

Now What? After a Disappointing Audition

By Deborah Conquest

One question I often hear from my students is, "So, I didn't get cast. Now what?" As voice teachers, we empathize with their disappointment, but this question presents a valuable teaching opportunity. Here are some suggestions we can encourage our students to pursue between performance opportunities.

1. Take a Dance or Acting Classes

Encouraging our students to expand their skills can make them more versatile performers. Dance classes improve movement and stage presence, which are crucial for both musical theater and opera. Acting classes enhance character interpretation and emotional expression. Both types of classes will boost their performance abilities and confidence in auditions.

2. Improve Musical and Vocal Skills

Continuous improvement is key. I find the pauses between shows to be the most productive for working on vocal technique; when they're not busy learning a role. Listening to new repertoire or new composers can deepen their musical understanding. Joining a choir or vocal ensemble helps with blending voices and understanding harmony, making them more versatile singers.

3. Practice Sightreading and Cold Reading

Sightreading and cold reading are critical for auditions. When I say sightreading, I remind them of callbacks where they may have to sing new music. No one is going to drill them on solfege, but the casting team might say "Here's a song from the show. You have five minutes. Here's your starting note." Or they might hand the student a script and ask them, on the spot, to read for a character or characters. The more prepared a student is, the less stressful sightreading and cold reading is. These are skills that can be practiced and improved.



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4. Develop New Repertoire

Evaluate their current audition book and identify any gaps in styles or genres. I give my studio members a sort of template of musical theatre styles and genres. The same could be done with a five-aria audition book. Select lesser-known pieces that showcase their strengths and versatility. A diverse and well-prepared repertoire makes them more adaptable and ready for various audition opportunities.

5. Engage in Performance Opportunities

Suggest participation in community theater, open mic nights, or collaborations with other musicians. Low-stakes auditions and performances build confidence and stage presence, keep them active, and provide valuable practice.

6. Reflect and Set Goals

Encourage students to reflect on their audition experience. What went well? What could be improved? Use this reflection to set specific, measurable goals for their next audition. Clear goals provide direction and motivation.

7. Foster a Positive Attitude

Rejection is part of the audition process. Encourage students to stay positive and

persistent. I always say casting is like putting together a jigsaw puzzle. The artistic team has to figure out how to best plug in all the pieces. Remind them that every audition is a learning experience and an opportunity to grow.

8. Promote Networking and Mentorship

Building a network of fellow performers, teachers, and industry professionals provides support and new opportunities. Encourage attendance at industry events, workshops, and masterclasses to meet new people and learn from their experiences. Seeking mentorship from experienced performers offers valuable guidance and insights.

9. Emphasize Mental and Physical Health

Maintaining mental and physical health is crucial for sustained performance excellence. Encourage self-care routines like regular exercise, healthy eating, and adequate sleep. Activities like yoga, meditation, or spending time with loved ones enhance overall performance and resilience.

10. Update Their Performer Resume

Ensure their resume is up-to-date and reflects recent performances and training. Check for the latest templates and styles on Playbill or Backstage. Highlight unique skills or experiences that set them apart from other performers.

Conclusion

A disappointing audition is not the end but an opportunity to grow and improve. By taking classes, enhancing skills, preparing new repertoire, seeking performance opportunities, and maintaining a positive attitude, students can make the most of the time between auditions.

Remember, our industry often involves more auditioning than performing. Every experience is a step towards becoming a better performer. Embrace the journey, learn from each experience, and continue to develop your craft. With dedication and perseverance, students will see progress and success in future auditions and performances. Encourage them to keep moving forward, and they'll be ready to shine when the next audition comes around.


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alum. Conquest loves hiking, rockabilly music, competitive powerlifting, house plants, and chocolate cake — not necessarily in that order. Fun fact: she started her career as the "Ivory Snow Baby" and became a SAG-AFTRA member at six months old. Learn more at [conquestvoicestudio.com](#)



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