**Secrets to Nailing Your College Theater Audition**

**Taken from Playbill.Com**

**For Theatre Students:**
Not all theatre schools require an audition, but among the ones that do, many require that students not only apply to the school in general, but also to the individual theatre department. You need to make sure you have completed your audition successfully before you act on the school’s acceptance.

Catherine Weidner, chair of the Department of Theatre Arts at **[Ithaca College](http://playbilledu.com/school/Ithaca/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)**, describes the process at her school. Students in Musical Theatre and Acting are required to upload pre-screening materials (two short monologues, and, for MT’s, two song cuts and a dance audition) at the same time they complete their application to Ithaca College. Once a student’s application is complete, faculty members review the pre-screen material, and students who pass are notified to schedule an audition in either Ithaca, Chicago, New York or Los Angeles. At those auditions, students take part in a warm-up with two or more faculty, a vocal warm-up and then a 30-minute master class/workshop with faculty, usually consisting of movement work, games and partnering exercises.

To help ensure a successful audition, Weidner urges applicants to “find material that is age-appropriate and is a role you could play right now. Choose material that you love. One of your pieces should be with an imaginary partner so we can see your ability to create an ‘other’ and remain focused on what’s happening between you. Choose contrasting material that shows some range--and a different relationship than your other monologue. Rehearse until it feels like it’s a part of you, and you enjoy telling the story.”



Avoid the common mistakes Weidner has seen:
1. Pay attentino to your volume. Weidner has heard a lot of screaming—not a good thing.
2. Trust yourself. Many applicants have trouble trusting they are enough.
3. Choose wisely. Too many auditioners pick material using lots of profanity or sexually-charged language.
4. Tell a story.
5. Dress appropriately. Don’t wear six-inch heels to play Emily in [***Our Town***](http://www.playbill.com/production/our-town-henry-millers-theatre-vault-0000002470).

Do kids who’ve had the benefit of formal training always have an edge? “It’s an audition for a training program, so we’re looking for potential, not finished products,” Weidner says. “We accept people who have little experience and a lot, and everything in between. The secret is to bring who you really are into the room, not the person your coach, teacher or parents want you to be. This is your time, and you will be the one doing the work, wherever you go to school, so relax, take your time, and bring your best work.” Chris Andersson, Director of Admissions in the Drama Department at **[New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts](http://playbilledu.com/school/NYU-Tisch/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)**, said Tisch welcomes applicants in four areas: acting, music theatre, directing and production & design. The requirements differ for each. Acting candidates are asked to prepare two contemporary monologues that are contrasting in some way. Music Theatre candidates participate in the same acting evaluation but are also asked to sing two 32-bar cuts (one must be from musical theatre and the other can also be from musical theatre or from another type of music) and dance a little—either live or on video.

Directing candidates do one monologue and then present a directing portfolio for review, which contains a director's notebook (preparation for directing a production—either actual or fantasy) and an understanding of additional directing experience they've had. Production & Design candidates present a design portfolio or a stage manager’s prompt book for an actual or fantasy production. All candidates are invited into a conversation with their evaluators immediately following the review of their artistic work.

Andersson’s tips for a successful audition:
1. Be yourself. Don't try to guess who we MIGHT be looking for. We are looking for YOU. We want to get to know you the artist and you the person through the audition process.
2. Have a series of relaxation and centering exercises that work for you. These will help ground you and allow you to concentrate and present your best self.
3. Be happy to be there. A smile and some positive energy go a long way.

How to avoid the biggest mistakes he sees:
1. Prepare.
2. Know your audition material well.
3. Research. It’s important to be knowledgeable about the program to which you are applying.
4. Respect. Demonstrate respect for others at the audition.

As for any other special suggestions, Andersson said, “Have fun! We want you to succeed! We're rooting for you! Knock ’em dead!”