

**FAVE
MAKER**

ACING AUDITION

The Insider's Guide to Fame & Success

by

VICKIE FRANKMANO
TALENT MANAGER

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CHAPTER 1: ASSESSING YOUR TALENT

Auditions are the tryouts that will determine some of the most important opportunities of your entire career. In order to capitalize on these opportunities, you will need to know the inside secrets of the process.

Throughout my career I have seen dozens of actors, models, singers and dancers make the same mistakes over and over, leaving them left to wonder why their careers never took off. The clients who adhered to my guidance, and embraced my knowledge of the industry went on to have successful careers. Understanding the mind of a casting director is key. You must understand what casting directors are *really* looking for. As a talent manager for over 30 years, I have gained a wealth of knowledge about the entertainment industry, and most importantly about the audition process. Whether you are a singer/dancer looking to make it onto the Broadway stage, an aspiring model looking to break into commercials, or a dedicated actor hoping to break into the film and television industries, you will need to understand the importance of auditioning, and how to do it successfully.

My name is Vickie Frankmano, and I have managed actors who have worked on dozens of TV and film projects, many stemming from successful auditions. My clients have booked starring and featured roles in TV and film projects such as: *The Cosby Show*, *Moesha*, *The Steve Harvey Show*, *Spanglish*, *Falcone*, *The Audrey Hepburn Story*, *Object of My Affection*, *Sister Sister*, *One Life to Live*, *Boston Public*, etc. I have also helped actors to book commercial roles for top brands like Olive Garden and Life Cereal.

My career began after taking a leap of faith and relocating from my hometown of Philadelphia, PA to New York City in 1976, where I obtained a position with Selma Rubin Talent Management, a management company that specialized in representing children and young adults. After 12 years with Selma Rubin, I felt as if I was ready to venture out, and from this decision my era at Cuzzins Management was born. After being initially given the responsibility of building Cuzzins' theatrical department, which consisted of TV series, movies & theatre work. I helped to establish a long list of notable clients such as *The Cosby Show* favorite "Bud" or Deon Richmond, and *Modern Family's* break-out star Sarah Hyland in noteworthy TV, film and commercial projects. Through my experiences, I became a master at securing the best and most lucrative deals for our clientele. I am proud to say that some of my clients have been some of the highest paid actors in a series have a firm understanding of both the client and the representatives needs.

Being in the entertainment industry definitely involves fame, fun and fortune, but deciding to become a performer is serious business. Even the most experienced and successful actors and models take their ability very seriously, and are always searching for ways to enhance their talent. By learning the basics of the entertainment industry and the audition process, you will be able to learn how to jump-start your career and audition well, which is a great foundation to build a career as a successful working performer.

I am not here to judge your level of talent, instead I intend to use this book to offer you the inside secrets to mastering the audition process. I will be calling upon my three decades of industry knowledge and expertise to help you outline the key information you will need to become a successfully auditioning actor, model, singer or dancer. Use this book as a tool that will help you understand the auditioning process, explain the different types of auditions, prepare you for casting directors, and inform you on the inner workings of talent agencies and management companies. Let this book enlighten you on an insider's secrets of the audition process, and breakdown the tools you will need to begin a career as a successfully auditioning, working performer.

DO YOU REALLY WANT TO BE IN 'THE BUSINESS'?

There was once a very talented young actress, who wanted nothing more but to act. After graduating from performing arts school in New York City, she focused on pursuing her dream. She endured a string of rejection after countless auditions, and supported herself by working low-paying odd jobs like waitressing and telemarketing. Soon her luck started to turn around and she began to be called back on auditions, and eventually booked several smaller parts, but never a breakthrough role. After these seemingly endless years of bad luck, little money, and being unable to land decent roles, the young actress considered giving up her dreams of becoming a successful actress. Desperate, she went on one last audition, convinced that if her luck didn't turn around she was finally giving up acting for good. This last audition was for a show called "Friends", and the young actress aced the audition and landed the role of "Rachel". The young actress is now the Jennifer Aniston that we all know and love today.

"Wow!" You might be thinking, that story was about the same Jennifer Aniston that was cast in one of the most successful sitcoms of all time, and was married to possibly one of the best looking men on the planet? You're probably wondering, "Surely she couldn't have had it so hard in the beginning of her career, especially given how talented she is!" Welcome to the entertainment industry, an industry that can be frustrating, unforgiving, and downright defeating at times, but when you are finally able to become a working performer doing what you love, the rewards can be amazing.

The first thing I say to the aspiring performers who walk into my office is to ask themselves some simple questions to determine if the entertainment industry is the right fit for their personality. You will need to do the very same thing.

These are the questions that everyone should ask themselves when they think about breaking into the entertainment industry. Are you an outgoing, sociable person? Or more introverted? Dancers and singers looking to break into theater, and even models who want to start auditioning for commercials must understand that those goals all include a form of acting. Actors should typically be outgoing and unafraid to speak in front of large crowds, as this is a large part of performing as an actor. Reading is also an important part of acting. Actors will very often need to do “cold” reads, meaning reading lines without memorization, and it is important to be able to read quickly and comprehend well. Most of all, the most important part of becoming a performer is deciding if you really *want* to become an performer! Entertainers sometimes face daily rejection from various sources like casting directors and even talent agencies, and it is important to be able to stay motivated and focused on your goals and aspirations in the face of adversity.

ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS:

- Are you outgoing?
- Do you read well?
- Do you feel confident speaking/performing in front of an audience?
- Do/Have you participate(d) in theater/drama/dance/voice activities?
- Do you handle rejection well?
- Do you have a real desire to be a successful [actor/model/singer/dancer]?

Being in the entertainment industry can be a difficult lifestyle for adults, due to the fact that you must always be available to audition during the day. Many aspiring actors work unconventional hours with jobs like waitressing, or bartending to be able to have their days free to audition, this is something that an aspiring actor would need to consider. Renowned actor Jack Nicholson once famously stated, “Acting is everyone’s favorite second job.” A quote that references the reality of actors who work odd jobs to support themselves while pursuing their career.

Parents of child performers would also have to consider many of these reflective questions in regards to their children. Is my child outgoing? Can I be available to take them to auditions during the day? (After school hours for school-age children). These are many of the things to consider before making the choice to travel down the career path of becoming a successful performer.

If you have answered these simple questions and determined that the entertainment industry is for you, then you should pursue your interests. Truly talented people think past the fame and fortune that can come with the industry, and dedicate themselves to the true art form itself.

IMMERSE YOURSELF IN YOUR CRAFT

Congratulations! You’ve determined you would like to become a serious performer, and can’t wait to begin your career. Now it is important to understand how to begin building the skills you will need to audition successfully. Although models do attend auditions, or go-sees, for print work

(we will discuss that a little later), and dancers can audition for different dance companies, most auditions are centered around the actual *skill* of acting. Models, actors, singers, and dancers will need to know the basics of acting to audition for any type of commercial work, stage show, and most importantly TV and film projects.

So let's dive headfirst into the world of acting. You can think of acting almost like a sport, and athletes must always practice, practice, practice. Just as a basketball player works on his jump shot, and a quarterback perfects his throw, performers need to constantly build and sharpen their skills.

Aspiring actors should begin by seeking out local theater programs and drama clubs in their communities and get involved. Audition for small roles in local productions to begin to build your resume as a working actor. Like I always say, there's no museum for actors! Actors need to study films, visit the theater, and watch television and commercials. Dancers should look for local dance troupes, and for singers joining a community choir or a musical theater group is a good first step. Even though many community entertainment jobs pay very little if any money at all, it's important for performers to participate in activities within the entertainment industry. Even the smallest of towns typically have a local theater or repertory company, and working on productions with these groups will not only provide a way to build credits for your performer resume, it will also give you a chance to network with other artists in the field. Performers should also always look into enrolling in classes or workshops for beginners that will help them begin to determine their initial skills and weaknesses. Parents of child actors should consider getting their kids involved with acting classes around age 12, where theater kids should always be involved in singing and dancing classes. You should want to be in your industry of choice! You must make a steady effort to study and learn your craft.

WHOSE GOT SKILLS? YOU DO!

Even if you are a beginning performer with little to no experience, you should be aware of the life skills you already have. These abilities may come in handy during your professional career. From driving a manual car, or speaking fluent Italian, to knowing how to ride a bicycle, simple skills like this may be helpful when casting directors are looking to audition talent with particular capabilities.

Actors may be faced with a situation where they have to learn a skill on the spot to be able to audition for a certain project. It's important to be versatile and open to learning and taking direction as a performer. Parents of child actors should also consider what skills their little ones have when starting them in the entertainment industry, sports and hobbies are great resume builders.

TO DO

Make a list of all of your skills and abilities to include on your professional performer resume

ASSESSING YOUR LOOK

At this point you've decided you want to become a performer, done a little bit of research on local talent groups in your town, and profiled all of your current skills. It's time to assess your look so you will be confident that you are the right candidate when attending an audition. Are you a blond haired blue-eyed petite woman, or a quirky geek-chic guy? It's important to know what your basic look is and how you fit into the mold of the industry. Aspiring talent should always look to TV commercials to stay on the cutting edge of what trends are popular as far as looks for actors. This is because the advertising industry is always ahead of entertainment. For example, many top brands began featuring quirky guys in company commercials long before geeky amusing actors like Seth Rogen and Michael Cera became leading men on the silver screen. Actors need to spend time determining their physical characteristics, as this will decide what type of look you have. Are you an athletic jock type of guy? Or an elderly woman? Asking these questions may help:

- At my age would I be considered for younger, older or middle-aged roles?
- What is my body type? ("Am I small and petite, or tall and shapely?")
- Is my hair, skin and eye combination (Mediterranean, Ethnic, All-American, etc.)
- Which actor or actress do I resemble?
- Am I Multi-Racial or can resemble multiple ethnicities?

Answering these questions can help you begin to understand your unique look and begin to give you an idea of the type of roles you would be able to audition for based on physical characteristics.

GOALS AND BEYOND

It's important to set realistic goals for yourself as you begin your career as a performer. Remember, a working performer is a successful performer. Even if you aren't at the superstar status of Tom Cruise, or Demi Moore, but you are an actor who nails auditions and is constantly working, you are indeed a success! Consistently working as an entertainer is a great accomplishment, as sometimes talent may land an audition in a national network commercial one week, and then not book another audition for two years. It's important to stay motivated and remember to keep trying.

This chapter has informed you on how you can prepare yourself to become a working performer who auditions successfully. Throughout this book I will share with you the *true* secrets of the auditioning process that will help you gain the edge you need in this competitive industry. Once you have finished this book, you will have the proven strategies and insider knowledge that you need to have the upper-hand on the rest of the actors, models, singers and dancers at any audition.

After reading this chapter you should:

- Ask yourself important questions to determine if the entertainment industry is for you
- Begin to do research on and get involved with local community entertainment programs and classes
- Compile a list of your life skills and hobbies to begin to create a performer resume
- Ask yourself important questions to determine your physical look
- Set realistic goals for yourself as you pursue your career as a performer



CHAPTER 2

RESUMES, HEADSHOTS, AND REELS

There are some important materials you will need to gather to successfully enter the entertainment industry.

Every professional must have a resume. An entertainment resume is not the same as a professional resume, but the information it provides should be somewhat similar. A resume is a written (typed) document stating any/all previous work or experience that a performer has obtained. Not only does a resume detail work history, but it also includes hobbies, skills and even sports activities. It is important to include any life skills you listed in your previous self-assessment. Also, be sure to include any classes or workshops you have participated in and continue to update your resume as you gain more experience.

You may have little to no experience, but that is fine for aspiring talent. Be proactive, and seek out professional work that will boost your resume. The most important thing to remember is to be honest on your acting resume. Falsifying your acting history is not a good idea. Casting directors who have been in the industry for years will know if you are lying. For example, on your resume do not list a “featured role” in a project, if you were merely a background actor, honesty is the best policy.

Many times a performer resume is listed on the backside of the talent's headshot, another tool we will discuss in more detail now.

HEADSHOTS

Every entertainer, performer, actor, singer, or dancer must have a headshot. Casting directors receive hundreds of submissions for one role, and a professional headshot coupled with a good resume will separate you from the rest of the pack. Your headshot should be as natural as possible. These photos are not meant to come across as glamour shots because it is important to capture your natural, true look. I like to remind my clients that casting directors want to see the real you! Make sure that the image you put forth in your headshot is an image of the person that enters the audition. There are two distinct types of headshots: **Commercial** and **Legit**.

Commercial Headshot: This type of 8" x 10" photo is best used for mainstream television commercial acting. This type of headshot conveys the same attitude that will be most useful in a commercial advertisement. You should appear warm, friendly, inviting, cheerful and relatable. By appearing this way in the headshot, casting directors can have an idea of how the actor will be received by the target audience. Models should use this type of headshot when trying to break into commercials. Remember to smile, not only with your mouth, but with your eyes! Project that same bubbly and upbeat emotion through the eyes.

Although your clothing may not be visible in the headshot, the clothing you choose is very important. I always recommend avoiding dark colors such as blacks and greys, instead opt for bright and soft colors. Commercial headshots are most useful for getting an aspiring actor in the door. This type of work may not be your end goal for your career, but many actors receive steady work as a commercial actor, and in this industry steady work is most important.

Legit (Theatrical) Headshot: The legit headshot is most useful for on-stage acting, a singer, dancer, television and film work. This type of headshot should convey a different message than a commercial headshot, and the photo should focus on different qualities. Theatrical headshots should be more serious. Dark colors are useful for setting this type of mood. You should appear professional, responsible and dependable. When a casting director hires an actor for a film or a television series, the actor's talent and representation is evaluated very seriously. The casting team will be searching for confident, trustworthy and qualified talent. Make sure your best qualities come through in your legit headshot.

Hair style and hair care are very important to the overall look of a headshot. Prior to the photo shoot consult with a professional hair dresser for tips and style options. If you decide to cut, dye or make any other drastic changes to your hair, it is best to wait no less than three days before having a professional headshot taken. You will need time to get accustomed to the new style, and a headshot should appear natural.

PHOTOGRAPHERS:

Now that you understand the different types of headshots, it is important that your composite card or headshot be professionally shot. This is not the type of image you can take in your bathroom with a cellphone camera. The photographer you choose should be technically proficient and personable. Be sure to hire a photographer whose work is impressive, and has a personality that you are comfortable with. The mood you are in while being photographed will come through in the finished product.

Use the internet to visit photographer's websites, an established photographer will have a website or virtual portfolio. It is important to assess the photographers work before hiring them for your own photo shoot. A great headshot is an even combination of great technical skill and communication between the photographer and the subject. The price of a photo shoot is an important factor; but



JOHN REED

COMMERCIAL



JOHN REED

LEGIT

COMMERCIAL & THEATRICAL HEADSHOT STYLE GUIDE CHECKLIST:

- ☑ Full night's rest prior to photo shoot.
- ☑ At least three different sets of clothing.
- ☑ Soft and bright colored clothing (commercial).
- ☑ Basic and dark colored clothing (legit).
- ☑ Professionally done natural makeup.
- ☑ Professionally styled hair.
- ☑ Very little to no jewelry. Nothing gaudy. Remove all facial jewelry.

like I always say to my clients, cheap work will usually appear cheap. A quality head shot photo shoot is a worthy investment for an actor. These images can greatly influence an actor's chances of receiving a call back on auditions or even in receiving representation from managers or agents.

Questions to Consider While Choosing a Photographer:

- Do you like the style of photography?
- Does the retouching appear natural?
- Are the subjects shot in a variety of flattering poses and backgrounds?
- Are the poses appropriate for your type of headshot?
- Do you feel comfortable with the photographer?

REEL TO REAL

Many times a casting director will ask an actor, "Do you have a reel?" A demo reel is a short video consisting of quality clips of an actor from professional productions. These are especially important when an actor is being considered for a role by a casting director that is in another location than the actor's home base. Reels are similar to a model's tear sheet portfolio, and display a performer's level of talent. Although it is not immediately expected for a beginner actor to have a demo reel, as an aspiring actor you should find local productions or independent films to gain some on-set experience. Although most of these opportunities are non-paying, these performances can be added to your demo reel.

ACTING REEL STYLE GUIDE CHECKLIST:

- ☑ Ensure the video begins as soon as entered into the player (computer/DVD player).
- ☑ The video should be no longer than two minutes.
- ☑ The reel should begin with a headshot, and your name in plain text.
- ☑ If you have a wide variety of acting examples, curtail the video to match the type of audition. (For example: You would submit a dramatic reel for a drama film audition.)
- ☑ You should be the focus of the reel.
- ☑ Always include contact information after the reel ends.
- ☑ Take a step back, look at your video. Does it properly represent you as an actor?

The standard demo reel begins with plain text stating the actor's name, and then cuts straight into a scene featuring the actor. Each scene you choose to use should be your strongest scene, and there should be no confusion as to who you are within the scene. Try to create diversity in the clips. Don't be afraid to show your versatility and acting range! Consider your acting reel a 30 second commercial in which you are the product to be marketed. Present yourself in the best way possible.

With advancements in technology, the format of an acting reel can be interactive, and professional. If you're an experienced actor, consider creating a different reel for each style of acting. This way you can send the appropriate style of acting reel to the casting director, depending on the type of audition.

The creation of your demo reel is very important. Unless you are skilled at video editing, consider hiring a professional to create your demo. The finished product should be a professional reel that represents you as a serious actor. On some occasions, the decision between two different actors can come down to the demo reel. Make sure that your demo reel is high quality, and easy to navigate.

LET'S WORK!

Once you have created your performer resume, received your commercial or theatrical headshot, and created a solid demo reel, then you are on your way to becoming a working artist! Keep in mind that building a career in the entertainment industry is a slow and steady process, and at the start of your career there will not be much experience to add to your resume. Remember to get involved with local theater and community performer programs to begin working on projects that can be added to your resume. Also, consider taking acting courses or enrolling in talent workshops, which can also be added to an acting resume, and will help you sharpen your skill set. All performers should consistently take classes to improve their craft. Being a performer is a full-time job even when you are not on set.

The cost for putting these materials together may seem like a large investment, but the benefits of creating them properly outweigh the financial burden. Quality over quantity is the rule for headshots and acting reels. These materials are pertinent to your career as a performer, and updating them annually is very important!

MODELING

Models also have resumes, and like any other professional, a model's resume details their professional experience. Include any and all training you have participated in, and detail the client or brands that you have modeled for. These details will showcase your versatility as a model. Also, include activities and interests such as fluency in another language, gymnastic ability or swimming. These small details may seem insignificant, but they will help you stand out as a model.

A model's composite card is like a business card, which markets them to the designer or casting director they will be auditioning for. A composite card is a 5 1/2" x 8 1/2" card which features four to five different images of the model. The composite card is essential to the success of your career. Fashion designers and casting directors can make the decision to see a model based on their composite card photos. Quality images will lead to a successful career, so these photos must be professionally taken. As a model you should be aware of the different types of modeling. There are different types of composite cards for each division of modeling. A high fashion model would not have the same type of composite card as a commercial model as these divisions of modeling are drastically different. Let's go through the different types of modeling, so that you can better understand the different divisions of the modeling industry.



COMPOSITE CARD

High fashion modeling is at the top of the totem pole of the modeling industry because these models are specifically chosen by luxury and high fashion designers. These types of models have a distinct look that sets them apart. A high fashion female model usually starts her career between the ages of 14-19 years of age, she is between 5'9" and up in height, and weighs no more than 130lbs proportioned to height. The dress size range for this type of model is usually 0-4. A high fashion model is a physical representation of how the designer envisions their clothing appearing on the wearer. Some notable fashion models include: Gisele Bundchen, Heidi Klum, Tyra Banks, and Linda Evangelista.

High fashion male models are usually between 18-25 years of age, 5'11" – 6'2" in height and weight 140 – 165lbs proportioned to height. Male models should be fit and lean, but not too muscular. Some notable high fashion male models include: David Gandy, Danny Schwartz, Garret Neff, and Jon Kortajarena.

Glamour modeling does not have the same rigid requirements in size and weight. A glamour model is usually chosen by the type of publication or ad they will appear in. Most glamour models are physically fit because they may be required to wear more form fitting clothing. One of the most famous glamour models was the late, great Marilyn Monroe.

Plus size models are appearing more and more on magazine covers and advertisements. Many famed designers are creating collections for full-figured women and need plus size models to properly showcase the clothing. A female plus size model is usually between 5'3" – 6'1" in height and the dress size is between 12–16.

Body part modeling is a very different type of modeling as the model needs to only have one body part that is exceptional. For example, a hand model should have blemish free hands, no noticeable veins, clean fingernails, and a smooth and even skin tone. Body part models appear in many commercials and print advertisements.

Fitness modeling is specifically for models that are serious about their physical fitness. A fitness model is not thin; they are muscular and toned with little to no body fat. Height and weight must be proportioned in this type of modeling and maintaining this physique is essential to getting work. Some notable male and female fitness models include: Jennifer Nicole Lee, Dianna Dahlgren, Ryan Hughes, and Max Wettstein.

All models should collect their tear sheets, or photos/advertisements they were featured in, as well as their images in a professional portfolio. Many casting directors may ask to see a models portfolio at a go-see, or casting.

After reading this chapter you should be ready to complete these action items:

- Begin working on forming your performer resume
- Determine what type of headshot is best for you
- Research photographers for your initial headshots
- Begin to work on participating in activities to build a performer reel
- For models: Begin to work creating your resume and research a photographer to create a composite card

CHAPTER 3

WHAT IS AN AUDITION?

ACTORS

Armed with your acting resume, a solid demo reel and a professional headshot you are now prepared for an audition! An audition is simply a tryout by an actor to demonstrate his or her skill. As an aspiring performer without an agent or a talent marketing center, you are probably searching for an audition on your own. Putting hard work and effort into your own career is a great way to start. Some may suggest obtaining a talent agent prior to getting acting experience, but that is not always a viable option. Agents usually become interested in performers after they have some beginning to intermediate work under their belts. At Cuzzins Management, I would typically look for talent in places like Off-Broadway shows, or even see talent who sent in photos to my office that I liked. For aspiring talent like yourself, there are plenty of auditions that do not require an agent, and they are within your reach. A great way to get information on current castings is by getting a copy of actors' publications like *Backstage* or *The Ross Reports*, or doing an internet search for local castings in your area.

Let's take a look at different types of auditions. Although the final goal is the same, the process can be quite different for each.

Open Call: This type of audition is a process in which many actors are given the opportunity to attend. Open calls can be attended by actors without representation, and usually take place within a flexible time frame that actors can choose when they would like to arrive. An open call is a great type of audition for an aspiring actor because using your resume, headshot, and demo reel you can get some much needed experience. These types of auditions are sometimes termed, "cattle calls" because of the hundreds of actors who show up in hopes of landing a role. As an aspiring actor do not let the idea of a large-scale audition keep you from attending. Remind yourself that every opportunity to be seen by a casting director is a chance to make a lasting impression. Seeking opportunities to audition will only increase your likelihood of receiving a call back.

Cold Read: On some occasions, the casting director may choose to have the actors audition using lines, (often called 'sides') from the actual script. This type of audition is referred to as a 'cold reading' because the actor receives the sides only moments before auditioning. Only a very small portion of the script is provided during a cold reading, but this type of audition is used to display an actor's versatility to a casting director. A cold reading is a great way to display your skill level as an actor, and how well you can interpret a character. Casting directors may not expect an Oscar winning performance during the first audition, but they do expect you to transform into a character with

little to no preparation. During this type of audition it is best to relax, and do your best.

Closed Audition: This type of audition occurs after a talent manager or agency receives a breakdown (or role description) and submits talent they feel may work for the role. The time for a closed audition is specific, and it's important to never be late! So don't be late! Did I say never, ever, be late to an audition? Okay, I just wanted to be sure we were clear on that, because there is nothing casting directors hate more than tardiness. Opposed to an open call, all actors are not able to attend this type of audition. These auditions are closed to talent who are not represented by an agency or manager. If you are not signing in under an agency who received the breakdown you will be asked to leave. Preparing for this type of audition is also quite different, as the agent must provide the actor with all the instructions that the casting directors have provided. For example, a set of sides, and a character description are usually provided and should be reviewed thoroughly by the talent prior to the audition.

MODELS

Go-See: A Go-See is an opportunity for a model to interview with a fashion designer or casting director for a brand. During this type of audition, the model may try on garments or walk for the casting director, or simply hand in their composite card and take a quick Polaroid for casting. An active model may spend an entire day seeing different designers or casting directors.

DANCERS

A dancing audition is meant to screen a dancer's skillset as well as their ability to learn choreography on the spot. There are also dancing auditions that require the participants to prepare a small piece to be performed. Some major dance companies hold annual open calls in which dancers may audition and demonstrate their skills.

SINGERS

A singing audition varies depending on the type of singing audition. An audition for a choir, tests how well the singer can read choral parts, or even sheet music. An audition for the opera would require not only vocal ability, but a bit of acting too. Capturing the lyrics of the song through body movement is necessary for an opera singer. Choral singers and opera singers are expected to be able to follow the gestures of the choir director. Musical theater auditions require a combination of singing and dancing to perform pieces from the show the performer is auditioning for. A trained singer should be able to perform a capella, and when accompanied by an instrument.

PREPARING FOR THE AUDITION



ACTORS

Once you have landed your audition, preparation is essential. As with any interview, your success is directly related to the amount of preparation that you put in. An audition may seem like a highly stressful situation, especially for a first time actor, but during the audition stress does not translate well to casting directors. Instead harness that emotion, and use it to give a high energy, and professional audition. Casting directors are very intuitive. Their sensitivity to an actor's body language, speaking voice, and overall appearance can tell them so much about you before you have even started your audition. Walk into your audition with confidence and self-awareness that signals to that casting director that you are a professional, and ready to give a great audition. Here are some ways to prepare for the different types of auditions:

Preparing for an audition should begin well before your audition, but this time frame can range from several days to ten minutes; it's important to use whatever time you have to prepare as best you can. Once you have received information on your open call audition, conduct some light research on not just the project, but also the director and the production company. The more you know about the actual project and its influential players the more you will be able to curtail your audition to fit the needs of the production. Also, you should always have a prepared monologue ready to recite, this may be something casting asks of you. If you're aware of the role you are auditioning for, comb through your wardrobe for clothing that somewhat fits that character description. For example, if you are auditioning for a role as a business person, it would be fitting to wear a collared shirt, and dress pants. On the day of your audition, punctuality is your top priority. I can't stress this fact enough, I have gotten more than my share of angry phone calls from casting directors waiting for late clients. Be sure to give yourself enough time to mentally and physical prepare for the audition as far in advance as possible, and this includes travel arrangements. Open call auditions can be very crowded, so allow at least a half hour of cushion time.

MODELS

As a model your appearance is your selling point. The day before your audition make sure to properly wash and moisturize your face for a clean, fresh-faced look. Preparing for your go-see is simple in that your overall look should be minimal. Your clothing should be understated, and form fitting so that the designers can assess your physique. Hair is also important for the go-see. Make sure your hair is clean, free of heavy products, and appears healthy. Female models should wear hair pulled back away from the face. Male models should be clean shaven, and hair should be combed neatly. Before walking out the door, stop and take a look at yourself. Make sure that you feel confident, because confidence shines! Be sure not to forget your composite card, and your modeling portfolio.

DANCERS

Preparing for a dancing audition varies depending on the type of dancing audition. Before entering the audition make sure that you have done research on the company or the production that you are auditioning for. You should also know whether your performance will be accompanied by a piano or if you will need to bring in your own music. Should you be asked to prepare a piece for the audition choose a routine that shows off a variety of your skills, matches the style of music, and try to use unique choreography. Original dance moves are the best choice. Dressing for the event is important because the casting director will need to see the lines in your movements. Make sure your clothing is comfortable and in line with the style of dance you will be performing. Hip hop dancers may wear loose, baggy pants, whereas a ballet dancer would want to wear a leotard. Hair should be pulled away from your face, and combed neatly. Be sure not forget your dancing resume, and your headshot photo!

SINGERS

Preparation for a singing audition is quite intensive. The day before the audition refrain from eating dairy products, as they can clog mucus membranes and cause the vocal chords to sound unclear. Drinking water and keeping yourself hydrated will help your overall health and your vocal chords. The day of the audition make sure that your voice is warmed up. Go through your normal vocal stretches and make sure you are projecting from your diaphragm. Make sure your clothing and appearance are clean and professional. As a singer you will also be judged by your appearance. Make sure to bring your headshot photo!

CHAPTER 4

MENTAL PREPARATION

PSYCH YOUR MIND

You've just received your first call for an audition. After the first wave of excitement, then panic sets in. "Oh my gosh! What if I don't get it?" You have just made your first mistake by over-thinking it before you even walk in front of a casting director. Being a performer who auditions consistently it's important to accept one very important part of being a performer: REJECTION. Rejection is one of the biggest parts of being a performer. Actors, models, singers, and dancers are faced with it every day. There may be plenty of auditions that you will go on that you simply just will not be chosen, or booked for. There are ways to mentally prepare yourself for this possible outcome, and maintain your composure. I like to call this mentality the 'DEF Factor'.

D

DON'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY

Just because you may not land the audition doesn't mean that the casting director thought you were the worst thing they've seen since the American Idol outtakes, it just means you weren't right for this particular job! Now of course within this it can mean that they were looking for someone with more experience, or that was more believable in the role, but remember you can only do your best. So go in, audition, smile, and be ready for the next audition.

E

EXPECT THAT THERE MAY BE POSSIBLE REJECTION

But remain positive that you will do well. It's important to understand that rejection is a part of auditioning. You will have to start building the thick skin that your ego will need to get through the entertainment industry

F

FORGET ABOUT IT!

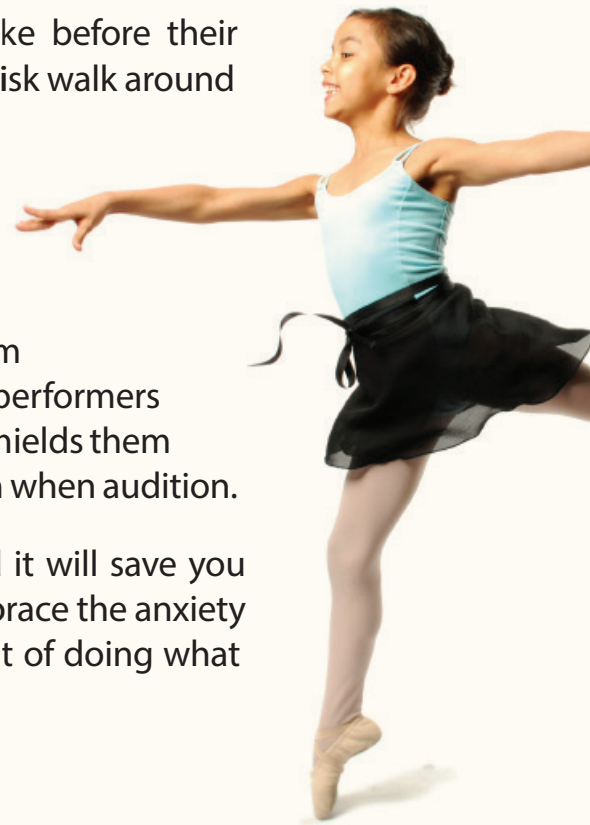
The best "auditioners" are the ones who walk out of the audition and forget about it. You would be surprised at how many times a performer pushed the audition out their mind after they left the casting, and then got a call while at dinner with friends that they landed the part! It doesn't help to leave an audition and agonize over if you did well, or did awful. Out of sight, out of mind is the winning mentality when you're talking about auditioning.

The key to mentally preparing yourself for an audition is to do exactly the opposite. Don't over-prepare! You should absolutely prepare by looking over any character descriptions, or sides (lines) that you may have been provided by your agent or manager, but once you feel comfortable in the material try not to over-think the process of the audition too much. If things happen unexpectedly, don't let it throw you off your game. For instance, if casting stops you and asks you to try again or gives you direction, don't be startled, that is actually a GREAT thing! It means casting is interested in your performance. You should also never be so worried and serious that you forget to walk in and be polite and pleasant towards casting, a stormy-faced, anxious look is never a good way to make a first impression.

FOR CHILD PERFORMERS

Parents should be sure that child performers are fully awake before their audition. If they have fallen asleep in the car, take them for a brisk walk around the block, or do a quick physical activity to wake them up and liven their senses. Also portable games, like Nintendo DS, should never be played before a child's audition. It's hard for kids to switch into performer mode quickly and get their mind out of the video game. Kids should be relaxed and at ease, and understand they will be taken into a room away from their parents for a few moments. The funny thing is, most child performers are better at auditioning than adults! Their childish innocence shields them from feeling the unease that many adult performers suffer from when audition.

Auditioning is ingrained into the lifestyle of a performer, and it will save you many sleepless nights and hours of worrying if you simply embrace the anxiety that comes with the territory, and try not let it take the joy out of doing what you love.



CHAPTER 5

TALENT AGENTS, TALENT MANAGERS & TALENT MARKETING CENTERS

There are certain entities within the entertainment industry that serve to assist and represent aspiring talent and working actors in obtaining work. You may have heard people mention talent agents, managers and talent marketing centers, but what do these entities do and how can they help you advance your career? Let us take a look at how these industry professionals connect talent with opportunities.

Agents: A talent agent is an entertainment industry professional that seeks out work for actors, models, singers or dancers. Think of an agent as an employment agency that constantly seeks out work solely for your benefit. Actually, the same laws that govern an employment agency also cover talent agents. These industry professionals collect 10% of the total revenue their talent receives. However, an agent does not receive payment until their client acquires work. A legitimate talent agent is Screen Actors Guild (SAG) franchised. The SAG is a performer's union that represents more than 160,000 entertainers and media professionals of all types. Franchised agents have a contractual agreement with SAG to uphold certain duties and practices.

Talent agents are most helpful to working actors because they have contacts within the industry that can get an actor work. Even high profile actors are usually not fully in charge of the business side of their career, they have an agent that secures their projects and essentially speaks on their behalf. A talent agent works for you, the talent, and strives to ensure that your career goals are achieved.

The best way to attract the attention of a talent agent is to actually work! By putting yourself in the position to get noticed by an agent you garner the attention of industry professionals. I have come across so many aspiring performers who assume all they need is a headshot photo to get an agent, but that is completely wrong. There are three main ways to attract a talent agent:

1. Discovery through a student film or showcase,
2. Referral from other industry professionals, and
3. By using a talent marketing center.

For aspiring talent with little to no experience in the industry it is easy to be taken advantage of. There are several issues to be on the lookout for while selecting an agent. For example, an agent should never pressure you for money or to sign a contract immediately during your first meeting. If you come across an agent that boasts many high profile clients make sure to check on those claims. An honest SAG franchised agent will look out for the best interest of their clients first.

CAN I GET WORK WITHOUT AN AGENT?

Yes, aspiring talent can get work and experience without an agent. It is not suggested that talent with little experience hire an agent. Instead work on your craft, take classes, and seek out jobs on your own. Once you are receiving consistent work you should then consider hiring an agent to help obtain jobs on your behalf.

Talent Manager: A one-on-one consultant that advises and directs a client on their career. Managers provide support and direction to help you succeed within the industry. A talent manager does not only seek out work for their client, but also helps assist their client in every aspect of their career such as, setting appointments, setting up interviews, and general day-to-day scheduling. Managers receive 15-20% of their client's earnings. As a talent manager I am partial to the effort that goes into helping an actor, singer, model or dancer throughout their career.

Acquiring a manager does not become critical until continuous work is coming in. Once your demand goes up as an entertainer, so does your need for a professional to assist you in organizing your career. The entertainment industry is highly competitive. Working with experienced industry professionals will make your job easier, and allow for more opportunities to come your way.

Choosing a talent manager is truly a personal decision. Since this professional will be so deeply involved in your professional and some of your personal life, you should really trust this person. As with every facet of the entertainment business, you will need to conduct some background research on every individual you want to work with. An experienced manager representing a solid group of working entertainers is a good sign in choosing a manager.

WILL MY CAREER FLOURISH WITHOUT A TALENT MANAGER?

It is not mandatory for every aspiring talent to have a talent manager. A talent manager helps to obtain opportunities for talent, and also uses their industry contacts to garner other forms of publicity and opportunity for their clients. Overall your career will flourish depending on the amount of effort that you put into it, and having experienced industry professionals by your side does not hurt.

IS IT NECESSARY TO HAVE BOTH AN AGENT, AND A TALENT MANAGER?

Remember that your agent will collect 10% of your income, and a manager will receive anywhere from 15-20%. This means that at least 25% of every booking you receive will be taken from your income. This can be too much for talent that isn't receiving consistent work. This is where aligning yourself with a talent marketing center may seem like a better financial decision. Talent marketing centers do not collect any of the income that you receive for any of your paid jobs.

Talent Marketing Center: This entity exists within the industry to connect aspiring actors, singers, dancers, and models with the elusive entertainment industry. Most service-based companies work to position their clients in a manner that they can present themselves in the best way possible. A talent marketing center provides that same service to their clients. This includes providing talent with composite cards, headshots, a resume and most importantly access to industry professionals to gain working experience. These materials are usually not provided in a package, but these essential tools are exactly what aspiring talent needs. A talent marketing center has contacts with industry professionals such as casting directors and agents that contact the center to request their clients.

Signing up with a talent marketing center is a good choice for aspiring talent. A talent marketing center can help to provide the opportunities for a model to gain real modeling tear sheets, assist an actor with footage for their reel, or provide a dancer with opportunities to grow as a performer. These essential tools are exactly what an aspiring talent needs in order to achieve a new level of success. It's important to understand that marketing centers are not agents or managers. The marketing departments within these centers promote talent, and encourage casting directors and agents to request their clients.

Conduct some research, and find a talent marketing location that is near your home or a city close to your home. Once you've secured a center, contact them expressing your interest in using their services to begin your career. Development directors will then request a meeting with you, evaluate your talent, and help you set realistic goals. The development director will then assist you in securing the materials you need to begin your career in the entertainment industry. From this point on, the center will market you to all of their industry contacts.

IF TALENT MARKETING CENTERS DON'T RECEIVE A PERCENTAGE OF MY INCOME HOW ARE THEY PAID FOR THEIR SERVICES?

Unlike agents and talent managers, talent marketing centers do not collect on every job that their talent receives. Instead, their charges are upfront, and clients pay for their photo shoot and styling services, as well as the time period they wish to be marketed to casting directors and agencies. This benefits aspiring talent so that once they have received a certain level of success they can then consider hiring an agent for a more personalized service.

CHAPTER 6

CHOOSING A MONOLOGUE AND STUDYING SIDES

In a previous chapter, we discussed the types of acting auditions and how a proper audition can really boost an actor's confidence and chances of getting booked. One of the most important choices an actor can make prior to an audition is the choice of monologue.

Monologue: A small portion of a larger theatrical or film script used for an audition.

This portion of the script should be an engaging solo sample of your range as an actor. The monologue you choose should be no longer than a minute, and it must be memorized and age appropriate. Unfortunately, you cannot read from the script because casting directors will believe you are unprepared and unprofessional. Every actor should memorize two different and strong monologues: a comedic monologue, and a dramatic monologue. From my experiences with auditions, the types of monologues do vary depending on location. The East coast or New York City casting directors, prefer actors to use monologues from plays/on-stage productions. The West coast or Los Angeles casting directors prefer monologues from films/movies. Remember this bit of information as it may come in handy during your career.

MONOLOGUE SELECTION CHECKLIST

- ☑ The monologues are age appropriate.
(i.e. If you are a teenager you shouldn't choose the monologue of an elderly character.)
- ☑ The monologues are gender appropriate.
(i.e. If you are a woman it's best to choose a monologue for a female character.)
- ☑ You easily embody the characters that the monologues were meant for.
- ☑ The monologues are no longer than 1-2 minutes.
- ☑ The monologues are captivating and demonstrate your talent in the best way possible.
- ☑ The monologues are not from over-used plays such as Romeo and Juliet or Hamlet.
- ☑ Each chosen monologue has been practiced and memorized.

Be sure to select monologues that showcase your strength as an actor. So many actors memorize plays from Shakespeare, when they are not Shakespearean actors. Their obvious discomfort with the material comes through during the audition, so try to avoid this situation at all costs.

Before performing your monologue for the casting directors there are some guidelines you should try to remember. While it is important that you captivate them with your ability by choosing an engaging monologue there are important dos and don'ts for the audition. In my experience I have been a part of many auditions and seen some truly unique performances. When entering the audition greet the casting directors by offering your headshot and resume. Remember the name of the monologue you will be performing because casting will ask you. It is not necessary to give them a summary of the story behind your chosen monologue.

Before beginning your monologue, position yourself at least 10 feet away from the casting directors. Try not to stare into the eyes of your auditors. Treat them as an audience, and avoid directly engaging them. Several times I have witnessed talent try to interact with the auditors while performing, but you shouldn't. It is not necessary in order to have a good audition. Instead, insert that emotion into your body language and speech. Use the space given to play the room. Stay mobile in a natural way, and most of all beware of over-acting!

At the end of your audition, remain courteous; thank the casting directors for their time. On some occasions casting may ask you follow up questions, respond clearly, and then exit the room.

"GOING UP"

Memorization is one of the most important techniques an actor must learn. Actors have to remember hundreds of sides, and be prepared to recite these sides verbatim. How an actor goes about memorizing their sides is really a personal choice, but two things should be included in the process: clarity and accuracy. I have seen so many talented actors begin a monologue strong and forget their sides halfway through. Forgetting lines is referred to as "going up" in the industry. Going up can happen for many reasons. Just try to study the sides, relax prior to entering the audition, and should you forget your lines remain composed and continue on.

Memorization Techniques

- Read the script in its entirety.
- Record your lines, and play them over through a speaker or headphones. Recite the lines while you are listening to them.
- Combine movement and speech: Use the stage directions while reciting your lines.
- If you have other actor friends, ask them to run through the lines with you. If not, it could be fun to ask a friend that doesn't act.

- “Peek-a-boo” Technique: Have the script in front of you, and recite them while covering your lines. Only read from the script if you completely forget.
- Re-write the script, and read them aloud as you write. Transcription is a study technique that is used in all facets of learning.

COLD READ AUDITIONS

As discussed in a previous chapter, some auditions require the talent to read from a script they have never seen, hence the phrase “cold read”. In cases such as this, you will not be prepared for the sides that you receive. Once you have received the script, read through the sides at least two times to get a sense of who your character is and what is taking place within the scene. Rehearse those sides until you’re comfortable. During a cold read, I have noticed that many actors forget to speak clearly, rush through the script or even become inaudible. Of course these are all a symptom of nervousness, but don’t allow yourself to fall victim to your own stress level.

During a cold read audition that involves two speakers, usually a casting director will read with you. Work off of that person, and interact with them as you would another actor. While the auditor is reading their lines back to you, glance down at your next lines so that you are prepared to deliver the sides fluidly. Most casting directors will not expect you to memorize your cold read sides. This type of audition is a test at how quickly you can transform into a character in a short amount of time. Although having a good grasp of the character you are trying to portray will make for a better audition, keep in mind that casting directors do not want to see you fail. They are never intentionally trying to work up your nerves or cause you to forget lines. The key to landing an audition is in preparation.

CHAPTER 7

INSIDE THE MIND OF A CASTING DIRECTOR

When you think about casting directors what are the first things that come to your mind? Menacing, cold-hearted, evil maybe? Although casting directors have a reputation for making some of the biggest decisions in a performer's life, the honest truth is--- they're really not so bad. Like I explained in Chapter 6, it's important to understand that casting directors want you to succeed. Casting directors want to be able to discover the next big name in the entertainment business, and be able to take credit for having the vision that a performer would do well in a particular production or role. Remember this, and try to remove the image in your mind of casting directors being heartless monsters who can't wait to tell poor little auditioning performers that they not only didn't book the job, but they were horrible too! That image couldn't be farther from the truth. Casting directors have an important job to do, and that is to find the best, possible performer for the roles and production that they are casting for, which is a responsibility they do not take lightly.

What is most important to casting directors is that you follow the rules of "OPP":

OPP =
On time.
Prepared.
Pleasant.

By always following these three simple concepts, you can begin to build a great relationship with casting directors, even if you have yet to be chosen to book a role. By following these three rules, you will build a polite, professional relationship with casting directors by respecting the unspoken rules of audition etiquette.

You should **NEVER** be late to an audition, it's simply inconsiderate. Even if a casting director tells you it's alright that you are late, trust me, they never forget when a performer was late to a casting. You should always be prepared for your audition as best you can. This means studying your sides, or even studying different characters parts in case you are asked to read for various roles. Casting directors appreciate talent who is prepared and confident when auditioning for a project. I worked with a young client once who was constantly late and unprepared for auditions. Because of this,

over time he developed a bad reputation in the acting industry. Soon, certain casting directors refused to even see him for auditions for important projects, like series regular roles. This had an extremely negative impact on his acting career as he tried to progress as a performer. These rules are not something to take lightly, and your behavior can greatly affect your career and reputation, both positively and negatively.

Casting directors also appreciate performers who are pleasant and polite during auditions. This doesn't mean going to an audition trying to engage a casting director in a conversation about the best sushi restaurants in the area, but it does mean being personable and courteous. This includes greeting the casting directors, and even thanking the receptionist at every audition. Not only is this just a great way to be pleasant, but you never know if that receptionist will one day be a casting director that you are reading for.

If you are following the OPP rule, even if you don't get called back or booked, if casting directors keep seeing you this is a great sign for your career. This means that the casting directors like you and are just waiting for the role that you will fit best for.

LET THE MIRROR MATCH YOUR PHOTO

Casting directors are who they are because of their skilled eye for talent. When casting directors look over a stack of headshots and choose which performers they would like to audition, they want to see the same person whose head shot they chose, walk through the audition doors. As a performer, it's important to be sure your head shot photos match your current look. Imagine if you had long, brunette hair in your head shots, and were called for an audition, but walked into the casting with a short, blond pixie haircut. This drastic change may frustrate the casting directors because the mental vision they had of you has been altered, and now may not fit the role description. This is also important with child performers, who need to show up to auditions looking their age. Young girls should never have on make-up, nail polish, large hoop earrings, or any other mature accessories. Young boys should also be neat, clean and dressed in play clothes.

CASTING DIRECTORS ARE NICE, FOLKS

Auditioning is a high-anxiety experience. You are basically putting yourself out there to be judged at the mercy of someone else, and that's not easy! What can make that feeling even worse is assuming that casting directors don't realize that auditioning is not an easy task, and forgetting that they actually do understand, and want you to succeed. Most casting directors were at some point involved



in the performing aspect of the entertainment industry, and many have been on the other side of the casting table. Respectable casting directors have no attitude about talent; their gift is being objective towards talent and finding the perfect performer for the job. A casting director would never laugh at or ridicule talent, even if they did an awful job during the audition. Casting directors have a job to do, and focus on only this goal, which is why they are never especially talkative with performers. It's not because they are not personable, it's because they like to stay focused on the task they have been hired to do. You must realize that casting directors have to answer to the production company or client that hired them to do the job. Most importantly, if you aren't booked for a job, or chosen for a call back audition, try not to take it like a personal attack from the casting director. They are trying to do their job as best as they can just like you.

CHAPTER 8

TYPES OF AUDITIONS

As a performer, you must be familiar with the different type of auditions that are involved in the entertainment industry. You will need to know the difference between each type of audition to ensure that you are properly prepared for whatever type of audition you are attending. Here is a thorough breakdown of the different types of auditions:

COMMERCIAL AUDITIONS

A commercial audition is an audition for a commercial advertisement. When you enter a commercial audition the casting department will give you some commercial copy, or the lines that you will read during the audition. You will also receive a copy of the storyboard (similar to a comic strip) of the action taking place in the commercial. Commercial copy will always be given to you a few moments before the audition, and it is not expected for you to memorize the lines. After you have a few moments to go over the copy and storyboard, you will be called into a room and asked to act out the lines and the commercial for the casting director. This audition is typically taped on video. If you audition well, casting will call you back for another similar audition called a call back. If you make it past the call back audition you will book the job.

Preparing For a Commercial Audition: The secret to booking commercials is to understand that a commercial audition is the one audition that does not focus on a character or role, but instead focuses on showcasing a product or service. It's important to realize that you are showcasing your talent and how well you can sell the product. Be sure to keep this in mind while you are auditioning. This means to be memorable and convincing. For example, if a commercial calls for you to be doubled over in pain, and moments later feeling better, be sure to really convey both extreme sides of these two emotions, the casting director will want someone that is believable.

You can prepare by studying current commercials and advertisements and focusing on how the subjects deliver their lines and really sell the product. Practice your delivery in the mirror and ask yourself, "Would I buy this product?" after rating your own performance. During commercial auditions remember to raise your voice at the end of every sentence, instead of dropping it like most people do during normal conversation. This will keep up your energy level when delivering the copy.

Also seek out a commercial classes, it's always great to have a professional assess where your strengths and weaknesses are.

FILM AUDITION

For a film audition, an actor's manager or talent agent will receive a character breakdown, or character description, of the role that the actor will be auditioning for. A character breakdown is typically a short blurb about the character to give you some insight into the character you will be auditioning for.

EXAMPLE OF A CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

MIKE WATTS, mid-30s, African-American male/Chiseled pretty boy/ A good guy but self-involved/ Is friends with main protagonist CHRISTIAN/Tries to flirt with BROOKE but she turns down his arrogant come-on/Is known as a ladies' man (see more examples of character breakdowns on page XX)

During the audition you will be called into a room by casting, asked to recite and act out the lines, and then the audition will be over. During the film auditioning process there may be several call back auditions. After you make it through the final call back audition you will be asked to perform a screen test as the character. A screen test is simply a taped dry run of the performer acting out a small portion of the script surrounding the character. The screen test is then submitted to the director to make the final decision and decide whether or not they would like to book you for the role.

TELEVISION AUDITIONS

The process of a TV audition is very similar to a film audition. Prior to the audition, your talent agent or manager will give you a selection from the script, or sides for the character, as well as a character breakdown, which is a description of the role. (*See character breakdown example above*).

You will be called into the auditioning room by casting, asked to recite and act out your lines, and then the audition will be over. If casting likes you, you may be called back to another audition called a call back audition. You can be called back several times before booking a television role. If you make it through several of the call backs you may have to screen test for the role, or audition on camera. This on-camera audition will be viewed by the director so that he can decide if he wants to book you for the role. Once the director makes his decision, the TV network must then approve and agree with this decision. If a director would like to book a certain actor for a role, but the network does not agree with that choice, the network's decision will trump the directors in the case of television series, and TV movies or specials.

Preparing for a Film or TV Audition: The key to auditioning successfully in TV and film is to understand that you must take the character description, interpret it, and then make up your own story around that character. You will need to create in your mind who the character is, so that you can audition 'in their shoes'. How would this character walk? Talk? Smile? You need to create your own story around your character so that you can become this person. Keep in mind that there is no right way to create the character, if there was you would be living inside the director's head. The idea is to make up what this character means to you, and then present that image to casting during the audition, and see if your interpretation matches the idea that the director had for this particular role.

Casting will also provide you with sides, or a portion of the script with the character's lines typically at least a day or so before the audition. It's important to read through these lines so that you can memorize them and become comfortable with the scene and the dialogue. Be sure to read through the entire script portion, to be sure you understand everything that will be happening in the scene that your character will be reacting to.

If you audition for a role and your interpretation of the character was not what casting was looking for, don't immediately think you've lost out on the job. The casting director still may recognize your talent and call you back for a call back audition and give you some direction on how they would like to see you portray the character.

THEATRICAL AUDITION

MUSICALS

Auditions for musicals are very different than auditions for film, commercial, or television. There are usually two separate auditions held for musicals, one to cast the singing portion of the show, the other to cast for the dancing portion. During the singing auditions the casting director will have you sing a prepared piece, and then thank you for your time. You may then be called back for a call back audition to sing another prepared piece.

DANCE AUDITIONS

You will also have to come in to audition for the dancing portion of the musical. During a dance audition all of the auditioning dancers will enter a studio and learn the steps to a piece of a dance number from the performance. They will then perform the dance steps numerous times, as the casting director watches on. As they decide dancers are not right for the show, they will tap them on their shoulder and ask them to exit the audition. The dancers that remain through the entire routine will be the dancers that are chosen for a call back audition or even the actual production.

Many auditions for theater are open calls, also called EPAs, that anyone can try out for. Because EQUITY, the stage actors union, requires all casting directors to be present during each audition, it's an amazing opportunity for aspiring talent to be seen by major casting directors.

PLAY AUDITIONS

During an audition for a play, you will be provided the sides, or lines for the character, before the actual audition. You will recite and act out the lines for the casting director, and you will be called back for another audition if they are interested in booking you for the role.

Preparing for a Musical Audition: When preparing for an audition for a musical you should be sure to have at least two songs ready to sing. It's always good to have an up-tempo song, and a ballad. You must also bring music that can accompany your singing. Some singers bring music that can be played digitally, but the industry standard is to bring sheet music that can be played by the pianist available. You usually will have an idea of the genre of music that the project is in, (ex. pop, opera, etc.). Your musical choices should reflect the type of musical you are auditioning for. Casting may also tell you what type of voice they would like you to use during the audition, (ex. Belt voice, mix voice, etc.). It's important to be prepared to take direction from casting. Parents should be sure to have a full knowledge of the songs their child performer will be using to audition with. Children should not audition using songs that have mature lyrical content, casting directors can be rubbed the wrong way by an oversight like this.

Unfortunately there are not many ways to prepare for the dance audition because you will not know the actual routine until you work with the project choreographer. The biggest way to prepare is to stay active in dance classes, and practice learning how to quickly learn choreography from a dance instructor, which is a skill within itself. Jazz and tap classes are usually the best classes for performers considering a career in theater.

Preparing for a Play Audition: When preparing for an audition for a play, it's important to realize that what is most important is the character, and the dialogue. A play comes to life because of the dialogue between characters. Use the sides and character breakdown you receive to create the character in your mind. It's important to find your own interpretation of who the character is, so you can present this during your audition. Also remember that a play is a big commitment for an actor, there are usually multiple shows per week, and often very little pay. The reward is in having a roaring applause from the audience every night, and in being able to build your acting skills.

CHAPTER 9

SO, YOU GOT A CALL BACK, OR YOU ARE ON HOLD— WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

I have been in the entertainment industry for many years, and have seen many performers progress. One of the most frequently asked questions I am asked after a client attends an audition is, "What is a callback?" This commonly asked question is relevant, and understanding how this process works is pertinent to adjusting in the entertainment industry as a whole.

Callback: A narrowed down audition list decided by casting directors for a second screening before the final decision.

Usually, talent will not be notified they have been called back until a few days after their initial audition, and you will never be contacted directly. Instead, casting will be in touch with your representation (manager or agent). The time frame for receiving a callback is dependent on the project and the casting director. There is no steadfast rule on this procedure, but if you are in line to receive a call back they will be in touch with you.

For aspiring talent just starting out in the industry, a callback audition is a good reason to celebrate. A callback means that the casting directors liked what they saw in you as an actor, and are now considering you for that project. As you move on throughout your career receiving more callbacks means that your face is getting recognized, and that you are becoming more experienced. Keep in mind; you may not be the only talent they are considering for the project. If you do not receive a call back it does not mean that you failed, but that you may not fit into that particular project. Remember, casting directors have an idea of the personality type and look for each role they cast. Some of my clients have auditioned for one role and received a callback for an entirely different role. This means that their look or personality just fit for a different role.

During a callback, there may be more people sitting in on your audition than before. It is common for other influential casting members to be asked to attend the call back. Remember that casting is not over with the callbacks, and there are still many final decisions to be made.

Although a callback is a big step in the right direction, there are still ways to prepare for the callback. I suggest that you focus on recreating their first memory of you. Essentially, dress exactly the same way that you did for your initial audition. Refrain from making drastic changes to your overall appearance, such as coloring or cutting your hair. Make sure to wear similar clothing to the callback as well. Approach your callback audition with confidence because the casting directors already like you!

The steps to securing more callbacks are exactly the same as securing the first audition. For your callback, you will be auditioning with other people that are being considered for the role. Make sure that you stand out. A certain percent of the entertainment business is networking, and being personable. If casting sees something in you that they are drawn to, besides your raw talent, you will be chosen for the role. Professionalism is another aspect of securing an audition that most aspiring talent overlook. If you have little experience then make them believe that you are experienced by remaining poised and humble. Punctuality is a huge part of professionalism, so be on time!

There are also situations when casting wants to secure your commitment to the project, while they take the time to make their final decisions. This is referred to as a “hold” period. For union work, a hold is slightly different than for non-union work.

Hold: A waiting period in which the talent is not formally hired, but held by casting until a final decision is made. It is best to refrain from accepting other opportunities during the “hold” period. A “hold” period allows the casting directors some time to decide if you fit for the prospective role. Hold dates ensure that you are available for the allotted filming dates. A union hold is different in that should casting decide not to book the actor, then a fee is due to the actor.

Right of First Refusal (ROFR): Casting will ask the actor to notify them if they decide to take on another opportunity. If ROFR is enabled, the actor does not have to notify casting if they choose to go with another opportunity, and casting does not have to pay a fee.

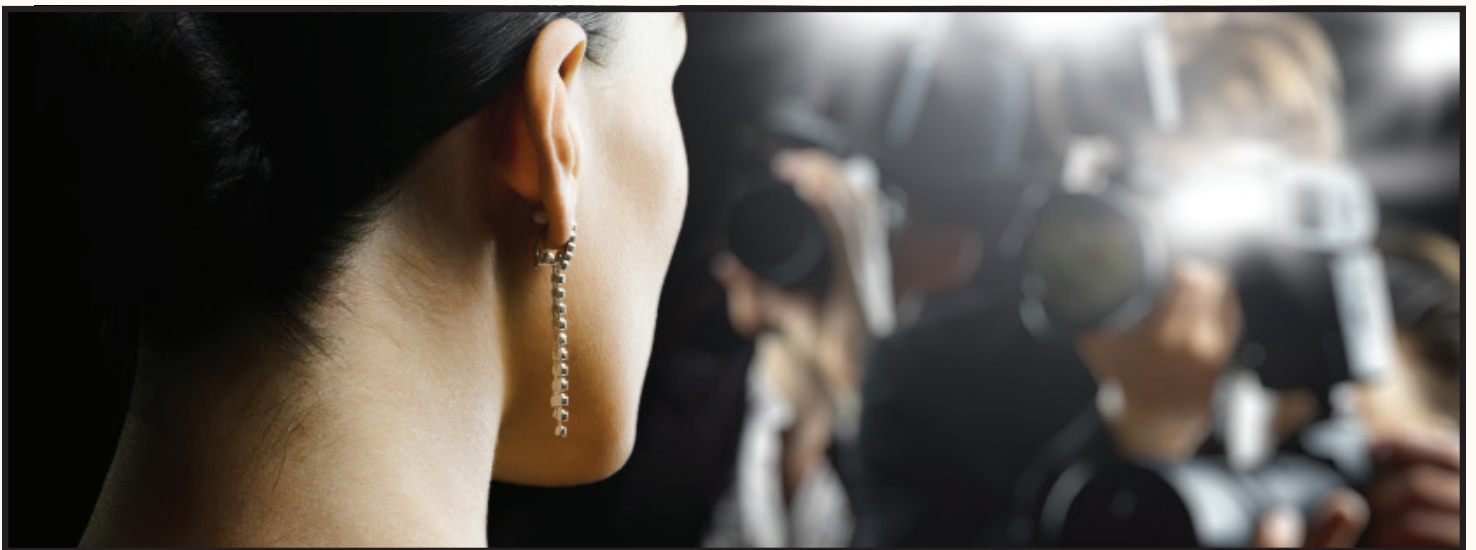
CHAPTER 10

SUCCESS

Success for a performer is being a working performer! There are many stories in which talent has gone on to audition successfully and secure a great role. For instance, one of my clients Ian, was submitted for an audition for the movie *Spanglish*, for the role of 'Georgie Clasky', Adam Sandler's son. Ian was slightly younger than the character breakdown called for, but we knew he was amazingly talented and submitted him anyway. After thorough preparation, Ian went to the audition and nailed it! He impressed the casting directors by being prepared, on time, full of energy, and interpreting the character in his unique way. Even though casting was still worried about him being too young, Ian managed to receive a call back audition via video conference with the film's director. He did exceptionally well during this audition by staying relaxed and natural, and ultimately ended up being booked for the role, in which he shined.

There are so many reasons why a casting director might choose someone for the job. Casting is an art form, and exceptional casting directors will take great care in choosing the right performer for the project. There is no "special reason" that makes a casting director choose a certain performer for the job, they go off of their intuition and gut-feeling to judge if a performer will work in the role. By the same token, performers need to be sure that their talent shines through and hope that the 'magic' they put into their audition is transferred through to casting.

Being a performer is an amazing responsibility, endeavor, and experience; and auditioning is the meat and potatoes of a performer's career. Use this book to make your journey as an auditioning performer as effortless as it is fun. You now have the secrets to auditioning successfully, so enjoy your voyage down the path to becoming a success!



APPENDIX



**FAME
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GLOSSARY

Audition	an interview at which a singer, actor, dancer, or musician demonstrates their suitability and skill.
Cold read	auditioning for a part with a script in hand; one the actor has never seen prior to the audition
Odd jobs	any of various non-specialized, unrelated jobs, usually domestic, unskilled, or menial
Go-see	job interview, model meets a client and shows portfolio.
Print work	photographs that are taken especially for print media such as magazines and other publications
Professional performers resume	a performer's resume details your experience in a performing arts discipline, your abilities as a performer, and any other associated skills you may have
Acting resume	an actor's resume details your experience in a performing arts discipline, your abilities as a performer, and any other associated skills you may have
Headshot	(Commercial Headshot/Legit Headshot) a head shot is a photographic technique where the focus of the photograph is a person's face. A headshot is a specific type of portrait. A headshot is an image that portrays a person as he is, however, simple or stylized the image might be
Acting Reel	a video resume for actors that includes clips of a variety of work the actor has been featured in
Composite Card	a comp card (also called composite card, z card or sed card) is a marketing tool for actors and especially models. They serve as the latest and best of a model's portfolio and are used as a business card
Glamour modeling	glamour photography is a genre of photography whereby the subjects, usually female, are portrayed in a romantic manner
Plus size modeling	this type of modeling is specifically for female models that are a dress size 6 and up
Body part modeling	these models are used only for specific parts of the body such as hands, legs, feet, and facial features

Fitness modeling	this type of modeling requires the models to be extremely toned and muscular. Male and female fitness models usually appear in fitness magazine, and maintain strict diets to meet these requirements
Open call audition	an open casting when the client sees all models suitable for the type requested
Closed audition	an audition or casting that is open only to the clients of the talent agencies or managers who were contacted about the particular opportunity
A Capella singing	Music that is specifically solo or group singing without instrumental sound
Casting directors	the person responsible for assigning roles in a movie, play, or other productions
Monologue (comedic/dramatic)	a long speech by one actor in a play or movie, or as part of a theatrical or broadcast program
“DEF” Factor	acronym for mentally preparing for an audition, “Don’t take it personally, Expect that there may be possible rejection, Forget about it!”
Character breakdown	a short description of a character within a script
Sides (lines)	lines of a script used for auditioning purposes
Talent Agents	a professional who finds jobs for performers, producers, athletes, writers and others in the entertainment industry
Talent managers	a talent manager, also known as an artist manager or band manager, is an individual or company who guides the professional career of artists in the entertainment industry. The responsibility of the talent manager is to oversee the day-to-day business affairs of an artist; advise and counsel talent concerning professional matters, long-term plans and personal decisions which may affect their career
Talent marketing centers	a business that helps break aspiring talent into the industry by creating their marketing tools and promoting those tools to talent agencies and management companies.
Actor’s Union	a labor union for actors, meaning they protect their rights for safe working conditions and providing fair wages among other services.
Screen Actors Guild- American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA)	an American labor union representing over 150,000 film and television principal and background performers worldwide. The current organization is the result of the March 30, 2012 merger of the Screen Actor’s Guild and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists.

Going up	forgetting your lines during an audition
Memorization	recalling lines or a monologue from memory
"OPP"	an acronym for remembering the basic factors when attending an audition. Be On time, Prepared, and Pleasant.
Punctuality	being on time for an appointment.
Callback	when a performer is called back for a second audition after the initial audition.
Hold (union hold)	when a performer is being strongly considered for a booking, but the final decision has not yet been made by the casting department, yet casting wants to be sure they are available if they are chosen
Right of first refusal	when casting asks the performer (who is on hold) to notify them if they decide to take on another opportunity.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS



**FAME
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PREP SAMPLE MONOLOGUES

FRANKENSTEIN (FEMALE)

A dramatic monologue from the novel by Mary Shelley

ELIZABETH: I am the cousin of the unhappy child who was murdered, or rather his sister, for I was educated by, and have lived with his parents ever since and even long before his birth. It may, therefore, be judged indecent in me to come forward on this occasion. But when I see a fellow-creature about to perish through the cowardice of her pretended friends, I wish to be allowed to speak, that I may say what I know of her character. I am well acquainted with the accused. I have lived in the same house with her, at one time for five and at another for nearly two years. During all that period she appeared to me the most amiable and benevolent of human creatures. She nursed Madame Frankenstein, my aunt, in her last illness, with the greatest affection and care. And afterward attended her own mother during a tedious illness, in a manner that excited the admiration of all who knew her, after which she again lived in my uncle's house, where she was beloved by all the family. She was warmly attached to the child who is now dead, and acted toward him like a most affectionate mother. For my own part, I do not hesitate to say that, notwithstanding all the evidence produced against her, I believe and rely on her perfect innocence. She had no temptation for such an action. As to the bauble on which the chief proof rests, if she had earnestly desired it, I should have willingly given it to her, so much do I esteem and value her.

THE MAN WHO MARRIED A DUMB WIFE (MALE)*A comedic monologue from the play by Anatole France*

LEONARD: My wife is dumb. Quite dumb. I admit, I noticed it before we were married. I couldn't help noticing it, of course, but it didn't seem to make so much difference to me then as it does now. I considered her beauty, and her property, and thought of nothing but the advantages of the match and the happiness I should have with her. But now these matters seem less important, and I do wish she could talk; that would be a real intellectual pleasure for me, and, what's more, a practical advantage for the household. What does a judge need most in his house? Why, a good-looking wife, to receive the suitors pleasantly, and, by subtle suggestions, gently bring them to the point of making proper presents, so that their cases may receive--more careful attention. People need to be encouraged to make proper presents. A woman, by clever speech and prudent action, can get a good ham from one, and a roll of cloth from another; and make still another give poultry or wine. But this poor dumb thing Catherine gets nothing at all. While my fellow judges have their kitchens and cellars and stables and store-rooms running over with good things, all thanks to their wives, I hardly get wherewithal to keep the pot boiling. You see, Master Adam Fumée, what I lose by having a dumb wife. I'm not worth half as much. . . . And the worst of it is, I'm losing my spirits, and almost my wits, with it all. When I hold my wife in my arms--a woman as beautiful as the finest carved statue, at least so I think--and quite as silent, that I'm sure of--it makes me feel queer and uncanny; I even ask myself if I'm holding a graven image or a mechanical toy, or a magic doll made by a sorcerer, not a real human child of our Father in Heaven; sometimes, in the morning, I am tempted to jump out of bed to escape from bewitchment. Worse yet! What with having a dumb wife, I'm going dumb myself. Sometimes I catch myself using signs, as she does. The other day, on the Bench, I even pronounced judgment in pantomime, and condemned a man to the galleys, just by dumb show and gesticulation!

SAMPLE CHARACTER BREAKDOWN & SIDES

FEMALE CHARACTER BREAKDOWN FOR TELEVISION SERIES:

[JENNY MILLS] White, mid 30s, loose black curls, pale cheeks with a hint of freckles. What we most notice are her enormous luminous violet eyes. As a child, her sister's murder shocked JENNY MILLS into a state of hyperthymesia, a rare condition in which she can remember absolutely every detail of her life, however seemingly inconsequential. More a curse than a gift, that ability destroyed her relationship with her fellow police detective JOE FIGUEROA and drove her away from the law enforcement field. But when her neighbor is murdered, Carrie becomes Joe's reluctant consultant on the case. The shock of the murder brings back memories of her own past traumas -- recollections that could lead her to the long-ago killer who has so blighted her life...SERIES REGULAR

Sides for Character, JENNY MILLS:

ACT ONE

TERRY

Jenny's fiddling with the TV, trying to get a clear channel. Would you move, please? I can't see.

Jenny turns to TERRY, late 60s, one of several older women and men seated in a lounge area. Jenny is a good ten years younger than the other residents, which makes the severity of her early onset Alzheimer's all the more tragic.

JENNY

Nothing to see you haven't seen before, Terry.

TERRY

(As she plumps Jenny's cushions) Are you new here?

JENNY

Nah, you and me go way back.

An OLDER MAN is quarreling with an attendant, ROBERT, 30s, African.

MAN

I told you already, I took the Hyzaar. I take it again, I have to go and go, I'm always going.

ROBERT

Let's ask JENNY, she never gets it wrong. *(To Jenny)* Mr. Woodson says he already took his meds for the day. What do you think?

Jenny pretends to be thinking hard.

JENNY

Well, Mr. Woodson, you took your Ependramine, two pills, ten milligrams, this morning at eight forty eight and had three Chloracid twenties at one fifteen. That would make you due for two more Hyzaar right about... now.

Robert smiles. The old man nods reluctantly.

ROBERT

(To Jenny) You know you're good at this. If you ever want a job.

JENNY

I have a job. 'Fact, tonight I think I'll ask for a little raise.

ROBERT

Good luck.

JENNY

Luck? Who said anything about luck?

END OF ACT TWO

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN FOR TELEVISION SERIES:

[TYLER WASHINGTON] African American, 30s, corporate, irresistibly handsome, smart, appealing, charming, sincere, Tyler is a Harvard-educated investment banker and Rachel's college love, who left her to take a job in New York City after graduation and refused to try to work out a long-distance relationship. Now in L.A. to set up an acquisition deal with "Brassy," the blog that Rachel works for, Tyler is delighted to meet up with Rachel and remarks that losing her was one of the biggest regrets of his life. Tyler asks Rachel out for drinks and is embarrassed when Rachel misinterprets one of his moves as romantic and goes in for a kiss--just as Tyler's current girlfriend, UCLA med student Monica Paulson, walks in. Despite Monica, Tyler clearly has some unresolved feelings for Rachel...SERIES REGULAR

Sides for Character Breakdown:

TYLER

Rachel? Is that you?

Rachel turns. Tyler Washington (30s, black, corporate, and irresistibly handsome) stands outside of the conference room.

Rachel recognizes him and her jaw drops in shock.

RACHEL

Tyler??

On Rachel's Stunned Expression...

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. BRASSY OFFICE – DAY

RACHEL

(Rachel, still stunned, approaches Tyler) What are you doing here?

TYLER

Handing a little business. My firm's overseeing a potential acquisition.

RACHEL

Of Brassy?

TYLER

Yea. Your boss didn't tell you?

Amy Genevive (30s, white) saunters over.

AMY

Ok, the first thing we need to change about this place is the men's room. I know this is a blog for women, but the floral print urinals have got to go.

TYLER

Rachel, I'd like you to meet Amy Genevive, CEO of Genevive-Com. Amy, Rachel writes the "Note to Self" column.

AMY

So you're Rachel! Listen, I'm a guy, but that piece you wrote on "Life After Drunk Dialing", was like therapy for me.

RACHEL

Really? Because it makes me feel like I need therapy.

Two buxom employees walks by and grab Amy's attention. Amy turns to Tyler.

AMY

Do they work for me?

TYLER

Yes. Once the deal's finalized.

AMY

Well, excuse me you two. The three of us should do drinks by tonight. How about 7 o'clock at the Dime?

RACHEL

Um... Sure.

Rachel leaves scene uncomfortably. Tyler and Amy walk away talking.

END OF ACT TWO

INEXPERIENCED ACTOR RESUME EXAMPLE

Jane A. Smith
(555) 555-5555
JaneSmith@actor.com

Height: 5'7"
Auburn

Weight: 145
Eye Color: Hazel

Hair Color:

THEATRE EXPERIENCE:

Macbeth

Lady Macbeth

ABC High School, 2003

Wicked

Elphaba

Teaneck Community Theater, 2004

Rent

Mimi

Teaneck Community Theater, 2005

TRAINING EXPERIENCE:

Fame Maker Acting School '12

New York, NY

Advanced Scene Study, New York Film Academy '11

New York, NY

SPECIAL SKILLS:

Fluent in Japanese, Advanced Pianist, Intermediate Swimmer

EXPERIENCED ACTOR RESUME

Jane A. Smith

FAME MAKER
Talent Agency.
(555) 555-5555

SAG/AFTRA

FILM EXPERIENCE:

		DIRECTOR/NETWORK	DATE
"Salt"	Young CIA Officer	Relativity Media	2002
"The Help"	Woman in Store	Dreamworks Pictures	2003
"Fast Five"	News Anchor	One Race Films	2004

TELEVISION EXPERIENCE:

"Law and Order"	Medical Examiner	NBC Studios	2001
"NYPD Blue"	Desk Sergeant	20th Century Fox	2005
"Full House"	Cheryl	Warner Bros. Television	2008

THEATER EXPERIENCE:

"Wicked"	Elephaba	Teaneck Community Theater,
"Ghost"	Molly	Lunt-Fontane Theater Co.
"Rent"	Mimi	Telsey & Co.

TRAINING:

Fame Maker Acting School '12 New York, NY

Advanced Scene Study, New York Film Academy '11 New York, NY

SPECIAL SKILLS:

Fluent in Japanese, Advanced Pianist, Intermediate Swimmer



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