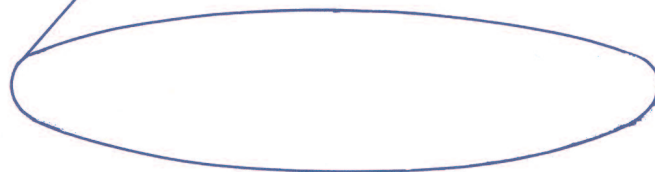


Theatre Video Series

“Audition Techniques”

Teacher's Guide

F977



“Audition Techniques”

Teacher's Guide

“Audition Techniques” is designed to prepare students for the audition experience by examining three aspects of the audition situation: selecting the right material, analyzing and rehearsing the material, and presenting the material. In addition, there will be information given on photographs, preparation of resumes, cold readings, and voice and body warm-up exercises. The following is an outline of the video. Also included in the teacher's guide are handout materials and a selected bibliography.

I. INTRODUCTION

The introduction points out that although auditioning is often a frightening part of theatre experience, there are ways to lessen the terror and perhaps even to make auditioning an enjoyable experience.

II. ANALYZING AND REHEARSING THE MONOLOGUE/SONG

A. Analysis. Ask the following questions:

- i. Who is speaking? Describe the character in the following ways:
 - Physically
 - Socially
 - Psychologically
 - Morally
- ii. Who is being addressed? Describe the character in the following ways:
 - General audience (open focus)
 - Defined other (closed focus)
 - The character himself or herself (inner-closed focus)
 - Undefined other (semi-closed focus)

(This section is illustrated with a cutting from “A Midsummer Night's Dream.” A copy is provided in the back of this guide.)
- iii. What is the relationship between speaker and audience?
- iv. What is the character fighting for?
- v. Where are the beat changes?
- vi. What is the nature of the conflict in the scene?
- vii. What is the “moment before”?
- viii. What discoveries is the character making?
- ix. Where is the humor in the scene?
- x. Where is the love in the scene?

B. The Introduction: Content and Delivery

i. Content

- What to include
 - a. Your name and/or number
 - b. Title of selection
 - c. Name of playwright
 - d. Name of character
- What to avoid
 - a. Plot summary
 - b. Apologies or excuses to:
 - i. Why you were late
 - ii. How sick you are
 - iii. Why you are not ready, and so forth...

ii. Delivery

- Think of the audition as an enjoyable experience where you have an opportunity to perform and learn.
- Be yourself.
- Take the stage.
- Speak directly to the auditors.
- Be friendly.
- Display confidence.
- Be sure you are in the light.

- Wait until the auditors are ready before beginning; do not seem impatient or upset if this takes some time.
- C. Rehearsing the monologue/song (Remember: the best way to alleviate stage fright is to be prepared and eager to perform.)
- i. Consider every rehearsal as a pseudo performance.
 - ii. Be solid and happy with your pieces at least two weeks before your audition.
 - iii. If possible, try to acquaint yourself with the audition space beforehand. Do not do something out of proportion to the space.
 - iv. Never audition “a cappella”.
 - v. Your sheet music should be:
 - In good shape.
 - The right key.
 - Clearly marked for the accompanist.
 - Mount your sheet music.
 - Sheet music should be a piano or vocal score.

STOP AND REVIEW: At this point you may wish give short quiz. Name three questions that an actor should ask about a character. What should be included in an introduction? What is a “moment before”? Should you have additional audition pieces ready for callback and why?

III. GETTING READY FOR THE AUDITION – BODY AND VOICE WARM-UPS

A. Body Warm-ups

- i. Head Rolls – gently roll head around several times to the right and then several times to the left.
- ii. Shoulder Rolls – roll shoulders forward and backward several times.
- iii. Hands and Arms Shake Out – with arms hanging at your sides, gently shake them to help relieve tension.
- iv. Roll Downs – drop head to chest (allowing gravity to take you down slowly), keep knees bent and roll down slowly vertebrae by vertebrae until you reach the floor. Breathe a couple of times and then roll back up, slowly. After you have reached a standing position, stretch all the way up through your fingertips while standing on your tiptoes. Repeat the procedure several times.

B. Voice Warm-ups

- i. Mouth Stretches – open your mouth as wide as you can then close it as small as you can. Repeat several times.
- ii. Mouth Relaxation – gently blow out air through your lips for several seconds. Repeat several times.
- iii. Diction Exercise – softly repeat tongue twisters like “Peter Piper”.
- iv. Vocal Falls – gently hit a note in upper register and gently come down the scale to your lowest note. Do this exercise on the word “key”.
- v. Singing Auditions – repeat number 4 but add several vocal scales on the syllables “la”, “ma”, and “oh”.

STOP AND REVIEW: A list of physical and vocal warm-ups are provided in the back of this guide. Give each student a copy of the warm-ups and have everyone participate as you try each warm-up in class.

IV. PRESENTING THE MONOLOGUE/SONG

A. An improper vocal audition is now shown. Ask the students to make a list of what they think is wrong with the audition.

- i. The audition is critiqued and the following flaws are discussed:
 - Sheet music that is not mounted on cardboard
 - Inappropriate clothing
 - Bad introduction
 - Negative attitude
 - Did not work with the accompanist
 - Inappropriate movement
 - Do not ask to start over.
 - Do not sing “a cappella”.
 - No more than 16 bars of a song
 - Difficult for the director to work with

- A "thank you" was not given.
- B. A proper vocal audition is shown.
- C. Be flexible (always be willing to give a vocal audition, even if you are not prepared; sing Happy Birthday if you have to).
- D. A monologue is performed improperly. Ask students to make a list of what they think is wrong with the audition.
 - i. The audition is critiqued and the following flaws are discussed:
 - Inappropriate clothing
 - Stay in the light
 - Speak coherently
 - Do not apologize or make excuses.
 - Do not give plot summaries.
 - No profile performances
 - Do not overact.
 - Only show appropriate versatility.
 - Do not substitute volume for intensity.
 - Do not under-rehearse.
- E. A monologue is performed correctly.
- F. A summary of correct and incorrect audition techniques are given.

V. SELECTING THE "RIGHT" MONOLOGUE

- A. Ask yourself the following questions:
 - i. Is the speaker within my age range? Would I get cast in this role?
 - ii. Is the speaker's situation within my realm of experience?
 - iii. Does the monologue work well out of context?
 - iv. Does the monologue have an effective beginning and end?
 - v. Does the monologue contain a "build to" and a "release from" a climax?
 - vi. Does the monologue provide me an opportunity to show my versatility?
 - vii. Does the monologue allow me to capitalize on my best abilities?
 - viii. Does the monologue have movement in it?
 - ix. Does the monologue have a surprise in it?
 - x. Is the monologue similar in tone to the play you are auditioning for?
- B. Created vs. Found Monologues
 - i. Found – a monologue performed as originally written
 - ii. Created – various lines of dialogue performed as one speech
- C. Be sure to read the entire play before preparing a monologue from it.
- D. Recent monologues from movies, prose fiction, and poems have been acceptable as audition pieces.
- E. Monologues to avoid:
 - i. Those that depend on a dialect.
 - ii. Those that are expository.
 - iii. Those that come from the end of a play.
 - iv. Monologues out of your age range, experience, etc.
 - v. Those that are overdone.
 - vi. Avoid original monologues.
 - vii. Avoid obscene, tasteless, or vulgar material.
- F. A list of monologue suggestions is given (the complete list can be found in the back of this guide).
- G. A list of overused monologues is given (the complete list can be found in the back of this guide).

VI. SELECTING THE "RIGHT" SONG

- A. Consider the following points:
 - i. Find a song that plays into your strengths.
 - ii. Avoid songs that depend on a prop.
 - iii. Use a song similar in tone to one in the show.
 - iv. Have several selections ready.
 - v. Use 16 bars from the "meat" of the song.
 - vi. When possible, pick music that shows your entire range.
- B. A list of song suggestions is given (the complete list can be found in the back of this guide).
- C. A list of songs to avoid is given (the complete list can be found in the back of this guide).
- D. Do not sing, "pop tunes."

VII. PHOTOGRAPHS AND RESUMES

A. Photos

- i. Have a good supply of 8x10 photos available.
- ii. Make sure the photos are recent.
- iii. Photos should be straightforward and honest.
- iv. Have your name and phone number on the photos.
- v. Avoid outdoors and "senior picture" type photos.
- vi. Composites are useful.

B. Resumes

- i. Neat, up to date and accurate (never lie!)
- ii. Attach resume to the back of 8x10 photo and have phone number listed.
- iii. If you have had previous experience and can have videotape made, be sure to list that it is available.
- iv. Include the name of your agent if you have one.

C. A sample resumes is discussed (a copy is provided in this guide).

MONOLOGUE SUGGESTIONS

PLAYS

FOR WOMEN:

BUTTERFLIES ARE FREE – Jill
'DENTITY CRISIS – Jane
DIARY OF ANNE FRANK – Anne
GYPSY – Louise
OUR TOWN – Emily
QUILTERS – Cassie
RAINMAKER – Lizzie
A RAISIN IN THE SUN – Beneatha
TALKING WITH – Mary, Jill, Laurie
VANITIES – Kathy, Mary, Joanne (especially Act I)

FOR MEN:

BABY WITH THE BATHWATER – Daisy
BUTTERFLIES ARE FREE – Donny
THE DARK AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS – Sammy
DOORS – Jeff
FANTASTIKS – Matt
THE GLASS MENAGERIE – Tom
LOOK HOMEWARD ANGEL – Eugene
OUR TOWN – George
RAINMAKER – Starbuck
WHERE HAS TOMMY FLOWERS GONE? – Tommy

MOVIE MONOLOGUES

BREAKFAST CLUB
BREAKING AWAY
THE GODDESS
LAST SUMMER
REBEL WITH A CAUSE
TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

PROSE FICTION MONOLOGUES

THE CATCHER IN THE RYE by J.D. Salinger – male
"THE WALTZ" by Dorothy Parker – female

POETRY MONOLOGUES

"PORPHYRIA'S LOVER" by Robert Browning – male
Shakespeare's sonnets – male or female
SPOON RIVER ANTHOLOGY by Edgar Lee Masters – 244 monologues for men and women, wide age ranges
"WILD GRAPES" by Robert Frost – female

OVERUSED MONOLOGUES

The following material is overused to those auditors who have seen and heard them over and over again. It is to your advantage to avoid material that may cause the auditors to groan at the mention of just the title of the play. On the other hand, even the most overdone, groan-at-the-mention monologue can be effective when done well. You must decide. Trust you instincts.

CONTEMPORARY

AGNES OF GOD
BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS
CRIMES OF THE HEART
HOUSE OF BLUE LEAVES
NOURISH THE BEAST
NUTS
TALKING WITH
WOOLGATHERER

SHAKESPEARE

AS YOU LIKE IT
HENRY V
KING LEAR
MACBETH
A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM
ROMEO AND JULIET
TAMING OF THE SHREW
TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

SONG SUGGESTIONS

FOR WOMEN:

CELEBRATION – “I Want To Be Somebody”
CINDERELLA – “My Own Little Corner”
EVITA – “Another Suitcase in Another Hall”
FANTASTICKS – “Just Once”
FIDDLER ON THE ROOF – “Far From the Home I Love”
GYPSY – “Little Lamb”
JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR – “I Don’t Know How to Love Him”
OLIVER – “As Long As He Needs Me”
PURLIE – “I’ve Got Love”
THE WIZ – “Be A Lion”

FOR MEN:

BRIGADOON – “Heather on the Hill”
CAGARET – “Why Should I Wake Up?”
CINDRELLA – “Ten Minutes Ago”
FANTASTICKS – “I Can See It”
GYPSY – “All I Need Is the Girl”
HELLO DOLLY – “It Only Takes A Moment”
MY FAIR LADY – “On the Street Where You Live”
OLIVER – “Where Is Love”
ONCE UPON A MATTRESS – “Very Soft Shoes”
ROAR OF THE GREASEPAINT – “My First Love Song”

OVERUSED SONGS

A CHORUS LINE
ANNIE
BABES IN ARMS
BABY
BRIGADOON
CARNIVAL
CATS
COMPANY
FIDDLER ON THE ROOF
FLOWER DRUM SONG
FOLLIES
MY FAIR LADY
OKLAHOMA
PAINT YOUR WAGON
PIPPIN
PORGY AND BESS
SEESAW
SHE LOVES ME
SOUND OF MUSIC
SOUTH PACIFIC
SWEENEY TODD
WEST SIDE STORY

In general, beware of material by Sondheim and Jaques Brel- not that they are overdone, but they are difficult and therefore frequently done badly.

POSSIBLE FOCUS CHANGES IN A MONOLOGUE FROM A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM:

HELENA:

O, I AM OUT OF BREATH IN THIS FOND CHASE.
THE MORE MY PRAYER, THE LESSER IS MY GRACE.
HAPPY IS HERMIA, WHERSOE'ER SHE LIES,
FOR SHE HATH BLESSED AND ATTRACTIVE EYES.
HOW CAME HER EYES SO BRIGHT? NOT WITH SALT TEARS.
IF SO, MY EYES ARE OFT'NER WASHED THAN HERS.
NO, NO! I AM AS UGLY AS A BEAR,
FOR BEASTS THAT MEET ME RUN AWAY FOR FEAR.
THEREFORE NO MARVEL THOUGH DEMETRIUS
DO, AS A MONSTER, FLY MY PRESENCE THUS.
WHAT WICKED AND DISSEMBLING GLASS OF MINE
MADE ME COMPARE WITH HERMIA'S SPHERY EYNE?
BUT WHO IS HERE? LYSANDER, ON THE GROUND?
DEAD, OR ASLEEP? I SEE NO BLOOD, NO WOUND.
LYSANDER, IF YOU LIVE, GOOD SIR, AWAKE.

OPEN
OPEN
INNER-CLOSED
INNER-CLOSED
SEMI-CLOSED
SEMI-CLOSED
OPEN
OPEN
OPEN
OPEN
INNER-CLOSED
INNER-CLOSED
OPEN
OPEN
CLOSED

NAME

ACTRESS/ACTOR/SINGER/DANCER

(Union Affiliations)

(Name of Agent/Manager)

Address:

Phone:

Can also be reached at:

Age Range:

Height:

Weight:

Color of Hair:

Color of Eyes:

Vocal Range:

Acting Experience

Stage

(Role)

(Play)

(Location)

(Year)

Television

(Role)

(Show)

(Location)

(Year)

Film

(Role)

(Film)

(Director)

(Location)

(Year)

Commercials (Video Tapes available upon request.):

Other Experience:

Professional Training (only list well-known professionals):

Special Talents:

Audition Techniques Quiz

1. What focus is used when addressing the general audience?

2. Always give a plot summary before an audition.

True False

3. How long before an audition should you be prepared with the piece that you are using?

4. Auditioning “a cappella” is never acceptable.

True False

5. Name two of the body warm-ups demonstrated in this video.

1. _____ 2. _____

6. Describe a “vocal fall”.

7. What is a “found” monologue?

8. What does expository mean?

9. Photographs should be what size?

10. Resumes should never contain false information.

True False

Audition Techniques Quiz Key

1. Open focus
2. False
3. At least two
4. True
5. Any of the following: head rolls, shoulder rolls, hand & arm shake out, and roll downs
6. Hitting a note in an upper register and gently coming down the scale to your lowest note.
7. Set speeches done as is
8. At the beginning of a play, monologues that usually "set up" the action.
9. 8x10
10. True

Selected Bibliography

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