

AND THE WINNER IS...

Tips on Taking a Successful Audition

Winning an audition means more than getting all the notes right—it also involves non-musical elements that many people overlook. For more than 25 years, Virginia Allen, a conductor and faculty member at The Juilliard School, has been involved in auditioning conductors, instrumentalists and vocalists for jobs, competitions, and workshops. *Here are some of her tips on how to make your best showing at an audition.*

Before the audition...

Prepare well in advance
Choose music that is appropriate – if you're not sure, ask for advice
Don't change repertoire less than a week before the audition

At the audition...

Present a professional image (you get only one chance to make a first impression)
Dress for the occasion (don't wear shorts, jeans or hats; pay attention to personal grooming)
Give yourself plenty of time to do everything (get up early, have a leisurely meal, **arrive early** to the auditions)
Avoid over-practicing, which may cause nerve problems and fatigue
At the site, warm up alone and don't listen to other players
Make sure your instruments and reeds are working properly
Have your instrument out and ready; leave your case outside the room
If you are not auditioning behind a screen, introduce yourself to the committee
Speak clearly and look people in the eye
Know correct pronunciations of titles, composers and musical terms
Take control of the situation (plan what you're going to play and do)
Demonstrate your technical ability and facility, but also show the depth of your musical soul
Play to your own standards; don't try to second guess how the committee wants something to be performed
Don't make excuses or apologies, but do communicate if you have a legitimate problem
Don't draw attention to problems (the committee may not notice)
If you make a mistake, recover quickly and continue
Maintain a positive appearance even if you do not play well
Demonstrate that you are a good colleague as well as a good musician
Show confidence without being cocky

What not to say...

I haven't warmed up
I haven't had a chance to practice
I didn't know... or Nobody told me...
I just got this horn
What should I play?
I don't have my instruments, sticks, etc.
I didn't bring any music

Remember that the Audition Committee members want nothing more than for you to do your best and succeed.