

Advice from Jedi Master Yoda – Preparing for your BYOV Audition

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The Jedi Order...err, I mean Bay Youth Orchestras are rapidly expanding. As we expand, we know that the audition expectations will continue rise as well. So how do you prepare? What can you do to be ready? How can you become a Jedi Knight? All these questions are of grave importance.

Master Yoda has trained Jedi for over 800 years. “Help you I can. Yes, hmmm.” Here are some pieces of advice for all of us concerning audition preparation in the words of the great Jedi Master himself.

“No. Try not. Do... or do not. There is no try.”

Commit to the Audition. It is important to realize that an audition is only part of the process. Judges will hear only 5 minutes; they do not know your history, how many hours you have spent working to get to this point. So, you have to commit, in your mind that you will get the music, give yourself adequate time to prepare, and then practice the audition. Be sure to memorize scales. If possible, memorize your choice of solo or etude repertoire. Come fully prepared on the excerpt: dynamics, musicality, phrasing, steady tempo, accurate rhythm, and outstanding intonation. Most of all, you are a soloist at an audition. You have to play like one!

“Ready are you? What know you of ready? For eight hundred years have I trained Jedi. A Jedi must have the deepest commitment, the most serious mind.”

Prepare yourself the right way. Most people assume that if they practice and prepare their music, they are ready. Not so. The audition itself is an art form in my opinion.

The best way to prepare is to recreate the ENTIRE audition process. Play for others, video/audio record yourself, and hype yourself up to ‘feel stress.’ Have a few friends or family act as your ‘judges.’ See, your brain is a powerful tool. When stressed your body releases adrenaline. Your heart races, blood pressure increases, and the eyes dilate just to name a few. Also, when this happens, your brain creates a “stamp” in your memory when this happens. If you recreate the process, your brain will ‘get used to’ the process and be less likely to send out an overdose of adrenaline when you audition. So the more you repeat your mock audition process, the better.

Luke Skywalker: “I don’t, I don’t believe it.”
Yoda: “That is why you fail.”

Your attitude is most important. So, you’ve practiced your music, memorized your pieces and scales, done a few mock auditions and now you think you are ready to take on Darth Vader? Be careful, you aren’t done yet. Attitude is the final piece to the puzzle. You must go into an audition with a positive attitude, believing that you are a success. Many times we may not say anything negative or communicate verbally that we have the wrong attitude, but our body language says it all. Here are things that you have to ask yourself BEFORE you audition. Do I have good posture (standing or sitting up straight)? Am I smiling? Do I seem excited about auditioning for this ensemble? Do I practice in

the mirror? You have to communicate to the judges that YOU are the best fit for their ensemble.

Yoda: "No more training do you require. Already know you, that which you need."

Luke: "Then I am a Jedi."

Yoda: "No. Not yet. One thing remains. Vader. You must confront Vader. Then, only then, a Jedi will you be. And confront him you will."

Go audition. Finally, you are ready to confront the audition! Just like Luke Skywalker, you realize Darth Vader is intrinsically good all along. Auditions are good for you. The more you audition, the better you get. Even if you audition and don't get in, you have not failed! You have learned what is necessary to try again. Giving up is not an option when it comes to music. Just like practicing music, you can't just give up the first time you fail. You have to keep trying, and by doing this, you will continuously get better. Now, go and audition! And as always, "May the force be with you!"