

AUDITION and VIDEO RECORDING ADVICE

It is a great joy for the committee members to hear fine, well-crafted performances by young, gifted Christian musicians! We hope that these recommendations for auditioners will be helpful to each applicant. As always, if questions arise, please contact us!

GENERAL TOPICS: preparing and completing an audition

1. What is the audition committee looking for?
 - Generally speaking, we are trying to assess two things: ability and potential.
 - ◊ Ability is all about how thoroughly one prepares the musical and technical aspects of the audition material. The ability aspect includes the ideas of technique, tone, rhythm security and accuracy, communication, and evidence of musicianly thinking.
 - ◊ Potential is about the record of growth indicated in the application [your literature performed/studied list; your well-crafted essay; your music service in community, school, and church.
2. What music should I play?
 - Rule number one: Prepare the audition requirements exactly as published. If the requirement is three pieces, do not submit two pieces—do not submit four pieces. If pieces must be memorized, do not use music or have music on the stand. Committees are not free to make exceptions.
 - Rule number two: Play only what you can play very well. We are impressed when an auditioner plays with mastery and this occurs when one plays something that they have “lived with” for a long time. A highly technical piece with note or rhythm errors will not go over well. A lyrical work performed with great musicality and security is always impressive!
 - Rule number three: Listen to the advice of your teacher and parents.
 - Rule number four: Play music that you have already performed. It is not a good idea to audition with a piece for which the audition is a “first time” performance.
 - Rule number five: Choose as diverse a program as possible. Play something fast, play something slow; something that is lyrical; something that requires much technical mastery; play different style periods. Always follow the published requirements, however.
3. What should be my approach?
 - Be fully, completely, totally prepared. This takes time and dedication.
 - Approach the audition in the same way you would approach a formal recital. Be in the same focused mindset, without distractions.
 - If a piano audition, try to use a well-tuned instrument.
 - If your audition requires accompaniment, you must use piano accompaniment. You may not use an instrumental accompaniment track. [Vocalists: see “Specific Topics: Vocal Auditions.”]
 - Dress in a manner fitting a recital. Present yourself in the best way possible.
4. Plan your video shot so that it shows your performance clearly. See “Specific Topics,” below.
 - If keyboardist, frame the video in such a way as to show you and your hands.
 - If a vocalist, frame the video in a way that shows your full body.
 - If an instrumentalist, frame the video to show your playing posture and hands.

5. Make a preliminary check to insure the sound pick up is clear, without distortion, and is balanced with the accompaniment [if accompaniment is required].
6. Note carefully that there can be no electronic sound enhancement—no electronic reverb, no amplification. We want to hear you clearly!

SPECIFIC TOPICS: The Video Recording:

1. You do not need to spend a lot of money making the recordings. In this day of cell phones and computers, you may use these to record a good video. Your video should be of high enough quality so that your voice has good presence and you are clearly seen.
2. Electronic enhancements, like reverb, amplification, or electronic coloring may not be used.
3. Editing multiple takes into a single recording is not allowed.
4. Try to use a large, quiet space with a nice acoustic (church, choir room, performance hall, or large room). The microphone should be placed far enough away—probably 6 to 10 feet—so that it is picking up your natural sound in the room.
5. Make sure that you are well lit. Natural light is best. If you have limited natural light, please position a light so that you are illuminated from the front. Please do not record in front of a window.
6. Shoot with your phone or computer camera directly in front of you. If using your phone, position it on its side (landscape view) for as widescreen a shot as possible. 1080p quality is best.
7. Before recording your performance, do a test and check to make sure you are centered in the frame, the sound is good, and the balance between you and your pianist or the external speaker [if using a recorded piano accompaniment] is right.
8. Clearly announce your name, selection title & composer's name.
9. Do not include any additional comments by yourself or anyone else before or after your performance.
10. Please record each piece separately, not as a continuous whole.
11. Check your recording to make sure everything worked properly.
12. Submit only the pieces listed as your audition literature. It is helpful to have someone beside yourself start and stop the recording.
13. You may submit a video shot at a live performance, in front of an audience.
14. Submit your recordings by email, Google drive, Dropbox, or as YouTube links, titled with your name and piece number 1, 2, or 3. We look forward to viewing your audition!

SPECIFIC TOPICS: Vocal Auditions

1. Memorize your music carefully: Be sure you have the correct pitches, correct rhythms, and good diction. For help in selecting audition material and with diction, see this list of helpful resources: <https://music.bju.edu/apply/vocal-studies-admission-resources/>
2. Accompaniment: Voice auditions may only be accompanied by piano.
 - Find a live accompanist to play for your recordings—one fully capable of playing your pieces.
 - If you cannot find an accompanist, you may also use any of these online resources to find piano accompaniment tracks for your pieces:
 - ◇ Appcompanist (<https://www.appcompanist.com/>),
 - ◇ Virtually Vocal (<https://www.virtuallyvocal.com/>) or
 - ◇ www.YouTube.com
 - If you need help finding an accompaniment track, please contact Mrs. Laura Brundage [ljbrunda@bj.edu].