

BROADWAY 101

A Comprehensive Study Guide covering everything that is Broadway.

Auditions Techniques and Strategies for Actors

How can an actor best prepare for an audition? This is an extremely important question with more than one answer and answers that often differ from person to person. Remember, the audition is subjective - acting teachers/coaches, fellow actors, agents, and casting directors all have their own strong opinions as to what works and what does not. A successful audition depends on many variables. Below are some general rules that can help an actor in doing his/her best throughout the audition process.

Pre-Audition Pointers

- ✓ Understand that knowledge is power - read the audition notice carefully so you are on top of all the audition details and requirements (e.g., type and length of audition piece; make sure the audition material is well-suited to the work or play; make sure the part you're auditioning for is appropriate for you). Note: Many times actors are asked to come with prepared sides (small scene from the play) or monologues. Cold reads (when you read/perform lines for the very first time) are also frequently asked for. Cold reads are a skill that requires practice and experience.
- ✓ Know whom you're auditioning for (e.g., find out who will be on the audition panel).
- ✓ Familiarize yourself with the play you're auditioning for. Understand your character and the world he/she comes from as best as you can.
- ✓ Along with being prepared, be professional and arrive early!
- ✓ The audition starts from the moment you enter the waiting room *and* the audition room. Remain professional and be personable - remember the audition isn't only about your acting skills; it's also about your general character. It's important to the panel to find actors that will fit well with their cast or company. Many casting directors and directors ask this question when putting out final offers - "Can I work with this person?". Make sure the answer to that question as it pertains to you, is "Yes. Absolutely!".
- ✓ Always bring a picture and resume (even if arrangements were made to send your pic/rez before the audition).
- ✓ Dress appropriately by checking the information that was sent to you or from the audition notice. Sometimes there are specific instructions about what to wear, which you need to pay attention to. If there are no specifics regarding dress then wear casual clothes that will not detract from your character (e.g., usually best to wear plain clothes and neutral colors with sensible shoes that aren't too distracting in height or style).
- ✓ Make sure to put your applicable contact information on your resume (e.g., email address, phone numbers, etc.)
- ✓ Memorize or be very familiar with your monologue/sides. Be careful that you don't set things too much in stone, as you still want to appear in the moment and spontaneous, but avoid at all costs the concept of 'winging-it'. Winging-it will only make you appear sloppy and unprofessional.
- ✓ It is not a crime to hold your sides in your hand. This is an audition after all and not a performance!

During the Audition, Make Strong Choices

- ✓ Make the first few seconds of your audition count - they're vital! Remember that casting directors make most of their judgments about you in the first 10 seconds of your audition.
- ✓ Be comfortable, confident, and charismatic. As an actor, exercise your ability to command attention. This is important for the panel to see and feel as they imagine you in role and on stage.
- ✓ Try not to use props; your stage entrance needs to be quick and clean - don't make the audition panel wait while you find props or set pieces to work with. Without props actors can more fully concentrate on his/her speech and more easily adjust / adapt the audition as needed (e.g., physical space, acting adjustments, etc.).
- ✓ At the start of your audition piece, choose a strong opening position and hold it for a brief moment before beginning. It's important to clearly communicate a physical presence and character that matches the selected scene or monologue.
- ✓ Be prepared to take an acting adjustment from the panel. If the casting director asks you to make a choice, do so clearly and confidently. Actors must make strong clear choices when developing characters and when presenting themselves in the audition room.
- ✓ If you make a mistake, don't start over. Do your utmost to keep going even if you think you can't.
- ✓ Don't make excuses. Just do your best.
- ✓ Finish your audition professionally. Don't stand in silence at the end of your audition speech. This creates an awkward moment for both you and the audition panel. Finish by simply holding in character for a moment at the end of your performance before returning to a neutral position. Make eye contact with the panel, say "thank you," and make a quick, clean exit.

Post-Audition Pointers

- ✓ Auditions can result in getting parts but more often the results of auditioning deals with being rejected. Remember, many factors are involved in selecting an actor for a role- don't take it personally. If you remain polite and positive, the casting director will be more open and willing to audition you for future projects.
- ✓ Be your own best judge. When you leave the room ask yourself the following questions: "How do I think I did? What could I have done better? What worked? What didn't work?"
- ✓ Audition, audition, audition....the best way to master auditioning is to do it again and again. The more you do, the more familiar you'll be with your nerves; with what works for you and what does not. Look at an audition as opportunities for free coaching and training!

Remember, the audition panel wants you to be outstanding because they want to find top talent so they can put together a great cast and a hit show!