

AUDITION TIPS

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1 to 6 months before the audition date...

Remember, the earlier you start to work on an audition the better the audition will be!

Find out the date of the audition and coordinate that date with your schedule.

Sign up as early as possible to assure yourself of a time that is convenient for you.

Write down the date and time and put it where you will see it. Enter the date into your phone or on calendar!

Practice fundamentals (scales and arpeggios) that are inevitably on the auditions.

Consult with your private teacher well in advance and make them aware of the upcoming audition. Ask for their help.

Find out if an accompanist is required and/or provided. Make arrangements if needed.

Find out if memorization is required. Even if it is not, try to memorize as much of the music as possible.

Practicing the repertoire...

There are two elements to auditioning: the mental and the physical. Are you thinking about the repertoire, about your playing, and about your attitude as much as you are practicing it?

Find out the specific repertoire for the audition. If you are unclear about the repertoire, then ask questions for clarification. There is no such thing as a stupid question -- rather, it is stupid not to ask a question.

Practice ALL of the specified repertoire.

Don't try to tailor your performance to what you think the judges want. Simply prepare well and play as well as you can.

If there are tempo changes in the pieces, confirm that you are playing the piece at the designated tempo.

Choosing your repertoire: most auditions include works of your own choosing - solos. Choose a work with which you are comfortable and that you play well.

Be flexible. For example, if the requirement is to play an F major scale at a certain tempo, practice it at that tempo as well as faster and slower, using different bowing/articulations. If you play a transposing instrument, practice both in concert pitch and the pitch of your instrument.

If possible, listen to professional recording of the repertoire. This will give you a good idea of style, tempo, and technique. Recordings are available online!

In addition to your orchestra/band teacher and/or private teacher, ask anyone that you think can help you. They will tell you if they don't feel qualified or have the time. Most will feel flattered that you asked.

As you get closer to the audition, practice all of the material for the audition at once so you are used to playing it in order and can work on your endurance.

If appropriate for your instrument/situation, practice standing up -- most auditions are given that way.

Record yourself. This will often help you deal with nerves -- you are your own worst critic.

As you come closer to the audition, you may want to play the audition for colleagues, teachers, or parents. Get used to playing in front of people, even if they are not musicians.

The day of the audition...

Get to the audition with plenty of time to spare, especially if you need to travel a long distance for it.

Do nothing unusual on that day. Get up at the same time, do your chores, errands, and so on, as if you did not have an audition.

Do rest well the night before -- don't sleep in, but don't stay up either.

Do not practice any more or less than you usually would on audition day.

Do not make any changes in your repertoire: changing this fingering or bowing will not help you and will throw off your concentration.

In addition to thinking about the audition, also think about what you will do afterward no matter if you play well or otherwise. Life goes on!

At the audition...

Unless otherwise stated, wear dressy, comfortable clothes. No tennis shoes, jeans, or t-shirts!

Arrive early enough to warm up, but not so early that you will get tired by warming up too much. Remember to give yourself time to sign in. Make sure you don't feel rushed!

Work on your attitude as much as your music. Have fun! Remember that you play music because you like to and because you love music. So, love to play music -- even at the audition!

Be kind to other musicians who are auditioning; they are just as nervous as you.

Be empowered to give yourself the space you need to focus on your audition in the warmup room. You can be kind without engaging in a distracting conversation

Don't show off to others in the warmup room. Politely walk away from anyone who tries to show off to you.

Bring extra copies of music for the judges.

Get into the habit of keeping all your audition music in one place so you don't have to worry about it.

Remember: the judges at your audition have a job to do. They simply want to listen to you doing your best under the circumstances. Most of the time they are friendly, but don't assume that they are your friend. Treat them with the respect they deserve.

There may be times of silence during your audition. Do not read anything into it – the judges may be just getting themselves organized.

The judges may ask you to stop part way through your repertoire. This is common practice, not a judgement of your playing. They will always listen to enough to judge your playing.

Do not ask special privileges from the judges. They are trying to be as fair as possible.

Be prepared to answer questions from the judges.

Often the judges will record an audition. Do not be alarmed by this.

Do not hesitate to ask questions of the judges if something is not clear, unless it is prohibited by the audition committee. Do not try to "chat" with the judges -- keep your questions brief and to the point.

On video auditions...

Plan for one hour of set up, taping, and editing for one minute of music. 10 minutes of music = 10 hours of work.

Recording can be a nerve-wracking experience. The pressure to do well on tape is often greater than in a live audition. Pretend it's a live audition and don't judge your recording too harshly.

Memorize as much of the music as possible.

Practice recording yourself in advance. Listen for your pitch, timing, breathing, bowing, and tone quality.

Photocopy your music and tape it together so there are no unnecessary page turns.

Assume that you only have one take. Each new take can negatively impact your endurance and confidence.

Dealing with the results...

A “no” is an opportunity to learn. Every musician alive has gotten a “no” – probably a lot of them! Sometimes it’s because it wasn’t your day, sometimes it has nothing to do with you. Shake it off. Learn from it. Try again.

A “yes” is something to celebrate! Remember to celebrate a “yes” even when it’s not yours. 😊

Be persistent! The most successful individuals in life fail often and persist onward to their goals!