



PREPARING FOR AN AUDITION

I have played over 10,000 auditions in my 40-year career as a professional pianist. I have seen successful auditions, unsuccessful auditions, and everything in between. I guarantee that if you follow the guidelines below, you will greatly improve your chances of getting a callback and landing your dream role.

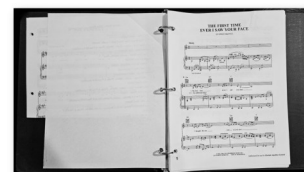
~Justin Gray~

PREPARING THE MUSIC

DO'S AND DON'TS FOR EVERY AUDITION!

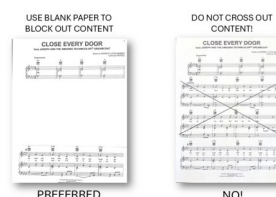
- **Music should be double-sided and put in a 3-ring binder**, or in a well-worn book that stays open easily, or printed on card stock and taped together. *Never bring in loose sheets.*
- **If using sheet protectors**, make sure they are *non-glare*.
- **When making cuts**, be careful not to remove time and key signature or any other important information about the feel of the piece (e.g. swing, straight).
- **Completely block out the music you want cut.** Use a blank piece of paper to block out the unwanted section. *Don't just cross it out with a pencil.*
- **Decide ahead of time whether you will have a short intro or a bell tone.** Don't just write "Start here" with no forethought of how you and the pianist are going to get started.
- **Always test drive your piece before taking it to an audition.** Just because you found the sheet music online does not mean that the key is appropriate for your voice or that it will sound like the commercial recording you heard on YouTube.
- **Pay attention to the time limits set by the theater.** If they say 45 seconds, don't bring in a song that takes 60 seconds, *especially if your "money note" is at the end of the song.*
- **Vocal sides (from scripts) are not acceptable.** They are found in rented scripts and have only the melody and lyrics. Lead sheets have chords and can be used if you know that the pianist can play from them (not all pianists can). *It's much better to bring in a piano vocal arrangement.* Make sure the melody is always included in the arrangement. Otherwise, the pianist won't know if you've accidentally skipped a measure.
- **E-readers are acceptable.** *Make sure they have enough charge to last thru your song* (yes, I've had iPads darken on me halfway thru).
- **Avoid singing from shows that are popular at the time.** It means you will be singing the same song as 19 other people. Find something unique!
- **It's ok to sing from the show but it is risky.** *You have to absolutely nail it.* It's better to choose a song in the same style (or even the same composer). Once you get a callback, you'll have the opportunity to sing from the show.
- **Many arrangements found online are not up to industry standards** and are challenging to read. One of the best sources is www.musicnotes.com

NOTEBOOK EXAMPLE



THREE-RING BINDER IS BEST

PROPER WAY TO MAKE CUTS



SHEET MUSIC EXAMPLES



WALKING IN THE ROOM

CONFIDENCE AND FIRST IMPRESSIONS ARE HUGE!

- **Enter the room with confidence** and immediately give your music notebook to the pianist. Remember that the artistic team sees many people in a day and they don't have time to chat. *Know where your music is in your notebook* so that the pianist doesn't have to look for it. Also, it does the pianist no good for you to hold the notebook while describing how you want it to sound.
- **Treat the accompanist with respect.** He/she may be the Music Director and may have a voice on whether or not you get a callback.
- **Stay out of the personal space of the pianist.**
- **Don't ask for a starting note or to hear your intro.** Music directors become a little wary of singers who can't find their starting pitch from the intro. *This should be practiced at home until you have it down.* No excuses.
- **Don't admit that you've never heard the song with piano** (and never come in that unprepared).
- **Don't ask the pianist if they know the song.** It's insulting. The pianist was hired for their sight-reading ability. If your music is clear and marked correctly, they will play it just fine.





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PRESENTING YOUR SONG

PRIORITIZE YOUR GOALS!

- **The primary goal of an audition is not to get the role;** it is to get a callback. Then the playing field is leveled once more, and you will have a chance to demonstrate that you are the best person for the role.
- **Always have a notebook of audition songs with contrasting styles** and always know everything in your notebook.
- **If the pianist's tempo is way off,** it's okay to stop and politely fix it. It's far preferable, though, to just sing the tempo you want and make the pianist follow you.
- **Know what the song is about.** Nothing is more boring (or embarrassing) than a singer who doesn't act the song. An actor who sings will almost always get the gig over a singer who acts. Singers take acting and dance classes. Dancers take singing lessons. Triple threats (sing, act, dance) get hired more than those who specialize in only one or two disciplines.
- **Personal note:** *As a music director, I am often in a position to choose the dancers in an ensemble. The choreographer will identify his best dancers from the dance call and ask me to tell him which ones can sing well.*



EXITING THE ROOM

RESPECT THE NEED FOR TIMELINESS!

- **After your audition is done, thank the team and leave.** If they want to hear something else, they will stop you.
- **Do not shake hands with the pianist.** While showing respect and being grateful are natural responses, please understand that we are playing for dozens (sometimes hundreds of people) in one evening and we prefer not to share your germs. Besides, shaking a sweaty hand is just gross!

