

Tips for Auditioning at Theatre Memphis

Auditioning for MUSICALS

CHECK LIST

- Read and understand detailed audition notice.
- Read the script.
- Review the score. / Prepare music for auditions.
- Fill out audition sheet.
- Update and print resume. Print current headshot. Both should be paper clipped behind audition sheet.
- Plan appropriate outfit with good shoes. Style hair neatly and out of eyes.
- Have a good understanding of what is expected of you during the rehearsal process.
- Have a good understanding of what is expected of you should you be cast.

See notes below for a detailed explanation of terms listed above.

AUDITIONS

PREPARATION

Audition Notice: Read over the audition notice thoroughly. If you have only seen a partial audition notice from one of the local papers, please locate and read one of the complete audition notices. Complete audition notices are posted on the website (www.theatrememphis.org) 2-3 weeks prior to auditions. Complete audition notices are sent via email to those in our volunteer database. (If you do not already receive audition updates and would like to be included on this distribution list, please send an email to ashale@theatrememphis.org or complete the general interest form under the volunteer tab on the website.) Complete audition details are also distributed through the Yahoo Group, Memphis Callboard (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/eCallboard-Mem-CHAT/>). If you have questions that are not answered by the audition notice, please contact Amy Salerno Hale (ashale@theatrememphis.org or 901-682-0518)

Read the Script: Read the script so that you have a good idea of the content and language of the play. Decide which characters may be a good fit for you. Most auditions at Theatre Memphis are cold readings from the script; sides (scene selections from the script to be used for auditions) are not available before the day of auditions unless otherwise noted in the audition announcement.

Scripts are generally available to check out from the Theatre Memphis box office at least three weeks prior to auditions. Scripts are available for a three day rental. The rental fee is \$5 and will be refunded upon timely return of the script.

Review the Score/ Prepare music for auditions: Review the score so that you are familiar with the songs that the character(s) for which are auditioning sing. Be sure that you are capable of handling all the material required. Select the song(s) you will perform for auditions based on what vocal qualities your desired character(s) must display. You will be expected to know your audition songs very well and sing with piano accompaniment. Sheet music should be prepared in 'your' key and in a folder that will stand up on the music rack. (The folder should include only the music you have prepared for auditions. Any additional music you may have brought should be stored elsewhere.) Music should be marked with the introduction, where you will begin singing and where you will stop.

Complete the Audition Sheet: For every show at Theatre Memphis, there is a specific audition sheet to be completed. Audition sheets may be found on the website under the auditions tab, 2-3 weeks prior to auditions. Please accurately mark information that is requested, especially in the calendar section that relates to rehearsal and performance availability. Paperclip the completed audition sheet on top of your resume and headshot.

Resume: Make sure your resume is clear, easy to read, and accurate. Even if you haven't had much performance experience, you may have valuable related experience. Any performance, dance, and vocal experience or training should be listed on your resume. Names of instructors and directors with whom you've worked should be listed, as

well as the institutions at which you've performed or studied. It is also sometimes helpful to list a few names and contact information of people in the local performance community who could give a good recommendation for you.

Headshot: You need not have a professional headshot. A good photo from the shoulders up will do. Photos should represent what you look like in real life, not glamorized. (The representation should be a close representation of what you look like at the time of audition, as the director will use the photo to refresh his/her memory of your audition.)

WHAT TO WEAR

Your overall appearance should be neat and clean and a step up from everyday casual. Clothes should fit well and allow you to move easily and comfortably. All black attire should be avoided, as sometimes the audition space is dressed with black curtains, walls, and floors. If you will be taking part in a dance audition, come dressed to move. (You may bring a change of clothes if necessary.)

Shoes: Make sure you are wearing shoes that allow you to move easily and comfortably without changing your posture or stance. [Heavy, thick-soled shoes with wide, higher-than-average heels are cumbersome and loud. They will make you look clumsy and ill at ease. Sneakers, sandals, flip-flops, and soft-sided, rubber-soled shoes cause most auditionees to move in a sloppy fashion, which distracts from your performance.] If you will be taking part in a dance audition, wear appropriate shoes.

1" or 1 ½" heeled character shoes (or similar heeled shoe) are generally a good choice for women. If a flatter heel is preferred, a hard sole selection is best.

Men and children should wear hard-soled shoes which allow them to move with ease.

Hair: Have your hair styled in a way that keeps it out of your face and especially out of your eyes.

Jewelry etc.: Don't wear anything that will distract attention from your performance. (Examples: large or sparkly jewelry, dangling earrings)

INITIAL AUDITION

Arrival: Make sure you give yourself plenty of time to get to the theatre in advance of the start time for auditions. There are three possible audition rooms at Theatre Memphis. There will always be a welcome sign on the front door letting you know where auditions are to be held. If needed, there may be additional directional signs inside or outside the building to help you locate the proper audition and/or waiting room. There are often up to two shows auditioning on one day and there may be other events happening in the building at the same time as auditions, so please make sure you are following the correct signs.

Check in at the registration table as soon as you arrive in the waiting room. You'll be asked to sign in with your name and full contact information. It is particularly important that we receive an accurate phone number and email address (if applicable). Once you've signed in you will turn in your audition form w/resume and headshot and be given an audition number to wear for the length of auditions. Be sure to return this number at the end of auditions.

Try not to bring too much "stuff" with you to auditions. There is a limited amount of space in the waiting room and audition room. Please do not leave anything of significant value in your car.

The Audition Room: After checking in, you will most likely be asked to sit in the waiting room until the director is ready to start auditions. Once auditions are ready to begin, you will be invited into the audition space and asked to

have a seat. There are usually one or more people at the table with the director during auditions. (These people may include a stage manager, assistant stage manager(s), the Production Stage Manager of Theatre Memphis, the Artistic Director of Theatre Memphis, and the Executive Producer of Theatre Memphis.) After a brief introduction from one of these audition representatives, the audition process will begin with the assembling of auditionees into groups and the assignment of sides. Generally groups are given a few minutes to review the scene before being asked to read and perform the scene before the director.

Attitude: As you enter the audition space, even though you might be quite nervous, you want to look as though you are looking forward to this experience. (We at Theatre Memphis strive to provide positive audition experiences, so it's very possible you may just have a good time!) Be aware that you may be observed from the moment you enter the room, not just when you're reading a scene. How you watch the other auditionees, how you treat those on the audition panel, and how you interact with your fellow auditionees – all these things matter.

Vocal Auditions

Remember that the accompanist wants you sing well – help the accompanist help you by following these guidelines

- 1- Sing a song that you know – VERY WELL!
- 2- Have your song completely memorized.
- 3- Sheet music should be prepared in 'your' key and in a folder that will stand up on the music rack. (The folder should include only the music you have prepared for auditions. Any additional music you may have brought should be stored elsewhere.)
- 4- Music should be marked with the introduction, where you will begin singing and where you will stop.
- 5- Give the accompanist your tempo while at the piano.
- 6- Thank the accompanist for playing for you when you collect your music.

Occasionally there are roles for non-singers in musicals. Read the individual audition notice for more information.

Dance/Movement Auditions

Most musicals have a dance/movement section. If you would like to be considered for a dancing role, come dressed to move with appropriate dance shoes. The choreographer will teach auditionees a short dance piece, which will be reviewed several times before auditionees are asked to perform in small groups of 4-5.

Usually there are roles for non-dancers in musicals. Read the individual audition notice for more information.

CALLBACK AUDITION

Callback auditions are the second round to the auditioning process. Callback auditions are most often held the Monday following the audition weekend. Notification for callbacks is made via phone call. Only those who are needed for the callback auditions will be given a phone call. These calls will be made by that Monday morning, at the latest. At times there are actors who are being considered for roles that will not be needed at callbacks.

Those attending callback auditions should prepare in much the same way as for the initial audition. If possible, auditionees will be notified of role(s) for which they are being considered. Auditionees may be asked to prepare a certain selection from the script for callbacks.

CASTING/REGARDS NOTICE

Theatre Memphis directors strive to make casting decisions within the week following the callback audition. Phone calls will be made to those who are being offered a role. After the cast is confirmed, those who are not being offered a role will receive a regards notice via email. Sometimes it is not possible to confirm a cast within the week after auditions. If casting decisions will take longer than a week, those that are being considered for roles will be notified via email. Those who are no longer being considered for a role will receive a regards notice via email.

Please understand that email is the easiest and most efficient way we have of communicating with auditionees and cast members, but emails are not fail-proof. If you feel like you have missed out on hearing information about audition results, please contact Production Stage Manager, Amy Salerno Hale at ashale@theatrememphis.org or 901-682-8601.

About two weeks after being cast, you should receive a follow-up email from the Production Stage Manager. This email will contain introductory information about the show, including when a script will be available for you to pick up. This email will most likely not include a rehearsal schedule. Rehearsal schedules are generally not available until about two weeks before the first rehearsal date. Please continue to keep your schedules as free as possible, especially during weekday evenings. Rehearsal schedules will be made based on the conflicts that are given on the audition sheet.

Cast lists are posted online about two weeks after auditions. You may view the cast list by clicking on the season tab and selecting the show title from the column on the left side of the screen. A show description will appear in the center of the screen with a "Meet the Cast" button in the upper right corner. Click this button.

IF YOU ARE CAST

REHEARSALS

Rehearsal times and days vary from show to show according to the director's needs. In general musicals begin rehearsals 8 weeks prior to the week of opening night, with rehearsals called 6 times per week. Weekday call times are generally 6 -10 pm. Weekend times vary, but usually do not begin before 1 PM. Actors will only be called to rehearsals for which they are needed. The time an actor spends in rehearsal varies depending on the needs of the role for which they have been cast.

The rehearsal schedule will be updated as needed, to accommodate rehearsal progress. Technical rehearsals begin about two weeks out from opening. Weekday tech rehearsals may start as early as 6 PM. Weekday tech rehearsals end at 11 PM. Weekend tech rehearsal times vary. All actors will be called for tech rehearsal 6 days per week and be expected to stay for the entire rehearsal period.

COME PREPARED to each and every rehearsal. This includes bringing:

1. Script and pencils with erasers (to notate blocking and other notes)
2. Your own personal agenda book (smart-phone, iphone, or whatever you use to keep track of your schedule and availability) If a rehearsal date needs to be altered or planned, you should be ready with your calendar to provide your availability.
3. Shoes – Wear shoes that are appropriate for the show. In general, everyone should wear a hard soled, closed toed shoe. ABSOLUTLY NO FLIP FLOPS OR CROCS should ever be worn to rehearsal.
4. Appropriate dress – Wear clothes that are appropriate for rehearsal in and for your character (Examples: Women who will likely be wearing heels in performance should bring heels to wear in rehearsal. If it's a period piece that requires women to wear medium or long skirts, a rehearsal skirt should be brought to rehearsal.)

PERFORMANCES

Main Stage (Lohrey Stage)

Performances run for three weeks. (Musicals that open or close the season may run up to 5 weeks.)

There may be 1-3 preview performances leading up to opening night. One of these will be a friends and family performance, for which cast members may invite up to 4 people.

Performances run Friday- Sunday the first week.

Performances run Thursday through Sunday the second week

Performances run Wednesday through Saturday the third week.

(Musicals that open or close the season- Performances will run Wednesday through Sunday for a fourth week)

(Musicals that open or close the season- Performances could run Wednesday through Sunday for a fifth week.)

Wednesday/Thursday curtain is at 7:30 PM.
Friday/Saturday curtain is at 8 PM.
Sunday curtain is at 2 PM.
All actors are called 1 hour prior to performance.

Next Stage

Performances run for three weeks.
There may be 1-3 preview performances leading up to opening night. One of these will be a friends and family performance, for which cast members may invite up to 4 people.
Performances run Friday- Sunday the first week.
Performances run Thursday through Sunday the second week
Performances run Thursday through Saturday the final week.
Wednesday/Thursday curtain is at 7:30 PM.
Friday/Saturday curtain is at 8 PM.
Sunday curtain is at 2 PM.
All actors are called 1 hour prior to performance.

COSTUMES

A few weeks prior to the first rehearsal, actors will be called in for measurements. A measurement session generally takes about 10 minutes and occurs on a weekday between the hours of 10 AM and 5 PM. Once the costumes have been constructed, actors will be called in 1 - 3 times for costume fittings. These sessions may last up to one hour and will occur on a weekday between the hours of 10 AM and 5 PM (4 or 4:30 PM being the last time slot). You will be able to sign-up for a time that is most convenient for you. Arrive promptly at the time scheduled.

The costume shop may ask you to provide several items for your wardrobe. Such items would include appropriate undergarments, socks, stockings, shoes, hair supplies, and make-up. Many actors will need more than one pair of shoes. Actors are asked not to cut or color their hair without checking with the Costume Designer first.

COMMUNICATION

Information and updates will primarily be given through email. Please keep abreast of your emails prior to and during rehearsal and throughout the run of the show. If you have any questions, please contact one of your stage managers.

TICKETS

Please call the box office for ticketing info. Box Office: 682-8323, open Tuesday- Friday, 10 AM to 5 PM, and weekends during performances.

All actors receive 4 friends and family performance tickets and a voucher for 2 complimentary tickets (good during the regular run of the show).