

AUDITIONING 101

Research!

- Know for **what** you are auditioning.
 1. Entrance into a program
 2. Scholarships
 3. A play (classical/contemporary, heightened text/ common vernacular, up and coming author/ seasoned playwright, political theatre, dramatic/comedic, etc.)
 4. A musical (accompanist, minus track, dance call, sides)
 5. Film/TV/Commercial/Industrial
 6. Is there actually a role for you?
 7. Content
 8. Something that requires special skills (swordplay, sign language, dialect)
 9. Required material (Contrasting, dialect piece, verse, time limit)

Research!

- Know for **whom** you are auditioning.
 1. College Professors (UTA, Unifieds, Individual School Auditions)
 2. The Director
 3. A Casting Director
 4. Producers
 5. Music Director
 6. Choreographer
 7. Broadway, Regional Theatre, Equity House/Non-Equity, Professional/Community

Research!

- Know **where** you are auditioning.
 1. What is the size of the room?
 2. How live is the sound in the room?
 3. Where are the auditors sitting?
 4. Is there a mark?
 5. Is there a light?
 6. Individually, in front of peers, UTA, Unified, Westminster, New York?

Research!

This is the most important work that gets done in an audition.

Why?

Because it informs every other choice you will make.

TIP

Start a play reading club, assign a play a week. This will familiarize you with more material; it will help you discover the difference between bad, mediocre, and amazing text; and help you find potential scenes and monologues for classroom assignments and monologues. Now your teachers won't don't have to!

Ask for a suggested reading list.

“I didn’t know what to get you!”

TIP

People give inexpensive gifts (\$5 - \$10) for Birthdays and Christmas/Holidays all the time. Why not make them a script? For \$8.50 I can get most any acting edition script from Dramatist, Samuel French, or Amazon. Have students create a shopping cart of plays they want and then have them give the login and password out to family/friends. They can go in and put their credit card information and have it shipped. No risk. What are they going to do... add more plays?

Selecting the Piece

1. Choose a monologue from **a play!**

Don't get one from a monologue book. Especially the ones where the pieces were written for that monologue book and are not from a play. Don't write one yourself unless it is requested!

Look at Tony, Pulitzer, Olivier Awards.

Selecting the Piece

2. Read the play!

Then read it again. Do not come to class and expect to work on a monologue you know nothing about.

Selecting the Piece

3. Choose a monologue that has a **present and identifiable partner**.

Your character and his/her mother, or lover, or brother, or husband, or boss, or business partner, or spiritual leader, or next-door neighbor, etc.

Selecting the Piece

4. Choose a monologue that **works through your partner.**

Do not choose a monologue that is just telling a story, or reflecting on a troubled past, or describing something. Look for a monologue in which you want something from your present and identifiable partner!

Selecting the Piece

5. Look for an **immediately identifiable objective/intention!**

Each tactic must then work to service that single objective/intention. Tactic upon tactic building to the climax of the monologue.

Selecting the Piece

One of three choices at the end:

- a. Achieve the objective/intention.
- b. Abandon the objective/intention.
- c. Last ditch effort to achieve it.

Selecting the Piece

6. Look for a monologue that is **1.5 minutes**.

We always say “2 minutes or less” but we really mean 1.5 minutes. Time it! There is nothing worse than feeling you have to rush through a monologue due to time constraints – it can destroy your performance.

Selecting the Piece

7. Don't simply look for long speeches.

Consider dialogue scenes between two people where you cut out your partner's lines. These sometimes make the very best monologues and are often not seen by auditors.

Selecting the Piece

8. Choose a monologue with a beginning, middle, and an end!

Read it to a classmate. Ask them if they can follow it. Do they get what is going on? If not, trim, fix, or find a new one.

Selecting the Piece

9. If you fall in love with a very overdone monologue, look for an alternate piece from the same play.

Try cutting and pasting a dialogue section together.

Selecting the Piece

10. Make sure your monologues are contrasting.

They don't always have to be comedic and dramatic (which is the preferable standard) but they do have to be contrasting in their presentation. If they have similar objectives or tactics, it's probably not contrasting enough.

Selecting the Piece

11. Look for the raw edge in each and every monologue.

That point where the emotional threshold is very close to the surface. That certain something about each monologue that has potential to stop the revolving door for the auditors.

Selecting the Piece

12. Make sure the majority of your monologues are really roles you could be cast in today.

Don't try and play an 80 year old grandmother right now or something else that is far away from who you are. Now is **not** the time for a stretch monologue. Save that for class.

Selecting the Piece

13. If doing a classical monologue (which is advisable unless going into musical theatre), make sure it is in verse.

We want to see that you can handle the language.

Selecting the Piece

14. At least one extended realism monologue should be an American classic.

Something from mid 20th century and a celebrated playwright (i.e. Williams, O'Neill, Hellman, Inge, Saroyan, and their contemporaries).

Selecting the Piece

15. Mix and match your monologues so that you have several pairs that work well together.

Selecting the Piece

16. Watch for the connect/respond/speak moment at the beginning of the monologue that launches you into it.

What is happening in the moment before? We want to see the impetus for the monologue.

Selecting the Piece

17. Look for moments of personal revelation in the monologue.

These are the discoveries or light bulb moments when your character realizes something they didn't know until that very moment.

Selecting the Piece

18. Remember that your monologues are a great performance opportunity.

Many an actor goes for months with monologues or cold readings as their only real performance opportunity.

Preparing the Piece

This could be an entire workshop of its own. Utilize the training you are receiving in your theatre/acting classes.

TIP

Make sure any monologue you select for class be one that meets the parameters set forth in the previous slides. This will hone those skills long before you will need them and provide you with a reservoir of pieces to choose from when auditioning. No scrambling for material a week before auditions!

Presenting the Piece

**I AM THE SOLUTION TO YOUR
PROBLEM!**

Confidant but not cocky!

Presenting the Piece

DRESS APPROPRIATELY!

LOOK LIKE YOUR HEADSHOT!

HAIR AND MAKE UP SHOULD BE CONSIDERED ALSO!

Presenting the Piece

- **Introduction**

- Be prompt. NO reason to add to the stress of an already stressful situation.
- Exhale and walk in confident and glad you are YOU! This is when they get to meet the person they would work with.
- Have pictures and resumes and any forms on hand.
- Be open and willing to talk, but don't babble. Don't try to shake hands unless they offer.
- State your name and pieces with confidence. Your name is not a question.

Presenting the Piece

Your audition contains 8 major "beats":

- 1) Your entrance and introduction of yourself and your pieces.
- 2) Transition from yourself to character #1.
- 3) Presentation of your first piece.
- 4) Transition from character #1 to character #2.
- 5) Presentation of your second piece.
- 6) Transition from character #2 back into yourself.
- 7) Thank you.
- 8) Your exit.

Presenting the Piece

- Take your couple of seconds to get in character.

TIP

Try to do this face up and out so that they too can participate in the transformation. Flesh out the “Moment Before”.

- Start on voice, your own voice. Make it human.
- Make discoveries happen in the piece versus pre-thought emotions.

Presenting the Piece

- Fight hard for what you want. You must be trying to change the other person. You wouldn't open your mouth unless you thought you were right and they were wrong and something you say could change them!
- Heighten the stakes. Intensify the secrets. It's much easier for a director to tell you to chill out than it is to try to coach deep emotion out of you.

Presenting the Piece

- Substitute everything applicable from your own life.
- See those visceral images in your head before you attempt to put them into words.
- **OFFER CHOICES.** Be confident in them. If the director gives you feedback or asks for something different, embrace their suggestions 200%. They want to see if you are willing/able to take direction.

Presenting the Piece

- End the monologue with you in a winning position, don't be defeated, keep fighting.

TIP

Hold the energy and intensity of the final moment for a few seconds and then drop out of the piece.

Presenting the Piece

Ending the audition

- Smile and say thank you. Don't apologize in word or nuance. Be positive, professional, pleasant, and yourself!
- Don't wait around for small talk. Leave. They will call you back if they need or have more information for you.
- Keep an audition journal and notate for yourself how it went. What did you learn about yourself? About the piece? What things do or do you not want to repeat the next time?

Presenting the Piece

- **RELAX and ENJOY the whole process: the waiting, the preparing, and the performing. This is your opportunity to shine and play this awesome character for two minutes. This might be your only chance to do so. Relish the opportunity to perform and show them what you've got!!**

TRUTH WILL ALWAYS TRUMP “BOLD”

If I don't believe it... I don't believe it.

Character will always surpass caricature.

Headshot/Resume

Know what is expected!

- Name
- Contact Information
- Physical Description
- Representative Roles
- Education
- Awards
- Special Skills
- **FOR COLLEGES AND UTA YOU ALSO NEED TO HAVE YOUR GPA ON YOUR RESUME!**

HOW IT IS LAID OUT ON THE PAGE MATTERS!!

Headshot

- You do **not** have to have a professional headshot for college auditions... but let's be honest, they look better and we tend to take you seriously when you have taken the time and paid the cost to get them.
- I would not recommend going to any national unified auditions without having a professional shot taken.

Headshots

- Black and white have seen their day and really are no longer the industry standard.
- $\frac{3}{4}$ Color shots are what most agents are wanting these days, however a nice shot from the neck up is still completely acceptable.
- Many are putting pictures on both sides. This allows for one look (you smiling) on the front and another (a serious shot) on the back along with the resume.
- Have them LOOK LIKE YOU. No glamour shots, etc. We want you to look like your headshot (don't severely change your appearance through cuts and dyes).

Resources

Book: Audition by Michael Shurtleff

- http://www.urta.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=45&Itemid=69

Places to audition for College

UTA

www.unifiedauditions.com

National Thespian Conference

Individual Schools