

A Great Audition: A Music Theater Checklist

Part 1: Prep for Your Audition

RULE #1: Your intention should be to have the best possible audition, not to get a particular part. You can only control your part, not theirs.

RULE #2: The most important person in your world is the audition accompanist.

PREP YOUR AUDITION BOOK

- Your book should have a number of different styles of songs. At minimum:
 - Two contemporary (post “Hair”) Broadway songs; up-tempo and ballad
 - Two classic music theater (pre “Hair”) songs; up-tempo and ballad.
 - A character piece (humorous is good)
 - A pop or rock song
 - A Disney song
 - Something that’s easy for you, in case you’re having an “off” day
 - Something that’s easy for the pianist, in case they’re not very good
- Your songs should be ready to go
 - Have the whole song in your book (they might ask for it) with 16 and 32 bar cuts clearly marked and highlighted
 - Ideally, your music is in the “Piano/Vocal/Guitar” category of printed music.
 - If the song is familiar, then piano/vocal is fine.
 - NEVER, ever, use the music from a score.
 - Make it easy for the accompanist to use
 - Clear copies
 - Taped accordion style, 3-hole punched
 - Use a slim 3-hole binder. If it starts getting crowded or fat, create two: an Entire Audition Repertoire book, and a For This Audition book
 - NO sheet protectors
 - Include an index, colored tabs, or both
- Your songs should show off your strengths
 - Pick things that capture both your personality and your vocal strengths
 - If you’re not confident about your choices, invest in a coach
 - Make sure your songs are in the most flattering key for you



- If you don't know how to pick a good key, invest in some time with a coach, accompanist, or voice teacher. It's really worth it.
- Your songs should **not** be:
 - ...from the latest hot show, or overdone
 - ...something you recently learned
 - ...one of your originals
 - ...something obscure
 - ...difficult for the pianist to sight read
- If you're not sure what your book should look like, watch [Katherine Steels's video](#)

TEST YOUR AUDITION BOOK

Buy some time from an accompanist, and sing through your book with her. She can fix any mistakes in your music, make things clearer for another pianist, and help you indicate your intros and endings.

If you don't play piano yourself, and especially if you don't speak Music, this is not optional. You have to do this, and should do it on a regular basis.

PREP YOURSELF

Practice your song(s) in front of a mirror so you know how you look. You can also video yourself. As you watch, think of your performance from the director's perspective, not yours.

The director doesn't know you, doesn't care about your self-esteem issues, doesn't know your cat puked on your favorite bedspread this morning which made you miss your train.

A director wants to know:

- whether or not you can sing in tune
- whether you can act and sing simultaneously
- if you've got the personality and energy he's looking for (this is where the song choice comes in)

Make sure your face reflects the lyric of the song. Think of it as a musical monologue and act it.

PLAN YOUR LOOK

- Know what you're going to wear at least a day in advance. You want to feel confident as you get dressed, not panicky.
- Wear something that fits you well; you don't want to worry that something is creeping up or down; you don't want to have to adjust your clothes at any time during the audition.

- Wear the right underwear. Don't distract from your professionalism by appearing lumpy, nipple-y, or bouncy.



Part 2: Rock Your Audition

LOVE ON YOUR ACCOMPANIST

Remember, your pianist can make or break your audition. So,

1. Make their job – which is to support your performance – as easy as possible.
2. Make them like you. You want your pianist on your side.

ROCK YOUR AUDITION

If you've done your homework and your music is clear, well-marked, and professionally presented, you're already ahead of the game.

- As you wait to be called, breathe low and slow. You want to communicate to your brain that you're calm.
- Say positive and encouraging things to yourself. It doesn't matter if you believe them, just say them.
- When your name is called, take a moment to stand up straight and cop your *Queen/King of The Universe* attitude.
- Acknowledge the audition panel as you head straight to the pianist. GREET the pianist! Look them in the eye and compliment them on something. (e.g. I've been listening and you sound great, or, beautiful outfit/earrings/hair, or love your shirt. You get the idea.)
- Open your music and point to your beginning and ending marks, saying, "I'm going to be singing from here to here."
- **VERY IMPORTANT:**
 - Now, look at the pianist again and say, "I'd like to sing it about here..." Then quietly sing a little bit of your song while tapping on the piano, snapping your fingers, or otherwise externalizing the beat.
 - This will be when you adjust your tempo. You might find you've counted it too fast, or too slow, if you're nervous. Take the time to get it right as you **sing and tap**. This is VERY IMPORTANT.



- The whole process, of greeting and tapping, will take about 30-40 seconds. It will feel like a longer time, but it's not. It's a very worthwhile investment. It's the only way you'll get the tempo you want.
- Once the pianist acknowledges your tempo, go to the designated spot. Introduce yourself, and your song. (e.g., My name is Chanda Smith, and I'll be singing *Home* from *The Wiz*.)
- It's ok to start again if you get a false start or your tempo is wrong.
- Expect this to feel uncomfortable or unfamiliar to you, please practice it a few times before your audition. (Show this to your teacher or coach and ask them to help you walk through this process.)

WRAP IT UP

- **When you're done, thank them and leave.**
- **Do. Not. Make. Excuses. Ever. Just don't.**
- **After you leave, look at your calendar to review the date and time of your next audition. Sing on the way home.**