



Audition Tips for the Wisconsin Singers Singer/Dancers

PREPARING FOR THE AUDITION:

→ How to Pick a Solo

- Choose two contrasting styles: up tempo and a ballad. Try to avoid songs by the same artist or show.
- We strongly suggest that you avoid contemporary solos that are currently on the radio for the following reasons:
 1. You do not want to be compared to the original artist who has a full recording studio to make them sound great!
 2. Chances are that others will choose the same song - you want to set yourself apart!
- Find a song that you love and can relate to that exemplifies your strengths. Do you have warm vibrato? Can you sell a ballad? Are you a great actor that can sell a character song? Does your voice have a country sound to it?
 - Make sure the song fits the strongest part of your range – this MAY require you getting the song transposed to a different key signature. Be sure this is done before you come to the audition!
 - Make sure that the song goes somewhere musically. Try not to pick a song that is repetitive.
 - Plan to show off your dynamic range as well.
- Know your song. If it is from a musical, learn about the musical, know where the song fits in the show, know who sings the song, and what it means.
- Beware of songs that are difficult to perform under stressful conditions and require careful coordination between pianist and singer (Sondheim and James Robert Brown are taboo).
- Avoid songs that are associated with a music legend, i.e. “New York, New York” –Liza Minnelli, “Don’t Rain on My Parade” –Barbara Streisand, “Over the Rainbow” –Judy Garland. Remember, comparisons are inevitable.
- Dare to be different. We hear a lot of standards and often the current Broadway hits are overdone. This works to your disadvantage, as you will be unavoidably compared to the artist who just sang the song you are using.
- We want to hear YOU sing, not your impression of your favorite performing artist. Don’t be afraid to be creative.

- Give thought to how you can structure your song to last no more than 2 minutes. Out of this 2 minutes, you should also have picked your best 16-32 bars (measures) in case that is all that we want to hear if we ask you to sing it a second time.
- Know who you are auditioning for (check out the website, audition videos on our YouTube channel, etc.). Wisconsin Singers performs American Pop Music (top 40, jazz, musical theater, country, gospel, pop standards). Don't choose hymns, classical pieces or your solo and ensemble piece unless it fits our genre.
- Do not choreograph your songs. Be real, approach your piece naturally.

→ What to Bring

- Water Bottle
- Music in a 3-ring binder, in the correct key with clearly marked cuts and transitions. Copied music is fine but it must be in a binder to make page turns easy for the accompanist. You will hand this over to the audition table for our accompanist.
- Extra copy of music so you can look it over while waiting
- Pen or pencil
- Two outfits: one for your solo audition, and one for movement portion, and shoes appropriate for both.

→ What to Wear

- First impressions are very important. Show yourself to be a person of taste, confidence, and sincerity. Come dressed as you would to a professional or college interview.
- Avoid shirts cut too low, skirts cut too high, pants that are baggy or covered with holes. Don't wear anything restricting.
- A smile. Hook us first with the sheer irresistibility of your personality.

THE DAY OF THE AUDITION

Vocal portion of your initial audition

→ Arrival

- Arrive at least 30 minutes early and be sure you've allowed yourself time to get parked and walk to the Humanities Building. We will have forms for you to fill out and this gives you time to warm up and settle down before you audition.
- Don't forget that the impression you make on those checking you in, measuring you for costumes, or escorting you to the warm up room are important too. We are looking for people who work well with others, who are articulate and above all, people who do not exude ego.
- There will be several people auditioning with you. Be sure that you support their efforts by listening attentively and applauding them when

finished. Above all, avoid comparing yourself to anyone else auditioning. We want to hear you perform at your best.

→Entering the room

- Again, first impressions are lasting ones. Carry yourself professionally and confidently.
- Take a seat and wait for instructions. Don't hesitate to introduce yourself to your peers sitting with you!

→When your name is called

- Set up the space for your needs. Move the mic stand if you need to, set it to the appropriate height- the vocal captain will show you how to do this.
- You may be asked questions when you step up to the mic – let your personality show through!
- Do not ever make excuses if you are sick, or have been sick. It is not professional.
- You will be asked if you want to sing your solo or vocalize first. Do what you are most comfortable with first.
- Stand confidently; feet shoulder width apart, chest open, shoulders back, head held high.
- Play to a full house. Do not sing directly to the auditioners, but right over their heads.
- If you have a memory lapse, continue if you can. If you cannot, simply ask to start over again. Take a moment to breathe and refocus, communicate to your accompanist when you are ready and start over. If you are prepared, we'll know! Memory lapses can happen!
- Always say thank you to the accompanist and to your auditioners for their time. Shake hands if offered.
- When vocalizing for us, keep your vowel tall, your breath quiet, and your tone warm (with vibrato if possible).

→Final words....

- **Auditions are NOT really about your talent...there are LOTS of talented people in the world. It's about whether or not you are a good match for next year's show. If you don't get the gig this time around, come back again next year and we'll remember you and look forward to hearing you again!**
- **Coming prepared is critical. We'll know you're serious about auditioning and we'll remember it the next time around!**

Movement portion of your initial audition

→How to prepare

- Watch music videos and try to pick up a few moves from your favorite artists. Another good way to practice learning quickly is to

find a dance workshop on YouTube and learn the dance along with them. Some of our best dancers have never had a lesson in their lives, but they are good at mimicking others.

- Think about how you best learn choreography. Is it easier for you to learn your hands and then your feet or vice versa? Do you learn better by counts or words in the music? The dance captains will switch up the way they teach, so that no one is left out, but if you figure out which method is best before you even walk in the room then you are already one step ahead of us!
- Dances will be taught quickly, and then will be performed in small groups. You will not be asked to dance by yourself. There is comfort in numbers!
- When in doubt, smile, smile, smile. You do not need to show us that you know that you made a mistake. Rather, we would like to see how you get past it as if nothing had happened.
- Practice not looking at your feet...they're not going anywhere!

→What to wear

- After the vocal portion of the audition you will be given time to change into dance clothes.
- Jeans are not conducive to the type of dancing we will be teaching you.
- Wear shoes that you can dance in like jazz shoes or tennis shoes. Dance shoes are not required.
- DO NOT wear flip flops, or plan to dance barefoot or in socks.

→During the audition

- Do not be afraid to ask questions about moves if you do not understand something. We are more than happy to help you, but if you do not ask we will be unaware of your problem.
- Try to learn the whole dance, but the beginning and end of the dance are the parts that the judging panel will remember. Make sure you nail the first 8 counts and then nail the last 8 counts.
- We are not looking necessarily for who picks up the dance the quickest, but instead look for people who have a strong work ethic. If you do not get all the moves, that's OK. We will be watching your attitude towards the challenge. Do you give up or keep on trying?
- Once you have the moves themselves, pay attention to details. Is the person teaching you using a hand in blade? A jazz hand? A pointed toe? An angled head? The more details you can mimic, the better!
- Try not to watch other people. We want to see how much you learn, not how good you are at watching others.

- Smile and perform! Even if you forget every single move in the song, if you keep smiling, then no one will know if you missed something or if the person next to you did.

Singer/Dancer Callbacks

- Within 15 minutes of your initial vocal/dance audition, you will find out if you've made callbacks. If you make callbacks, pick up your callback packet, go some place quiet and read through it carefully.
- Prior to your callback, be sure that you rehearse your second vocal song and pick the best 16 measures or so from the song you sang in the first audition. Typically, this will be toward the end of the song where you can really build to a big finish!
- Spend time going over the dance audition that you were taught. You will be asked to dance this again and we will be looking for whether or not you improve.
- Be sure to hydrate and get something to eat. Callbacks tend to run several hours and you will be kept busy the entire time.

→ Solo

- Callbacks will include having you sing your second song and maybe a part of the song you sang in the initial audition.

→ Part-singing/ Sight-reading

- We will take time to “teach” you a 4-part song. Really listen to notes, rhythms, and how your part relates to the others. You will be given a chance to ask questions.
- Following the teaching section, we will ask you to sing in quartets. We are listening for whether or not you can hold your part independently so work to sing your part solidly but think “ensemble” not “solo.”
- Trust yourself and do not apologize through your face or actions.
- This section is really not that hard!

→ Interview

→We want the real you

- Be yourself. We cannot emphasize this enough! The whole point of the interview process is for the interviewers to get to know YOU.
- Smile. It is much more advantageous if you present yourself as having a positive outlook on the process.

- Give some thought to the role you think you would play as a new member. What can you offer?
- Humility is a valued character trait in this business. You don't have to impress with what you know, but rather, who you are!

→What to expect

- RELAX!!! Take some deep breaths and share yourself with us. We are really interested to get to know you.
- Think about how you can incorporate personal strengths and successes into your answers without coming across as egotistical. It is also nice to hear about real life examples of how you achieved success by overcoming an obstacle, or how you learned from failure.
- Remember that we are not trying to put together a troupe of thirty identical personalities. Diversity is key to keeping one's sanity when we spend so much time together. We are simply looking for individuals who know their strengths/weaknesses, take direction well, and get along with others.

→Q and A session

- Finally, you will all get a chance to ask any questions you have about the program. Don't hesitate to ask what's on your mind. Our student staff will answer honestly!