. You can surprise a director by bringing something to a character role they hadn't thought about before.
4. The director has the final say on how each person fits the director's vision of each role. The look, the personality, the sound. It all plays a part.

If you don't see your name by any of the roles you wanted when the cast list comes out. How do you handle disappointment in a healthy way?

It is okay, healthy, and understandable to...

- A. Be disappointed because you worked hard to prepare, and you believe that you did your best and you still didn't get the role you wanted.
- B. Vent about how you feel in your personal journal.
- C. Vent about how you feel to a trusted and sympathetic member of your family.
- D. Want to cry about your feelings. Grab a box of tissues and let it all out!

It is natural to feel jealous, angry, and frustrated. BUT DON'T...

- A. Vent to other people that were cast in the show saying rude, immature things about how you were "robbed" and deserved the role more than the person who got it. These other cast members would feel like you are someone they want to avoid.
- B. Vent on social media about any bad feelings you have toward the director, the people in the show, or the show itself. This is so immature and will put a bad reflection on you. Directors will NOT want to cast you in any future shows if you have an immature attitude.
- C. Personally put down the person who got the role you wanted and attack them either physically or with rude words.
- D. Go to rehearsals and pout, act rude, and give no effort.

After you have had a chance to process your feelings in one of the healthy ways above, you can decide to move past it and...

- A. Congratulate the other cast members in the show...even the ones who got the roles you auditioned for.
- B. Shake it off! Go put on a video or recording of your favorite musical or play and listen to it with your heart open and remember all the reasons you love theatre!
- C. Remind yourself there will be other opportunities in the future to be a part of another production.
- D. Analyze your audition. Think about your song, your monologue, your readings, your acting, dancing, expression...all of it! What could you improve on next time?
- E. If you know you did the best you could, then you must realize that you did not fit that role in the director's vision for this show. But there will be other shows.
- F. Take on the role you were given and be ULTRA PLUS with that role! Give it all you've got!

If you were not cast in the show or were given a role that doesn't require a lot of stage time, you can look for other ways to help the production behind the scenes whenever and wherever possible. Directors take a lot of notice of the attitudes of cast members and how they treat other people in the show. This, more than anything, affects how people think about you, and if they ever want to work with you again.

What to Do When You Land Your Dream Role

Please Do..

1. Congratulate your fellow cast members. Support and encourage them.

2. Be humble and appreciative about it.
3. Work hard. Learn your lines, songs, blocking, and choreography quickly.
4. Show up to rehearsals
5. Make the rehearsals and the show a top priority
6. Show commitment and dedication
7. Listen to your director and take their instructions
8. If you disagree with something, be respectful when giving your opinion, BUT still be willing to do it the director's way.

What NOT to Do When You Land Your Dream Role

Please Don't...

1. Brag about it and have an entitled attitude
2. Laugh at those who wanted your role and didn't get it
3. Ignore your obligations and commitments by missing rehearsals or shows
4. Put off learning your lines, songs, blocking, and choreography
5. Ignore your director's instructions or act like you know more than them
6. Argue with or be rude to the director. That is the wrong way to disagree.