

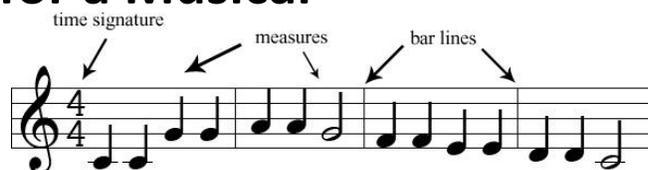
How to Audition for a Musical - Quiz

A close friend of yours is about to audition for a musical for the very first time. They have seen a few musicals but are not well versed in the field. See if you can answer these questions for them on auditioning.

1. I don't know anything about this musical. Is that ok? How would I go about getting more information?
2. The audition says I need to pick a song. How do I choose a song to sing? What type and how long, too?
3. Where do I find sheet music?
4. What will be expected of me at an audition? What will I have to do?

Auditioning for a Musical

TIPS FOR AUDITIONING:



- No long intros. 2 – 4 bars works.
- Resume and headshot (even if you don't have a headshot, a professional resume is a must, even if it doesn't contain much experience.)
- Audition on the earliest day possible (when you can still wow the panel and before they have mentally cast the show without you)
- Be well prepared. Know your notes, lyrics, and research without hesitation, and arrive warmed up (though continue to warm up until you perform, if allowed/possible).
- Choose a song that is similar to the musical, composer, character, or style of the musical based on your research.
- Dress professionally. This is the same as a job interview, but be prepared to move as well.
 - NO Jeans, UGGs, flip flops, sweatpants, hoodies.
- If there is a movement audition, make sure to have clothes to move freely in but that also show your body line.
 - Bring appropriate shoes. (Dancers should typically bring character heels as well as other options to be prepared for any eventuality.)
- SLATE: Announce your name, the title of the song, and the composer or musical it is from. Make sure to show your true self and make eye contact with the panel as you do this.
- Be kind to the pianist:
 - Show (and have clearly marked) where to start and stop the song.
 - Explain (and have marked) any cuts you want in the music and show how fast to play the song by singing a couple of bars quietly in tempo. (Snapping or clapping at the pianist for tempo is considered bad auditioning etiquette or RUDE. Just sing at tempo quietly).
 - Give a good copy of the music, in your key, that won't fall off the piano.
 - Try taping your sheet music together or tape it and put it in a binder to save the pianist from page turns.
- Show some "release". Get into the character of the song and show what you and your voice are like.
- Realize that everyone feels nervous. Try to be yourself (or your non-nervous self) and have fun! A great idea is to imagine someone you feel comfortable singing in front of in the audience.

DO YOUR RESEARCH

- Be well acquainted with the music. Nowadays you can usually find the music free online (YouTube, Spotify, Google Play, etc). Get a feel for the style so you can make your audition piece try to fit it.

- Be acquainted with the looks from past productions by looking up pictures, videos, and websites. YouTube is great for this – but remember that not all videos are equal.
- Be acquainted with the background of the musical.
 - Did it receive awards? For what?
 - Any well-known performers famous for their roles in this show?
 - Famous production staff (directors, composers, choreographers, etc)
- Read the script if possible. (Many scripts can now be found on-line if you look carefully for PDF's of the full script). If you can't read the script, at least read the summaries of the plot and characters.
- Understand how the characters fit into the show and plot, and which ones might fit your abilities. Be honest! If you have NEVER been in a show, starting in the chorus might be right.
- Use the above information to influence your choice of music, attire, and character.

Looking for Sheet Music? Try These Resources:

- Musicnotes.com
- Imslp.com
- 4shared.com (need to make free account)
- Google *show name PDF* and many vocal books will come up in the first few results.

TIPS ON HOW NOT TO AUDITION

- Don't bring your friends to hang out with or to try to watch you audition
- Don't wear a costume (though angling toward the show style, era or even a character trait might be good – for example if the character you want always wears red, wearing red couldn't hurt.)
- Don't be too personal with the director (even if you know him/her.) Be professional. It IS an interview.
- Don't make excuses (for singing, clothes, preparedness, or even illness.)
- Don't arrive unprepared.
- Don't project fear. Don't fidget. Stand up straight and confident. Relax, take a deep breath, and do your best.
- Don't do full choreography or pantomime the words.
- Don't sing a song from the show you are auditioning for.
- HIGHLY RECOMMENDED: *Don't sing songs from Wicked, Les Miserables, Phantom of the Opera, Disney, or anything Sondheim or Jason Robert Brown. These types of songs are difficult for rhythm reasons and very rarely fit the show in question.
 - *ONLY sing these songs if they DIRECTLY relate to what you are auditioning for: for example, sing Sondheim if auditioning for Sondheim.

Musical Theatre Styles

*This is **not** an all-encompassing list, and many of these styles overlap or may be called something else. However, this is a great way to start a professional auditioning portfolio. Try to find sheet music, in your key, that fits each of these genres. More than one piece in each genre helps. That way you will be prepared for most auditions that come your way and have a way to keep your sheet music organized. (Though always do the research on the specifics from the show you are auditioning for to make your choice fits the characters and feel of the show.)*

1. Operetta (1870s-1920s) *(Called light opera.)*

Gilbert & Sullivan, Franz Lehar, Sigmund Romberg, various others

2. Early MT Standard (1900s-20s) *(Standard songs that were often used in more than one musical. Stories of this time were often music heavy, less story.)*

George M. Cohan, Victor Herbert, Jerome Kern, Howard Talbot

3. Jazz Age Standard (1920s-40s) *(Standard songs that were often used in more than one musical. Stories of this time were often music heavy, less story.)*

Cole Porter, George Gershwin, Rodgers & Hart, Kurt Weill, Noel Coward, Harold Arlen, Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern (later works), Arthur Schwartz, Vernon Duke, Marc Blitzstein, Vincent Youmans

4. Golden Age Standard (1940s-60s) *(This was considered the beginning of the story-driven musicals. Many of these were made famous by becoming movies – which have since been made back into stage musicals.)*

Rodgers & Hammerstein, Lerner & Loewe, Leonard Bernstein, Frank Loesser, Jule Styne, Bock & Harnick, Adler & Ross, Burton Lane, Meredith Wilson, Harold Rome, Jerry Ross, Cole Porter (later works), Irving Berlin (later works)

5. Post-Golden Age Standard (1960s-70s) *(Much of the work of famous choreographer/director Bob Fosse falls into this category. This era had its own definite flavor.)*

Kander & Ebb, Cy Coleman, Jerry Herman, Harvey Schmidt, David Shire, Charles Strouse

6. Sondheim (1960s-present) *(All songs/musicals written by Stephen Sondheim)*

Stephen Sondheim (select songs by Adam Guettel, Michael John LaChiusa, Jeanine Tesori, Scott Frankel, and others may also work for this category).

7. Musical Theatre Pop/Rock (1960s-present) *(These are musicals with a more modern flavor of the music of the times they were written in. Choose 1 song from each sub category: 60's/70's, 80's/90's, 2000 – current)*

Stephen Schwartz, Ahrens & Flaherty, Alan Menken, William Finn, Marvin Hamlisch, Jason Robert Brown, Marc Shaiman, Andrew Lippa, Henry Krieger, Robert Lopez, David Yazbek, Frank Wildhorn, Andersson & Ulvaeus, Mel Brooks, Jonathan Larson, Duncan Sheik, Tom Kitt, David Bryan, Lawrence O'Keefe, Damon Intra Bartolo, Pasek & Paul, Michael Friedman, Paul Scott Gordon, Galt MacDermot, Elton John, Stephen Trask, Richard O'Brien.

8. Jukebox & Radio Tunes (1950s-present) *(These “standards” (popular radio tunes) might work for musicals based in those eras. Choose at least 1 from each sub category: 50's/60's/70's and 80's/90's)*

Songs may be drawn from jukebox musicals, radio, films, television shows, etc. Choose songs from multiple decades and commercial music styles (pop, rock, country, hip hop, r&b, etc.).

9. Disney Theatrical (1930s-present) *(Choose at least 1 nice, less well known, Disney tune.)*

Alan Menken, Sherman Brothers, Elton John, Robert & Kristen-Anderson Lopez, Phil Collins, David Nessim Lawrence, Randy Newman.