



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Musical Theatre Certificate Audition Tips

Picking Material

Pick songs you can act!

- Don't just pick songs that move you musically. Make sure there's an actable lyric within which you can make an active, meaningful connection with an "other"

Song cuts should be a minute, tops

- Aim for your cut to be slightly shorter than a minute so you don't go over time

Make your cut clear on your sheet music

- Be sure to mark your sheet music clearly with "Start" + "End" points as well as other musical info that might be important (tempo changes, fermatas, ritards, etc.)
- Highlighter works well
- No plastic sheets; limit page turns
- Be sure to put the title and composer names on your cut if it's not already visible

Practicing

Practice slating your material

- This is one of the most under prepared portions of an audition – practice this and aim to show your best, authentic self while doing so

Practice in your shoes

- Especially women, but men too: you will feel different if you're in heels, dress shoes or tennis shoes

Practice with an accompanist

- The vast majority of times, you cannot get away without practicing with a pianist
- Listening to a cast recording is not the same.

Practice your songs in front of people

- The first time you do your song in front of people should NOT be your audition.
- Even if you can't get some people to watch you while working with an accompanist, perform it a cappella in front of some supportive friends

On the day of your audition:

Wear clothes that aren't restricting

- Your body is your instrument and if you wear that top that makes it a little harder to breathe or pants that restrict your hips/legs, it will affect your ability to sing and communicate well

Warm-up

- Physically and Vocally – create a routine between now and the audition dates so you're used to the way things feel

Nerves

- These are normal – acknowledge and thank them for being with you
- If you ignore or try to push them down, they will make themselves more forcefully present

Take a second to prep before you sing

- Breathe and take the room in for a second before you start
- While it's not a long period of time, the audition time is YOUR time

A Memorable Monologue Is the Key to Leaving a Lasting Impression in the Room

This is an edited version of an article from Backstage written by UGA Alumnus Clifton Guterman, Casting Director for Theatrical Outfit in Atlanta and a successful actor in theatre and film.

Three minutes is the average time an actor gets in the room for a general audition.

In general, stand out monologues that make a casting team “look up” feature the following:

- A character actively attempting to fulfill an objective to get the receiver(s) to “do” something (listen, love, admit, concede, stay).
- A clear beginning, middle, and end; a story in which your character evolves.
- A clear receiver to whom you are communicating: a lover, an enemy, a boardroom, the gods (but please, not the casting table).
- An opportunity for vocal and physical variety.

Problematic monologues that make us scratch our heads (or doodle on our notepads) may feature:

- Text taken out of context from the source material; it can be confusing without knowledge of the entire character arc or plot.
- Multiple characters/voices.
- A dependence on props (phones) or scenery (opening a window; driving a car).
- Death, weeping, overt eroticism, mental breakdowns, disabilities (from able-bodied actors)...generally, “extremes.”
- Frenetic physicality.
- Very choppy writing that will force you into a staccato rhythm. If it’s there, connect the language and make it sound more natural.
- Difficult dialects. If you can’t improvise in a dialect, you’re probably not proficient.
- Shakespeare or other verse. Only attempt it if you’re proficient.
- Whispery, very quiet filmic pieces unless they are contrasted with a theatrical piece.
- Roles and passages made famous by stars. (“A Few Good Men,” “Steel Magnolias,” “A Streetcar Named Desire,” etc.)
- Self-written, autobiographical pieces. We’d like to see a character.

In general, brief is better. The old adage that a casting director or director can tell within the first 30 seconds if someone is skilled is true. For the remainder of a piece, our hope is that you show range, vary rhythm, choose opposites, and tell a complete story. Ideally, you’ll take us on a journey that means something to you, to us, or both. Under-staying or overstaying your welcome simply means we’ll crave more (and may need to ask for another piece to evaluate technique) or lose interest.

Finally, breathe. One of the best ways to combat nerves that could make you speed through a monologue is to find moments for breath. Actively think (in character) while doing it. Or move when inhaling. Or sit as you exhale. An actor breathing is truly fascinating to observe because it reflects life, and what’s more exciting to watch than that?

<https://www.backstage.com/magazine/article/memorable-monologue-key-leaving-lasting-impression-room-763/>