

Clinic: Auditions and Competitions: Advice for Students and Adjudicators

presented by Mary Sorlie

Advice for Students: Prepare for Auditions with Sight Reading

Before the audition

- Play something new everyday.
- Play with others; your teacher, fellow students.
- Work from rhythm books such as *Master Theory* by Charles S. Peters and Paul Yoder, *The Logical Approach to Rhythmic Notation* by Phil Perkins, *Essentials for Strings* by Gerald Anderson, *Rhythmic Training* by Robert Starer.
- Play chamber music (string quartets/wind ensembles).
- Use online resources such as sightreadingmastery.com, thepracticeroom.net, sightreadingfactory.com
- Play pieces that are below, at, and slightly above your level.
- Work with a metronome.
- Advanced string players should practice in the higher positions everyday.

During the Audition

- Take a moment to look at the excerpt.
- Scan the entire excerpt, don't dwell on a single part of it.
- After looking at time signature and

key signature, look for accidentals, rhythmic patterns or changes, register changes, articulations, and dynamics.

- Keep breathing. Your judge doesn't know CPR.
- If you have played something before, don't announce it. Smile and play beautifully.
- Keep commentary to a minimum.
- Play as musically as possible.
- Make sure that you are playing the part as best you can. Play what you see, not what you think it should be.

After the Audition

- Congratulate yourself on completing your sight reading.
- Don't beat yourself up for things that could have gone differently.
- Think about the positive.

Most Common Audition Mistakes Students Make:

- Mixing up major and minor modes, or mistaking a flat key for a minor key.
- Not knowing key signatures.
- Not preparing scales.
- Saying how terribly NOT prepared you are and/or how it sounded so

much better at home.

- Rushing into each element of the audition, especially the sight reading.
- Never having played your solo in front of an audience prior to the audition.

Advice for Adjudicators:

- Know the age, level and expectations of the students who are playing/auditioning.
- Be on time. Students are anxious enough.
- Do not make guarantees to any student who auditions.
- Kindness prevails.
- Is there any way to set the student up for success?
- Thank the student for playing. They have worked hard.
- Answer questions honestly.

Mary Sorlie currently conducts the GTCYS Philharmonia East and West Orchestras, as well as teaches at the Harmony Program at Riverside Elementary. She maintains a violin and viola studio in her home and received the MNSOTA Master Teacher: Studio award in 2011. †