



# AUDITION HANDBOOK

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# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Ridgecrest Musical Enrichment Society! Whether you are a seasoned performer or stepping onto the stage for the first time, auditioning for a production can be both exciting and intimidating. We created this Audition Handbook to walk you through what to expect during a standard RMES adult musical audition. Inside, you will find guidelines on audition logistics, vocal and dance requirements, cold readings, and callbacks. Our goal is to make the process as transparent and stress-free as possible so you can feel confident, prepared, and ready to shine.

# AUDITION MUSIC & RESOURCES

Below is a list of recommended websites for purchasing audition materials to help you prepare for a successful RMES audition.

<http://www.karaoke-version.com>

<https://pianotrax.com>

<http://musicminusone.com>

<http://sheetmusicplus.com>

<https://www.musicnotes.com/>

<https://www.sheetmusicdirect.com/>

<http://www.halleonard.com>

<http://jwpepper.com>

iTunes

# DAY 1: VOCAL AUDITIONS

Please refer to the event description to ensure you know exactly what the directors are looking for each day of the auditions, as it may vary by production. This guide covers what typically happens at an adult musical audition.



## General Notes:

1. **Be on time.**
2. **Come dressed to impress.**
3. **Bring a copy of a recent photo** if you did not submit one electronically. If you do not have a recent photo, we will take one onsite.
4. **Be quiet while others are auditioning.**
5. **Plan on being there the entire audition time**, unless told otherwise by a director or casting team member.

## Audition Spaces

At most auditions, there are two areas you should be aware of: the **Waiting Room** and the **Audition Room**.

### 1. The Waiting Room

The Waiting Room is where you will:

- Complete any audition paperwork that was not submitted online.
- Have your photo taken, if needed.
- Ask the audition crew any questions you may have before your audition.
- Receive any additional instructions before entering the Audition Room.

The Waiting Room may sometimes be located in the same space as the Audition Room.

**Report to the Waiting Room first** so we can make sure all of your paperwork is complete and that we have a recent photo of you. Once an RMES crew member confirms that everything is in order, you will be directed to the Audition Room.

Remember that all RMES crew members are working with the directors and casting team and will report back to them regarding what is happening in the Waiting Room. Please be

friendly, courteous, and respectful toward every crew member you encounter.

**TIP:** *If you need a place to warm up your voice before your audition, we recommend doing so in your car before entering the Waiting Room.*

## **2. The Audition Room**

When you enter the Audition Room, your first priority should be to check in with the person handling your accompaniment.

### **A. MP3 Performance Track**

If you are using an MP3 track for your accompaniment, locate the **sound engineer** when you enter the room.

Please:

1. Greet the sound engineer and provide the device you will be using.
2. Tell the sound engineer which track you will be performing.
3. Tell them exactly where in the track your audition piece should begin.

**Ideally, your accompaniment track should contain only your audition selection, edited to the appropriate starting point and length.**

**IMPORTANT:** Under **no circumstances** may your accompaniment track contain **any voices or vocals**.

### **B. Live Accompaniment**

If an accompanist is available and you would like to use their services, please introduce yourself to the accompanist when you enter the room.

**Please do not assume that RMES will provide a live accompanist.**

If you are using a live accompanist:

1. Bring a **clean, unbound copy** of your sheet music.
2. Provide the music to the accompanist when you arrive.
3. Let the accompanist know the **tempo** you would like—the speed at which you would like the piece performed.
4. Point out any sections of the music that may require particular attention, such as tempo changes, cuts, repeats, or unusual entrances.

If you are providing your **own accompanist**, please proceed directly to the piano together unless otherwise instructed by an RMES crew member.

## Before Starting Your Piece

After you have provided your accompaniment material to the accompanist or sound engineer, move to the center of the room and face the directors. In some cases, an “X” may be marked on the floor to indicate where you should stand.

Once you are in position, wait for the directors to finish making any notes from the previous auditionee before introducing yourself.

When the directors are ready and looking at you, introduce yourself and briefly identify the piece you will be performing. For example:

“Good evening, my name is John Doe, and I will be singing ‘Oh, What a Beautiful Morning’ from the musical *Oklahoma!*”

Practice your introduction ahead of time. Make eye contact with the directors, speak clearly and slowly enough to be understood, and try to sound confident and comfortable.

When you have finished your introduction, give a small head nod to the accompanist or sound engineer to let them know you are ready to begin.

# As You Perform

As you sing, keep two things in mind:

## 1. Be aware of your distance from the directors.

Keep your staging at a comfortable distance. Avoid moving so close to the directors that you make them feel uncomfortable.

## 2. Avoid making direct eye contact with the directors while singing.

You should still perform the song as though you are singing to someone if the piece calls for it. However, rather than looking directly at the directors, look just past them or slightly to the side, as though you are singing to another person within the scene. This allows you to stay in character while keeping the directors focused on your performance.

**NOTE:** *For time-management purposes, the directors may ask you to stop before you have finished your selection.*

# What are the directors evaluating at the vocal auditions?

During a vocal audition, directors evaluate several key areas:

- **Vocal technique** (posture, rhythm, breathing, note accuracy)
- **Diction** (clarity of consonants, purity and naturalness of vowels)
- **Volume** (projection and dynamic control)
- **Tone** (beauty and control of the natural voice)
- **Song interpretation** (expression, phrasing, style, tempo)
- **Intonation** (pitch accuracy)

Each element helps give a full picture of the singer's skill and musicality.

## Once Your Song is Finished

When you have finished singing, thank the directors (for example, simply say, “Thank you”), collect your accompaniment materials, and proceed to the area where your vocal range will be checked, if requested.

Relax—you’ve made it through the most challenging part of the vocal audition! At this point, the directors primarily need to determine your general voice type (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, or Bass) and may have you sing a few notes to help establish your range.

Once you have completed this portion of the audition, you are free to leave unless a director gives you additional instructions.

## DAY 2: VOCAL AUDITIONS, DANCING, COLD READING, & SIGHT SINGING

Please refer to the event's audition description to make sure you know exactly what the directors are looking for on the second day of auditions, as the requirements may vary from production to production.

**If vocal auditions continue on the second audition date,** refer to the previous section for information on preparing for your vocal audition. You should also be prepared for the **Dancing, Cold Reading, and Sight-Singing** portions that are typically included on Day 2.



## General Notes

1. **Be on time.**
2. **Come dressed to move.** Everyone will participate in the dance portion of the audition.
3. **Bring a sealable bottle of water.**
4. **Bring a change of clothes** for after the dance portion, in case time is provided to change. The directors will let everyone know if there is time and space available to change.
5. **Be quiet and respectful** while others are auditioning.
6. Plan to remain at the audition for the entire scheduled audition period unless a director or casting team member tells you otherwise.

## The Audition Room

Unless otherwise instructed, go directly into the audition room when you arrive.

Once inside, crew members will be available to provide nametags and markers. Take a nametag and write your name on it **in large, easy-to-read letters**.

Find a seat and remain quiet until the directors are ready to begin.

## The Song — If Needed

If the directors determine that a vocal portion is needed on Day 2, the vocal director will announce the section of music that everyone will learn.

Typically, you will have approximately **5–15 minutes** to learn the music before moving on to the dance portion. Copies of the sheet music will be provided as needed.

Everyone will move into the dance space and learn a simple melody, which will generally be sung together in unison.

# The Dance Rehearsal

After the vocal director has finished teaching the song, if one is being used, the choreographer will take over and begin teaching the choreography.

The choreographer will typically divide everyone into rows of approximately **5–8 people** and alternate between the rows while teaching the choreography.

During this portion of the audition:

- **Pay close attention** to the choreographer.
- **Do not talk** while choreography is being taught.
- **Listen carefully** and try to follow the instructions as closely as possible.
- Smile and show the choreographer that you are willing to try what they are asking you to do.

The choreography may include both easy and more challenging movements. This gives the directors an opportunity to see each person's individual skill level and ability to learn choreography.

**Remember:** You are not expected to be an expert dancer. Regardless of your dance experience, the directors want to see that you are willing to try, have fun, and step outside your comfort zone.

# The Dance Audition

Once the choreographer has finished teaching the piece, everyone will be given approximately five minutes for a break. You can also continue practicing before the casting team begins watching the dance auditions.

After the break, a director will have everyone line up again in rows of approximately **5–8 people**. The casting team will then watch each row perform the designated section of choreography.

Those who are waiting for their turn may be allowed to continue practicing while the group in front of the directors is performing.

**NOTE:** *If the dance audition includes singing, you are encouraged to sing out. This can help support your fellow auditionees who are dancing in front of the directors.*

After your row has finished performing, the directors will instruct you where to go to wait. You may be asked to move to the back of the group or to another area of the room.

The directors may ask your row to perform the choreography a second time, or they may later ask you to join a different group or row. Pay attention to all instructions and be prepared to perform again if asked.

## **What are the directors evaluating at the dance auditions?**

During one's dance audition, the directors assess the following:

- **Overall form** (body alignment, posture, expression, and how well they maintain control, grace, and proper technique)
- **Timing** (choreography that is in sync with the music)
- **Commitment** (energy, focus, and intention within the performance)
- **Proficiency** (accuracy, control, skill)
- **Ensemble awareness** (stay connected and coordinated with the group)

Evaluating these areas helps directors identify each performer's strengths, readiness, and fit within the overall production.

## Post-Dance Intermission

Following the dance portion of auditions, there will be a 10–15 minute break before transitioning to the next phase.

- **Changing Clothes:** You are welcome to change out of your dance attire during this time if dressing space is available.
- **Reassembling:** Once the break concludes, please return promptly to the seating area inside the audition room and wait quietly for instructions from the director.

## Cold Readings & Sight-Singing

Script requirements vary by show—some feature extensive dialogue, while others are entirely sung through. Depending on the production and the directors' needs:

- **Cold Readings:** You may be asked to read excerpts ("sides") from the script.
- **Sight-Singing:** You may be asked to sing short passages from the score.

All scripts and musical excerpts will be provided on-site.

# 1. Cold Reading

The stage director will lead this portion of auditions, calling performers individually or in groups to read selected scenes from the script.

- **Procedure:** When called, proceed directly to the reading area. The director will specify the script page, character roles, and starting/stopping points for the scene.
- **Script Perusal:** Be sure to check [www.rmesonline.com](http://www.rmesonline.com) the week before auditions to see if perusal scripts are available for review.



## Performance Tips for Cold Reading:

- **Lift Your Eyes:** Look up from the page as much as possible to connect with the directors and fellow actors.
- **Follow Stage Directions:** Pay attention to stage directions printed in the script and incorporate them unless directed otherwise.

## What are the directors evaluating during the cold readings?

During one's cold reading, the directors are assessing the following:

- **Believability** (authentic reactions, natural delivery, and emotional truth— so the performance feels genuine rather than “acted”)
- **Volume** (proper vocal technique to match the size of the space and the emotional tone of the scene)
- **Physicality** (posture, movement, gestures, facial expressions that convey to convey their character, mood, and emotions)

- **Control of material** (ability to authentically express and regulate their character's emotions while maintaining professional discipline and staying true to the scene's tone)

## 2. Sight Singing

The vocal director will lead this portion of auditions, calling performers individually, in small groups, or as a full ensemble to sing selected musical excerpts.

- **Procedure:** Sheet music will be provided on-site and may or may not be from the show being produced. When called, proceed to the sight-singing area. The vocal director will specify the page number, measure numbers, and voice part assigned to you.
- **Group Warm-up:** The vocal director may lead the whole group through a selection a few times before asking performers to sing individually or in small groups.



### Performance Tips for Sight-Singing:

- **Lift Your Eyes:** Get your head out of the sheet music as much as possible to connect with the directors and showcase your expressiveness.
- **Observe Musical Markings:** Pay close attention to dynamic markings and stylistic cues written in the score, incorporating them unless given specific adjustments by the director.

## What are the directors evaluating during the sight singing?

During the sight singing portion of the audition (if needed), directors continue evaluating vocal technique and also observe a performer's:

- **Sight Reading** (the ability to read and perform a piece of music *on the spot*—without having seen or practiced it beforehand)
- **Rehearsal Etiquette** (the respectful, professional behavior expected from cast and crew during rehearsals)
- **Memorization** (a person's ability to **quickly and accurately remember** information—like lines, lyrics, choreography, or cues—in a short amount of time and retain it for performance)

## DAY 2 OR 3: CALL BACKS

Callback requirements vary by production. Please refer to the specific event description for exact details on what the directors will be looking for during this session.



## What to Expect

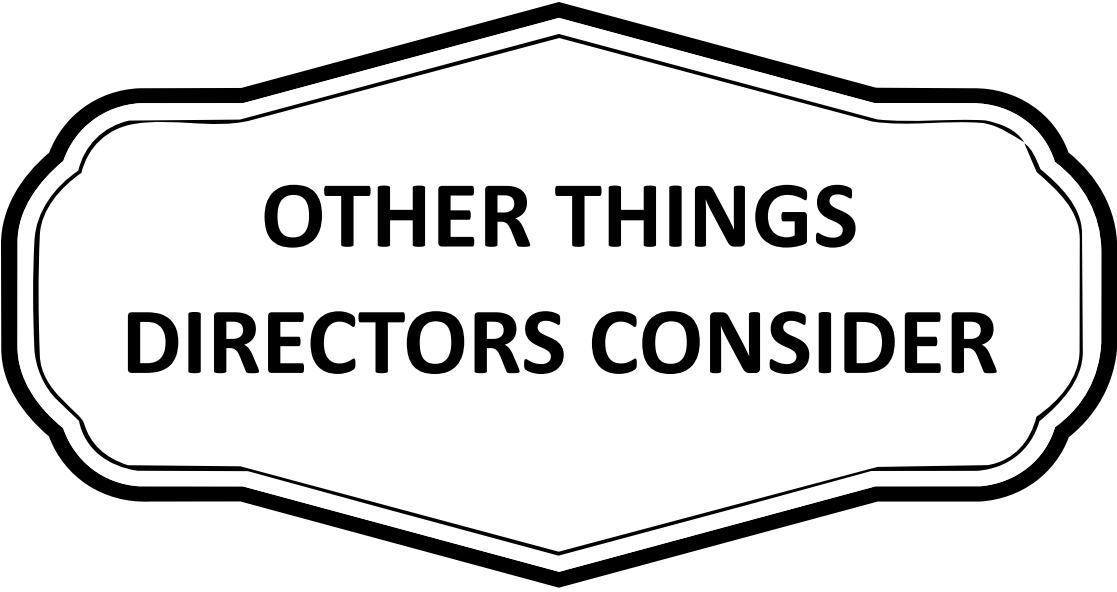
In most cases, the creative team has already made decisions for certain roles based on initial auditions. Callbacks are typically used to evaluate performers for specific characters where decisions are still pending.

**Not receiving a callback does not mean you have not been cast.**

Callbacks primarily focus on cold reading and sight-singing, though additional dance evaluation may occasionally be requested.

## General Callback Rules

1. **Be on time.**
2. **Attire:** Dress neatly and professionally, ensuring your outfit allows for comfortable movement. Bring a change of dance-friendly clothes just in case.
3. **Bring a water bottle** with your name on it.
4. **Etiquette:** Remain quiet and respectful while others are auditioning.
5. **Availability:** Plan to stay for the entire scheduled callback window unless explicitly dismissed by a director.
6. **Attitude:** Bring a positive, cooperative mindset—follow the same general guidelines as Day 2.



# **OTHER THINGS DIRECTORS CONSIDER**

## **1. Availabilitiy**

Directors will compare the conflicts you listed on your audition form to the production calendar to see where conflicts (if any) fall.

## **2. Preparation**

Directors usually give auditionees guidelines for a successful audition, and it's essential that these are followed closely.

## **3. Personal character**

Are you dependable? Do you have a good attitude? Do you have a good work ethic? Are you a team player? Directors will try to answer these questions during the auditions.

## **4. Do you fit the Director's vision for the show?**

Each director usually has a vision for how characters should look and/or sound in their production, which might differ from your expectations—but that vision can evolve based on what they see during auditions.



# CASTING

Following the conclusion of the auditions, the directors will meet to finalize the cast. An official cast list will be sent via email within two weeks of the auditions. Those cast in the show will need to respond ASAP to let directors know whether they've accepted the part(s) they've been offered. The cast list may also be posted on the RMES Facebook and website at a later point.

Unfortunately, not everyone will be cast after auditions due to limited roles and varying cast sizes from show to show.

If you aren't cast this time, don't be discouraged! It doesn't mean you're not talented, it just means your journey isn't over! In fact, every great performer has faced auditions that didn't go their way. We encourage you to keep growing and auditioning — we would love to see you at future auditions!



## ADDITIONAL HELP

If you wish to continue developing your skills as a performer, RMES encourages you to consider additional training in **voice, acting, or dance**. Private or group instruction can help you build confidence, strengthen your technique, expand your range of abilities, and prepare you for future auditions and performances.

Whether you are new to musical theatre or have been performing for years, continued instruction can be a valuable way to grow as a performer.

In this section, we have provided information about **local instructors and programs offering voice, acting, and dance instruction** that may be helpful as you continue developing your skills.

## Acting Instruction

While we're not aware of any private acting instructors in Ridgecrest, you can still grow as a performer by auditioning for local productions and exploring online tutorials. To stay informed about local theatre opportunities, be sure to follow the Facebook pages for CLOTA, Master Mystery Productions, and RMES.

## Vocal Instruction

The **High Desert Music Teachers Association** (HDMTA) can help you find the right vocal instructor:

<http://www.hdmta.org/>

## Dance Instruction

There are two excellent dance studios in town:

### **The Sierra Academy of Dance**

1008 Kyle Ct, Ridgecrest, CA 93555

<https://www.sierradanceacademy.com/>

### **Simplicity Performing Arts Studio**

133 Panamint Ave, Ridgecrest, CA 93555