



GUIDELINES FOR THE MUSICAL THEATRE AUDITION – PREPARING THE MUSIC FOR THE PIANO ACCOMPANIST

As we return to hosting a live, in-person conference safely, we want to welcome our High School and State College students and Sponsors back to the festivities. This year's conference will look different than those hosted pre-Pandemic, most importantly due to our new incredible location at the AdventHealth Fieldhouse and Conference Center in Winter Haven, FL. With this more centralized location, we hope more High School and State College students will be able to attend and participate in the transfer auditions/interviews and College Fair. Below are some important guidelines and helpful hints to keep in mind as you determine how best to make the 2021 FTC Conference a successful experience.

It is recommended that only the portion of the music that is to be sung is presented to the accompanist. Tape the photocopied music onto a file folder that will easily stay open on the piano's music stand. If the excerpt is more than two pages, make the third page an attached folder to avoid page turns. (Never offer the pianist loose sheets. They will fall off the accompanist's music stand and are often in the wrong order)

Mark the top of the first page with: title of selection, show title, and composer/lyricist. Mark the following musical indications:

1. Tempo (metronome marking is useful: quarter note=120, half note=60, etc.) Mood indication from the score (moderate, swing, allegro, softshoe, etc.) "Belltone=G" (or whatever the first note is) unless using a piano introduction. Any liberties that are to be taken with the tempo (ritards, breaths in the middle of sentences, rubato, moving forward, etc. The time signature and the key signature must be clearly included at the beginning of the selection.
2. Before taping the music onto the folder, cut out anything that is not to be played, such as unnecessary introduction, first endings, long postludes, instrumental cues, second verse words that are not going to be sung, etc. Then adjust what follows so that the pianist follows the score in a logical manner – no sudden jumping from score to score. Do not cross bars out and expect the pianist to jump over unused sections of music.
3. Always present the music in the key in which it is to be sung. NEVER ask a pianist to transpose at sight.
4. Never ask a pianist to play from a lead sheet that has only the melody, lyrics, and chord symbols. Make certain that the music is clearly copied and includes all of the top melodic notes and all of the piano bass notes. Whiteout anything that is distracting or unnecessary.
5. Ask an experienced pianist to read through the excerpt to see if anything is distracting, confusing or missing.
6. Prepare and practice what needs to be said to the pianist (including "hello" and "thank you") so that valuable audition time isn't wasted at the piano. Point out anything that may be tricky to the pianist. Lightly tap the temp and lightly sing the first phrase of music until the pianist nods that s/he understands. Then, walk to center stage and prepare to perform.
7. Let the pianist know where you want to start and where you will end. Mark this on



- your score as well.
8. Let the pianist know if you are singing or acting first. If acting first, give the pianist your cue line (or write your cue line in the sheet music)
 9. Always nod to the pianist for the belltone or the introduction when ready to sing.
 10. Always thank the pianist when finished.
 11. Avoid manuscript copies if possible. It is much better to have someone input the music into a software program (Finale, Sibelius). The printing is much easier to read.
 12. Avoid the very difficult piano reductions of certain composers such as Jason Robert Brown, Michael John LaChiusa, John Bucchino, Stephen Sondheim, etc. A pianist who can't read this challenging music can destroy an audition. Many of these difficult accompaniments can be simplified by a composer/arranger and printed out in a more easily read version.
 13. Do not waste valuable audition time asking the pianist to play a lengthy piano introduction. It is usually best to plan for a one-bar introduction or just a belltone. A belltone allows the singer to establish the tempo with pickup notes. Furthermore, starting with a belltone avoids having the pianist accidentally set a wrong temp and allows the singer to begin when s/he is ready.
 14. Avoid selections that have meter, tempo, and key changes. An audition selection that maintains a steady, established tempo and key is most often successfully completed without error.

ALL COMPLETED AUDITION APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED IN THE FTC OFFICE BY OCTOBER 15TH. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.