

What is an audition?

An audition can be daunting but try and remember that it's essentially an arena in which to express your talent.

Matt Ryan (director)

An audition is your chance to show your ability as a performer and an opportunity to show your individuality to a panel of prospective employers. The audition may involve singing, acting or dancing, depending on the project. The best way to approach it is with a positive attitude, embracing the opportunity to perform. Remember the pleasure of playing to an audience – and why you embarked on this career in the first place.

An auditionee should aim to project to a panel:

- I hope you want to work with me.
- I hope I want to work with you.

The process

A production company embarking on a new project, or recasting an existing one, will usually ask a casting agent to find suitable artists for it to choose from. After discussions with the creative team, the casting agent will produce a breakdown of parts to be sent out to agents. This can have details of roles, characters, vocal range and style, suggested playing age, possible colouring and physical type.

Once this has been issued to the agents, it is their job – and skill – to look at their client-list and select suitable artists to put forward.

CD track 9: humming

Say the word “nummm”: feel how your tongue releases. You should feel the sounds vibrating – in a relaxed way – against your teeth and lips. Walk around, relax your body as well.



CD track 10: exercises using “oo”

If you put your forefinger in your mouth and close your lips around it, it will alter your tongue position and help find the shape to make the right sound. Try the following exercise:



CD track 11: adding more vowels

This exercise helps to keep a steady stream of air flowing – use the vowels “ee”, “eh” and “ah”:



INTERVIEWS

TRACIE BENNETT

Tracie Bennett trained at the Italia Conti Academy in London. She appeared in the TV soap Coronation Street between 1982 and 1984 and again in 1999, and played Malandra in the film Shirley Valentine. She has twice won Olivier awards for Best Performance in a Supporting Role in a Musical, for her performances in She Loves Me and Hairspray.

I'll never forget my very worst audition – it was for *Follies* in the West End, with Mike Ockrent directing. I'd got through all the preliminary auditions – where you turn up and they ask you if you can dance and sing, so you do a few steps and sing a few bars and then they say "Next"! Well, I'd got through the first four of those and now I was on audition number five and I was due to meet Mike Ockrent.

This was an acting audition and that is the one that I generally have to do the least work for. After all, I am an actor – or so I thought. So, I'm on this West-End stage and I'm listening to him and thinking about what he's asking me to do, but I'm just not getting it. There are twenty people out there in the darkened auditorium, all here to watch me do my stuff and, although this is supposed to be the easy bit, I'm just not doing it right.

So finally he has to get up on the stage and explain it to me. He's brilliant Mike Ockrent, but I'm looking at him and I'm just not getting it – I don't know why. I think the adrenaline kicks in, and you're almost bolting off the starting line, without