



StawHat Auditions

Post-Audition Guidelines:

With your StawHat Audition experience behind you, there are still more things you can and should do to ensure that this experience was a valuable one.

- **KEEP YOUR LIST OF THEATRES ON HAND FOR FUTURE REFERENCE.**

This can be the beginning of a professional database. Keep the list of attending theatres and any notes you have about your callbacks in some sort of organized fashion. It is good manners and good business to drop a postcard or friendly note in the mail thanking people for their time if they showed enough interest in you to give you a callback. You may also want to keep them on a mailing list to inform them of future projects you're working on.

- **CONSIDER PURCHASING YOUR AUDITION DVD FROM STRAWHAT.**

This isn't imperative, but you may find your clip both useful and educational. If you gave a rock-solid audition and got 10 or more callbacks, this footage could be a good clip for future submissions. If you didn't get as many callbacks as you thought you should have, the clip can give you a more objective idea of what you presented that day. (Example: a couple of years ago a young woman came in and blew us away - 11 callbacks, maybe even 12. Then the following year, she came back and got only 2. What happened? We were curious, too, so we looked at her clips. The first year she looked fantastic and sang really well - polished, professional, and funny with a big voice. The second year, she still had the big voice, but her material seemed to be underprepared: she was singing a new song in something of the same genre, but she was nervous, unfocused, and came across kind of frantic. Not professional at all. She could've learned a lot by comparing her two clips.)

- **BE PREPARED WITH ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE IF THE PHONE RINGS WITH A JOB OFFER.**

You have had your callbacks and you have access to the theatre web sites, so you know the seasons being presented and some general idea of what they may be thinking. So now the question is: ***What do you want or need to accomplish this summer?*** There are a lot of ways to skin this cat called your career. Do you need to gain professional experience? Does that mean you need to build your resume with roles, or does it mean you need to rub elbows with Equity actors and learn by watching as well as doing? Are you simply starving to do live theatre wherever you can? Or do you straight up need to make as much money as possible this season? Your answers to these questions will affect how you weigh the benefits and deficits of various opportunities that may come your way. Knowing your mind will help you keep a clear head.

- **HOW SOON WILL COMPANIES CALL WITH JOB OFFERS?**

We cannot stress here how quickly preproduction must move for summer theatres. We would suggest that you'll hear from a company within the week, two weeks at the outside. Be aware

that many organizations attend not only StrawHat in NYC, but also the UPTAs, the SETCs and/or the NETCs - or they may hold their own open call. If you are the #1 pick, you'll hear shortly.

If you don't hear anything, take a deep breath and cut yourself some slack. Auditioning is hard and relentless - you will easily audition ten times or more for every job you actually get. That's the nature of the business, so all you can do is your very best - and try to have fun while you do it.

- **I GOT A JOB OFFER - NOW WHAT?**

As we've said, preproduction must move fast for summer theatres. June may seem a long ways away, but for producers and casting directors the days fly fast and they have a multitude of issues to deal with - casting the actors is only one small facet.

Please make note of the following essential job offer etiquette:

- **Return Phone Calls ASAP Even If Only To Say You Will Call Back Later.**

Do not wait several days to respond. They may move on to another performer with the offer. Inaction = disinterest.

- **Return Emails ASAP As Well.**

Most theatres have an offer deadline - if they do not say "we need your answer by such-and-such a date," then **ASK THEM HOW LONG YOU HAVE TO MAKE A DECISION.** You must understand that if you say "NO," they have a 2nd, 3rd, and even 4th choice lined up for that job - and they can't afford to lose those people if they've already lost you. Typically, you have 3 or 4 days to decide, but no more than that.

- **Be Honest.**

Remember "Be Prepared" earlier in this article? If you know what you want, you know if your answer has to be "No." So be gracious and say so. If you've done your research on the companies and on the shows they are doing, then you also know the additional questions you may want to ask if you are seriously considering the offer.

- **If You Have More Than One Offer...**

... it is even more essential that you make your decision promptly and be gracious in BOTH accepting and declining the offers. Just because you said "no" to someone this year doesn't mean you might not want to say "yes" next time. There may not be a next time if they think poorly of you.

- **Contracts**

Whether the offer is for a resident acting company position or an actor/tech intern gig or even a tuition-based summer training program, a company making an offer will expect you to sign a

contract. Read it. Then read it again. Then ask your parents -- your partner, your faculty advisor, your lawyer -- to read it. A good contract will spell out precisely what is expected of you **and** what you can expect from the employer. It will detail your salary and when you will be paid. It will list the roles you will play or at least the number of shows you will perform in. It will specify your day off, travel expense reimbursement (if any), housing arrangements, and rehearsal plans.

Is there something you want to know? For example:

You: *I'm thinking of bringing my car. Is there off-street parking for my vehicle?*

You: *The contract says 'shared bedroom.' How many people to a room?*

You: *My parents want to come visit – do we get comps?*

If you think ahead, you'll come up with a lot of questions to ask. All of them should be clearly and cheerfully answered, if the information hasn't already been provided. And when you get the answer...

You: *Will this information be stipulated in a rider to the agreement?*

In some cases, there won't be a rider but there will be a Company Information Packet – in print – that provides these details to every actor, techie, and staff member who has signed on for the season.

- **If It Doesn't "Feel" Right...**

... then you should probably follow your instincts and pass on the offer. We completely understand that you want to spend your summer performing – otherwise you wouldn't be at StrawHat or pursuing this crazy career! But sometimes the right gig isn't in the cards, and you should be ready to walk away if you don't like the vibe you're getting. *"I really wanted to do something this summer, so I bit the bullet"* is NOT a measured and professional reason to say "yes."

Ultimately, we believe that working in summer theatre for any of our attending companies will be a valuable experience for you - and will help shape the performing artist you hope to become. The hard-working and often colorful cast of characters who produce live theatre deserve your respect and consideration, so treat them well. You can expect the same in return.