

Quick guide to



How to Audition

By Seth Lutnick

This publication is protected under the US Copyright Act of 1976 and all other applicable international, federal, state and local laws, and all rights are reserved, including resale rights. No part of this document or the related files may be reproduced or transmitted in any form, by any means (electronic, photocopying, recording, or otherwise) without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Copyright © 2008 Seth Lutnick. All rights reserved worldwide.

Online Music Resources

- **Music Online Training**
 - [Hear and Play Music Course](#)
- **Online Music Libraries**
 - [Get a 14-Day free trial to Rhapsody Unlimited then pay only \\$12.99 per month.](#)
 - [eMusic gets you 25 MP3 Downloads/month with no restrictions.](#)
 - [Click here to get Napster--FREE 7-day trial.](#)
- **Music Promotion**
 - [Promote Your Music at Indie-Music.com](#)
- **Music Backing Tracks**
 - [mp3Karaoke: Whatever you do...sing.](#)
- **Music Recording Software**
 - [Mixcraft software multitrack music studio free trial download](#)

How to Audition

Auditioning can be amazingly fun. You read that correctly. I said fun. And when it is fun, it is also likely to get you the desired callback. Enjoy yourself during your audition, and the auditors will probably enjoy you as well! What is the secret to doing that?

On the other hand, for many people, an audition can be the most stressful and painful experience in performing there is. You only have a few moments to impress them, and you feel that they are looking at every single wart, every single defect, every single thing that can possibly go wrong. You spend your time fearing things as varied as: forgetting your lyrics, forgetting to zip your zipper, your voice cracking, uncontrollable trembling in your hand, or any other possible catastrophe. You feel as if the fate of existence itself is at stake.

And that, in a nutshell, is the reason why your auditions do not succeed. This guide aims to change that dramatically, beautifully.

You Gotta Have Attitude

The reason so many people dread auditions and don't give even a small percentage of their talent in them is because they have the wrong attitude about auditions. They feel like they are on trial, and have to prove their innocence. They fear

every little twitch of the eye will trigger the people behind the table to scrawl a large "X" on their application. In other words, they are fixated on what could possibly go wrong, and completely forget what can go right.

That is the first thing to fix.

Anthony Robbins describes how he took a lesson in racecar driving. The instructor stressed to him to keep his eyes on the track, and never look at the wall around it. No matter what. Sure enough, in a sharp turn, his car started skidding. Robbins instinctively looked at the wall that he was headed straight for.

At the last moment, he remembered what his instructor had told him. And he forced himself to look back to the track. Almost miraculously, he recovered from the skid.

The reason for this is hardwired into the human psyche. Our subconscious does not process negatives. In other words, if I think "don't blink", I will be more tempted to blink than had I thought of something else entirely. Even better, had I thought "keep your eyes open", I would've had the best results.

If, instead of looking at the wall that I fear crashing into, I look at the track that I want to speed down, I will change my entire attitude. My psyche will adjust my mind and body to fulfill the object of my focus. It will make it so much easier for me to succeed.

So, too, at an audition. Focus on how well you can sing the song, how well you can feel the words. Focus on how confident you can feel, not just appear. Focus on how good you look, how physically involved you are with your performance. **Focus on how much you love what you are doing**, and that love will hold your hand through your beautiful performance.

It's Not Really an Audition

All right, technically it is an audition. But part of the challenge is to look at it in an entirely new way.

When you go into that room to sing, are you really on trial? If you feel that you are, you may experience feelings of guilt. You may feel guilty for wasting these people's time, because you may have insufficient confidence in your own performance abilities. I would like to suggest, based on what I have learned from my performance coach, that an audition is not really an audition. What is it?

It is a performance preview.

I perform a lot. And I can tell you, the hardest place to perform is in my musical theater class. It is there that I feel I am being judged by people who are more talented and experienced than I am. I do get nervous, and as a result, I don't always give my best performances.

Put me in front of a crowd, however, and I feel completely different. Yes, of course I am nervous when I first go out there. But as soon as the show begins, I feel myself connecting with the audience and enjoying sharing my love of musical performance with them. And my teacher told me after the first time she saw me perform live that I am "a natural showman".

What was the difference?

It was that I felt the audience was enjoying the performance together with me, rather than looking at me with a critical eye. I felt they liked me. And that completely changes the energy.

So you must realize to things when you go into an audition. Firstly, it is really a small show, a mini concert of the few seconds. Secondly, **the people in the room want to love you and enjoy you.** They may want you to succeed more than you want yourself to succeed. Just say to yourself before you go into the room, "I'm going to share a song I love with people who want to love me." I can tell you as someone who has been on an auditing committee, we really want every person who comes into the room to do their very best. We want them to succeed, we are rooting for them.

When you go to audition for American Idol, a local theater production or anything else, **know that everybody behind that table is rooting for you.** Give them a show!

How to Prepare for an Audition

In order to audition your best, you must prepare five things:

- 1. What song you should sing.**
- 2. How you will perform it.**
- 3. What accompaniment you will need.**
- 4. Your wardrobe and appearance.**
- 5. Your attitude and frame of mind.**

When choosing a song, there are a few factors to keep in mind. Most importantly, it must be a song that you can perform well.

- You must be able to sing it well -- it should be comfortably in your vocal range and show off your voice well.
- You must be able to act it well -- you should have a personal emotional connection that you can use to make the lyrics meaningful.
- It should be appropriate to what you are auditioning for -- if it's a rock concert, sing a rock song.

Never choose a song just because it has high notes that sound great for you. The most important part of performance is how much you move your audience. If your song is merely as a vocal exercise, you may sound great and never get the callback. Trust me, if they like the way you perform, they may ask you to sing a few scales to make sure that you do have the vocal range they need. That should be enough. **First and foremost, you must connect with the song**

emotionally.

And never sing a song, even if you connect really deeply with it, if you can't do it in your vocal range. As much as I love the song, and do feel a connection to the message, I will never sing Old Man River at an audition. I am a tenor, and will only sing tenor or high baritone songs. Thank God, there is so much material out there for every voice. **Take the extra time to find the right material.**

You may be able to transpose, but make sure that your accompanist can play it in the right key for you. I once auditioned with a transposed song, and didn't have good sheet music for the pianist. She just stopped playing in the middle, and I was a goner then.

How to Perform a Song

This is an entire course of study that never ends. To get started, I highly recommend you read my e-book, **Singing Excellence**, available from www.singing-excellence.com. What follows are just a few basic tips to turn you in the right direction.

The first thing you want to do is **analyze the lyrics**. Circle the words that are the most significant and meaningful. When you compare the song, you will want to make those words stand out.

Then you want to understand **to whom you are singing the song**. You are not singing it to the auditioners. You're singing it to somebody in your mind. You are singing it to an imaginary scene partner. For example, you might sing Somewhere over the Rainbow to an imaginary child in a war-torn country. Whoever you choose, you will see them in your imagination's eye and communicate the song directly to them. See them responding, and allow that to affect the way you feel and perform.

It is crucial to **take a brief moment before you start singing** to allow yourself to inhabit that scene. Take that moment to visualize your scene partner looking at you, saying or experiencing something that will force you to respond with the first words of the song. For example, that child might say "I don't want to live anymore". To which you respond, "somewhere over the rainbow, way up high, there is a land that I heard of once in a lullaby." You are basically telling that child that there is a better life, and they must hold on to reach it.

Which brings me to the wonderful technique called "**translation**". This means that you have the right to imagine that you are speaking your own thoughts in a different language. When you are saying "somewhere over the rainbow," that may be a translation of your internal thought of "you must keep hold of hope with all of your soul, because you are beautiful and you deserve a beautiful world."

As a general rule, **the more personal you can**

make your song, the better. If there is someone in your life who needs to hear the message of Somewhere over the Rainbow, imagine yourself speaking it to them. If you find yourself becoming emotional as you practice, you are probably on to a good thing. Embrace those moments, because they make your performance extremely powerful and beautiful.

What Accompaniment?

Most auditions use a pianist. Most audition pianists read music fluently. Never assume that they can transpose, however. **Always have sheet music written in your key.** Make sure that it is clear, in a proper folder that it is easy for the pianist to put on the stand and turn the pages. Sometimes a chord chart with melody is enough, but it is always better if you have full sheet music.

If you are performing only a section of the song, I recommend that you make a photocopy of the music that you can write on. Clearly mark the parts to be skipped, any repeats that you need and so forth. Make sure any instructions such as "pause here" are clearly marked.

When you go into audition, you have a few moments to **talk to the accompanist.** The first thing to give them is your basic tempo and feel, so you should hear in your own mind how you want the song to go. Then sing quietly to the accompanist the melody in your tempo. Then go over any repeats or omitted sections, so the

accompanist knows what to play. Finally, **make sure the accompanist waits for you to nod to them before they start playing.** Agree on how much of an intro they will give you.

This is an important point. Don't allow your accompanist to quickstart you. You want to have those few seconds for your imaginary moment before. Ask the accompanist to wait for you to nod before they play. That is reasonable, and it shows that you are a professional performer.

What to Wear?

Well, what do you want to tell them about yourself? What kind of song are you performing? This will determine what you wear.

Wearing clothing that is more revealing sends one kind of message. Wearing clothing that is sloppy and ill fitting sends another kind of message. Dressing conservatively shows one side of you, while dressing to the nines shows another. What kind of guidelines should there be for you?

I suggest two words to keep in mind:
appropriateness and support.

You want your clothing to be appropriate to the occasion. Dressing neat and attractively shows that you take your appearance seriously. Performing is as much visual as it is auditory. If your song is somewhat 'risque', you can probably push the envelope towards more 'risque' wardrobe

choices. But you should always stay safely in the bounds of good taste.

Support means that your wardrobe supports your performance instead of upstaging it. You want people to notice your face, eyes, and the way you hold your body in performance. **You don't want them distracted by loud patterns and colors** in what you wear. You want them seeing you, the whole person. Not just you, the guy wearing those ridiculous jeans.

Your Attitude and Frame of Mind

You may want to reread the first paragraphs of this booklet. The first thing to know is that an audition is not an audition. It is a preview of your performance, and you are delivering it in front of people who want you to succeed and want to be entertained. They are not looking for faults, they are looking for you to share your joy with them. Give them that, and you are in great shape!

Before going into audition, you have a number of choices as to how to prepare. There will usually be many people waiting to audition. Some may be your friends. It may be tempting to spend the time socializing, yet that may not be the best choice.

On the other hand, sitting silently and biting your nails is also not an ideal way to prepare. What is the happy medium?

For starters, **make sure you have properly**

warmed up vocally within a reasonable time of your audition. If you know that you're going to be called in in a few minutes, excuse yourself to the restroom and (besides doing the obvious thing in there) sing a few scales and arpeggios. Then, **think about your material and visualize how you want to perform it.** Remember, focus on what you want to accomplish, and never on what you fear going wrong. Look at the track, not the wall.

I find that meditating, and simply being aware of my breathing relaxes me and allows me to focus. When I go into the room, I am open energetically to the people there and to the material I am going to sing. I am focused on the job at hand, and after saying a heartfelt "hello" to the auditors, I go straight to the piano to give the accompanist his or her music and instructions. If the auditors talk to you, that is great! They are trying to help you loosen up! So smile and go with it!

Do It, Love It, and Be a Nice Guy Or Gal

When you are ready, give that nod and give that performance. The auditors are not in the room, as far as you are concerned. Your scene partner is. Make it real, make it meaningful, make it beautiful. Enjoy your show.

In truth, some auditors really like it that you make eye contact with them during your performance. If you sense that that is the case, that doesn't mean you need to change the scenario for your song.

Simply make the person you are singing to represent your scene partner.

In most cases, however, auditors prefer that you not look directly at them. They want to be able to watch you without feeling a responsibility to react. What I usually do is imagine my scene partner to be just slightly above their heads. In this way, I am not completely disconnected from them, yet I am giving them space.

Most importantly, **auditors want to see a nice person**. If they feel that you are not nice, if you have negative attitude, they will not respond positively to your performance. Especially if they feel that you will be difficult to work with, they will not give you a fair chance. Before you get into your scene, you should smile and be polite. Smiling is absolutely required for good human relations. Before you leave the room, make sure you thank the pianist and the auditors. In short, make sure you are wearing your manners!

And Now Really Learn How to Do This

This guide to auditioning is simply a few points. In truth, everything that goes into performing a song must go into audition. The only difference being that in an audition, the audience is smaller and you may be singing only a small part of the song. As far as the art and technique goes, it is the same.

This is an ongoing course of study. Again, I highly

recommend you read the e-book **Singing Excellence** (www.singing-excellence.com) to begin your thrilling journey to becoming a great artist. Together with that, find yourself the best teacher and take your performance seriously.

If there is one lethal attitude that stops any potential performance success, it is the attitude of wanting to be a star. Yes, you read that correctly too. One should not want to be a star, one should want with all their heart and soul to perform and have the opportunity to sing and perform in front of the whole world. **It's not about what you want to be, it's about what you want to do.**

So when you go in to audition, don't think to yourself how much you hope they cast you. That will probably not help your performance at all, and may make you unnecessarily nervous.

Instead, think how much you love singing this song. Focus on the joy and excitement of sharing this beautiful, emotional, powerful and exciting musical story with the human beings who want you to succeed that are there in the room with you.

Do that and you have already come a long way towards singing excellence!

Online Music Resources

- **Music Online Training**
 - [Hear and Play Music Course](#)
- **Online Music Libraries**
 - [Get a 14-Day free trial to Rhapsody Unlimited then pay only \\$12.99 per month.](#)
 - [eMusic gets you 25 MP3 Downloads/month with no restrictions.](#)
 - [Click here to get Napster--FREE 7-day trial.](#)
- **Music Promotion**
 - [Promote Your Music at Indie-Music.com](#)
- **Music Backing Tracks**
 - [mp3Karaoke: Whatever you do...sing.](#)
- **Music Recording Software**
 - [**Mixcraft software multitrack music studio free trial download**](#)