



Choir Virtual Learning

Women's Choir/Successful Auditions 101

April 30, 2020



Lesson: April 30, 2020

Objective/Learning Target: Students will be introduced to a variety of strategies to help them through the audition process.

Bell Work:

Think about your last audition.

- a. What were you auditioning for?
- b. How did you prepare?
- c. How did the audition go?
- d. Did you have the desired outcome?

In this lesson we will discuss some audition strategies that will help you walk into that audition with confidence!

Preparation is Critical

When we talked about performance anxiety last week, we talked about the importance of preparation. Being well prepared not only helps to calm nerves and anxiety, but it also helps you have a great audition. You must prepare each day by training your voice, practicing your audition pieces, and practicing those pieces in a performance mindset rather than just a practice mindset. Are there other aspects of the audition that you can practice, such as sight-reading? Yes! You don't learn this skill overnight. You must practice over a series of months or even years to be able to do that successfully. Once you know what will be expected of you in a choral audition, you can prepare months in advance to get ready..

What to expect!

1. Prepare 1 or 2 choral appropriate pieces. This could be songs that you have prepared for contest, or maybe a song your director has specified for your audition.
2. Sight-Reading- You will most likely be asked to do some sort of sight-reading either a single line, or to sing your part within a choral piece.
3. Tone Memory- Some auditions will have the accompanist play a series of notes and you will sing them back to see how many tones you can remember. This tests your ear-training abilities and judges how quickly you may be able to learn your part, as well as if you can sing pitches in tune without the piano.
4. Range Checks- Voices are versatile. You may feel like you are an alto, but the director may move you to soprano based on your range and their needs. Doing a range check is not uncommon. Be flexible and gracious.

Audition Day Expectations

Let's just run through the audition day and the different aspects you will need to consider for a successful audition.



Literature

Choosing the right literature is crucial! You want to choose music that shows your strengths. Here are some things to consider.

1. If you are allowed to sing more than one piece, make sure they are contrasting in style.
2. Choose music that is in your range and shows off your abilities.
3. Many times the accompanist in the audition room will be sight-reading your pieces. Do not choose a piece with a difficult accompaniment. That will not be good for you or them. They will make some mistakes, but just keep singing.
4. Make sure you have practiced with the accompaniment prior to your audition many times.
5. Have original copies of all your music. No photocopies are permitted!

Warm-Up!

You have done months of preparation to get you to this point. You have great literature that contrasts in style and you know your stuff. You have about an hour before your audition. What do you do? You begin to get your voice warmed up and ready to go. You can go through vocal warm ups in a practice room or outside the building. Make sure you test all parts of your range. You are going to do some sirens and maybe even run through some trouble spots you encounter in your songs. You will run over your lyrics to make sure you have them memorized and then you will run through your pieces in performance mode before you walk in the audition room. Warming up is critical. You want to make sure your mind is right and also that you avoid walking into the audition room cold.

Dress to Impress

An audition is not just about the music you will make, it's also about you as a human being. You are being interviewed. Treat it as such. You want to dress nicely and appropriately. Avoid skirts that are short, blouses that may reveal more than is appropriate, and clothing that may be transparent or reveals body markings and undergarments. All of these things are distracting and inappropriate for any sort of job interview, concert or audition. First impressions are critical. A good rule of thumb to remember is that you want to be heard and not seen. What you do with your voice is the most important aspect of the day and you want to be remembered for that, not what you are wearing.

Command, Confidence, Connection

It's not all about you when you walk into the audition space.

1. Command/Confidence- Walk in the room with confidence and a sense of commanding the space. Body language is incredibly revealing. I can tell what somebody will sound like by how they walk in the audition room. Walk in with purpose, strength, and don't make excuses for how you think you might sound. Confidence is not arrogance. You need to have a presence that shows you are prepared, but also that it's not all about you.
2. Connect- Greet those who are in the room. Make eye contact with them and try to connect with them on a personal level. You don't have long to make them feel like you genuinely care and that you appreciate the opportunity. Your accompanist is your biggest ally. Communicate clearly with them on tempo and any markings of importance in the music. Walk in with the mindset that you will express your best self.

Accompanist

Remember these things when you talk to the accompanist prior to singing.

1. The best way to let them know what tempo you would like is to sing about 4 bars of the song to them. You will be nervous, so take a deep breath and make sure you don't rush when singing to them.
2. Make them aware of any cuts you are making, where you are starting and stopping if it's an abbreviated audition and any other pertinent information about your piece.
3. Thank them for their time and be gracious. They may have never seen your piece before and will do their best to play it as well as possible. Be grateful and thankful for their talents.

Performance

It's finally time to sing!

1. Say your name and the pieces/composers in the order you will be singing.
2. Nod to the accompanist that you are ready to begin.
3. Sing your heart out! Sing as musically as possible. You want your performance to stand out in all the best ways possible and for those in the room to not just listen to you, but experience your performance.

Exit

Here are some things to remember as you depart the audition.

1. When you are finished singing, do not say anything right away. Just wait for directions from those facilitating the auditions. They may want to ask you further questions, have you sight read or learn more about you and your voice.
2. When they dismiss you, gather your music, thank your accompanist, the facilitators and walk out confidently.
3. Refrain from having over-dramatic comments or reactions when leaving. They can still hear and see you. No matter how you feel about your audition, save any response, good or bad, for your car/home!

Post Audition Reflection

It's important to take some time to reflect after every performance or audition. Think about what went well and also some things you can improve on. Many times the things we need to improve on dominate our thoughts and mask the really good things that did happen. All of our experiences can link back to preparation and how we can prepare and improve upon every experience. The more you put yourself in these types of situations, the easier it gets. And while you may never be completely comfortable putting yourself out there in this way, you will be able to handle it with confidence, grace and ease.

Practice

Below are a couple recordings of an audition. Based on the topics discussed today, evaluate the audition. What went well? Where can they improve?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0d5eP0wWLQY>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5QbWFO5JD_Q

Extra Practice

Think about your own future auditions.

1. How will this information inform your preparation for auditions moving forward.
2. What songs would you sing for an audition?
3. Do a mock audition practicing the tips we discussed today.



**Thank You
So Much!**