

Performing Arts High Schools: Preparing Your Audition/Arts Portfolio

How to Prepare for a Drama/Theater Audition

Requirements Different schools have different audition requirements – check your High School Directory for specific requirements. In general, students may be required to do any of the following:

Recite two prepared monologues. The two monologues should differ in style (for example, one comic and one dramatic) and meet the following requirements:

- All monologues should be published. Original student writing or internet monologue material is not appropriate.
- All monologues should be 1-2 minutes in length.
- Monologue characters should be age-appropriate.
- Generally, classical theater or verse such as Shakespeare is discouraged unless the student can reveal real facility with complex language.

Participate in theater games or improvisations in order for auditioners to judge students' ability to collaborate in a group and to be spontaneously creative.

Verbally answer questions about reasons for wanting to be in a theater program in general and at that school in particular. Auditioners will want to know that students are committed to this particular school and the demands of a theater program.

Sing a musical selection from a Broadway show (for students applying to musical theater programs only). Check with individual schools about their musical theater audition requirements.

Note: Schools may call students back to present their monologues a second time. Typically, no additional preparation would be required for a "call back" audition.

Monologue Criteria: The specific criteria by which students are evaluated vary among schools. However, auditioners may look for the following features:

- ✓ Dramatic Understanding
- ✓ Characterization
- ✓ Diction
- ✓ Clarity of Communication
- ✓ No Costume or Prop Pieces

Preparing a Monologue: Audition monologues are available from a variety of print and published sources. Please consider the following recommendations:

You may select either an independent monologue or a monologue taken directly from a play and edited for your purposes. If you select a monologue from a play, please be aware of the entire play from which the monologue is taken. You should read the play and be familiar with the character you are portraying.

Listed below are some published monologue books to consider. These books are readily available online or at the Drama Bookshop, 250 W 40th St., New York, NY 10018: (212) 944-0595. The Performing Arts Library at Lincoln Center is also a good resource for monologue books.

- *Audition Monologues for Student Actors: Selections from Contemporary Plays* by Roger Ellis
- *Red Licorice: Monologues for Young People* by Carole Tippit
- *Monologues for Young Actors* by Lorraine Cohen
- *100 Great Monologues: A Versatile Collection of Monologs, Duologs and Trilogys for Student Actors* by Rebecca Young
- *Multiplicity: A Collection of Monologues for Student Performance* by R. James Scott & Bianca Cowan

Students should be coached on the presentation of the monologue for the above criteria. If you have an in-school theater teacher, ask for assistance with your preparation. An English teacher may also be able to help.

At the audition, students should be prepared to announce their name, monologue selection and the playwright. For example: "My name is _____. I will be performing one of Anne's monologues from *The Diary of Anne Frank* by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett."

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How to Prepare for a Music Audition

Selecting and Practicing Your Audition Repertoire

- Choose your repertoire well in advance of the audition.
- Select music that is written specifically for solo instrument or voice (not music for which your instrument or vocal part provides the harmony for other instruments or voices).
- Select music that highlights your strengths. A difficult selection played or sung well can show off your skills. However, an easier selection played or sung with strong musicality and good intonation can be equally impressive.
- When practicing, prepare slow, expressive parts as carefully as you would up-tempo, technically challenging sections.
- Isolate and practice your weak areas. Spend time building your capacity so that all sections of your piece are performed with equal competency.
- Use a tuner and a metronome during the early stages of your practice to help with pitch and rhythm.
- Practice performing your audition repertoire in front of an audience. Ask them to critique your performance and overall presentation.
- Practice sight-reading every day.

Vocal Audition

- Prepare at least two pieces in contrasting styles from memory. However, you may not be asked to sing a second selection.
- Prepare one song in a foreign language, if possible.
- Choose songs from musical theater productions, American traditions, world-folk traditions, or art song collections. Note, most schools discourage performing R&B, Rock, and Rap selections for the audition. Check each school's preferences.
- Be prepared to match pitches, echo rhythms and melodies provided by the adjudicator.
- Be prepared to vocalize (arpeggios, leaps, runs, etc.) to demonstrate vocal range and placement.

Instrumental Audition

- Prepare one piece that can be played through to the end.
- Be prepared to play a second selection in a contrasting style or tempo. However, you may not be asked to play a second selection.
- Be prepared to sight read a short musical passage (4-8 measures).
- Be prepared to play at least one scale and know all required scales from memory. However, it is acceptable to use sheet music when playing your prepared audition selection(s).

Resources for Selecting your Repertoire

- Ask your music teacher for help when selecting repertoire.
- New York State School Music Association Manual, Edition 31. A professional resource for teachers and conductors, this book contains graded lists of repertoire for all voice types and instruments. It is available in some libraries or may be purchased from www.nyssma.org at a cost of \$55.
- You may be able to purchase sheet music for your repertoire at the following stores: Sam Ash Music, The Guitar Center Stores, Music Time (on line), J. W. Pepper (on line), Catalano Music (Long Island).

General Audition Advice

- ✓ Keep going even if you make a mistake. Do not get flustered. The adjudicator is most interested in determining your potential.
- ✓ If the adjudicator asks you to change the way you performed a passage, it doesn't necessarily mean you played or sang it incorrectly. He or she may wish to see how readily you are able to receive feedback and/or make a correction.

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How to Prepare for a Dance Audition

Requirements: Different schools have different audition requirements – Check your High School Directory for specific requirements. In general, students may be required to do any of the following:

Participate in a dance class. Dance classes usually involve a combination of ballet and modern dance techniques, though some schools may require separate classes for each style. Some schools may also require students to participate in other forms of dance in the class, such as jazz or improvisation.

Perform a solo dance.

- The solo should show off the student’s best dance and performance abilities.
- Students should prepare a solo piece of original choreography, although some schools may allow pieces choreographed by someone other than the student.
- The solo may be in a style other than ballet or modern dance (such as Jazz, African, or Indian Classical dance) if that has been the student’s primary training.
- Schools may require the solo dance to be anywhere from 1 to 3 minutes in length.
- In some schools, all students have a chance to perform their solo pieces. In other schools, only students who are called back after the technique class will perform their solo pieces.

Complete a written audition. Some schools require students either to write an essay about why they want to attend the school or to take an exam to determine the extent of their dance knowledge.

Dance Criteria: The specific way students are evaluated varies among schools. However, keep in mind the following criteria:

Poise and appearance, as shown through neatness and attentiveness

Attitude: Appropriate classroom behavior, showing respect to teachers and peers, a sense of commitment to dance, and a desire to learn

Technical Ability: Demonstrated achievement in dance technique and the ability to pick up new movement information, take verbal and demonstrated corrections, and revise one’s work on the spot

Body Alignment: Knowledge of basic anatomical relationships

Musicality and Rhythm

Creativity, as shown in improvisation and the student’s solo choreography

Performance Skills: The ability to communicate with an audience

General Understanding of Dance, as demonstrated in movement and/or in verbal or written form

Attire: Students should come dressed in appropriate dance clothes for ballet and modern dance work: Footless tights, leotard, soft ballet slippers (no pointe shoes unless specifically requested). Other recommendations:

Wear solid colors – no fancy appliqués or patterns.

Do not wear midriff-baring outfits.

Do not wear baggy shirts or baggy pants.

Hair should be neatly pulled off the face in a bun or pony tail if long or neatly combed if short. This applies to girls and boys alike.

Remember to Bring to Your Audition

- ✓ Your Audition Ticket
- ✓ Your dance clothes and shoes
- ✓ A pen/pencil
- ✓ The tape or CD for your solo
- ✓ A light snack and water