

Audition Advice

From Ethan Rouse – YSO Viola Coach

General Advice

1. Read and understand all instructions and information clearly. You do not want to prepare the wrong material or not do what is asked of you.
2. For excerpts, find a copy of the full score if possible. imslp.org is a great resource for this. If the composer has been dead for at least one hundred years, the music will be public domain in the U.S. and will most likely be on this website. Use this to better understand how your part fits in with all of the other instruments.
3. Listen to multiple recordings for ideas about tempo and interpretation. There is no definitive recording, so listening to multiple recordings can be very helpful. Remember – Not everyone on YouTube is a good musical example!
4. Ask any questions BEFORE your audition. Don't wait until it's too late!

Practice Tips

1. Use a metronome!!! Start at a slow tempo at which you can play all of the notes with a good sound, in tune and with the correct rhythms, dynamics, and articulations. Do not practice faster than you can play the music. This only solidifies mistakes and will greatly slow your progress.
2. Make sure to look carefully for dynamics, articulations, bowings (for string players), and tempo. Follow them!
3. It is better to play under tempo and play well than to play the specified tempo and play poorly. Know what you are capable of doing right now.
4. Look up any musical terms you do not know. These will give you a great deal of insight into tempo, character, and articulation.
5. Record yourself – video and audio recordings can be very useful. You may notice things you didn't hear while you were playing.
6. Play for other people – friends, family, teachers... anyone who will listen! The more you practice performing, the easier your audition will be.

Audition Strategies

1. Relax!!! Take a deep breath, and trust the work that you have done.
2. Get plenty of rest the night before your audition.
3. Eat a good, nutritious meal (if you can). Bananas contain natural beta-blockers which help to ease nerves. Avoid excess caffeine. This can amplify symptoms of nervousness.
4. Allow yourself plenty of time to get to the audition to warm up and get focused. You don't want to be in a hurry and give yourself something else to worry about.
5. Take some time right before you play to establish your tempo and character. Don't start before you are ready.
6. Don't dwell on your mistakes. The audition panel is not expecting a flawless performance, and neither should you! Everyone makes mistakes. Focus on the music.
7. Remember that the panel wants you to play well. They are not simply tallying mistakes

Best of luck on your audition!