Auditions 2009 were a huge success. Many thanks to the outgoing audition chair Kathy Gallas for three years of hard work organizing audition opportunities for students.

TETA 2010 finds us back in Dallas. Be on the lookout for newly formatted audition forms that will be posted later in the year. Many districts have final exams the week before TETA; please be sure your students prepare well in advance of auditions to avoid the stress of prepping for auditions during finals week! Remember, it’s never too early to start helping students prepare for auditions. Selecting and preparing monologues for auditions is an actor’s life work; encouraging actors to find monologues and technicians to develop portfolio materials early will benefit your students immensely!

Ten Tips to Consider for TETA 2010 Auditions:

1) Be sure your kids have taken the SAT or ACT well in advance. Scores are required to be submitted on the form with a counselor signature. Please let your kids know that information is important! Many Universities cannot seriously consider your students without this information. Tip: Encourage your students to take advantage of the option on the SAT/ACT form that allows test scores to be sent directly to five different Universities. This can save your students some money. Encourage them to arrive at the test with five schools in mind to send the scores to.

2) Make sure your students select audition pieces that are appropriate to their age and emotional range.

3) Make sure your kids read the entire script so that they understand the context of the monologue.

4) Time your kids. They must cut their pieces to under two minutes from the first moment to the closing moment of their monologues. They will be stopped by the timekeeper at two minutes. For technicians have them prepare a five minute presentation of their work and prepare them to answer questions about their process.

5) The introduction for actors should consist of their name and the titles of the plays their monologues are from. Both actors and technicians will be given a number when they check in at the audition that will correspond with their page number in the book; they should say this number when they introduce themselves. (Note: Students should know the authors of their plays but will not be required to state the author’s name in the introduction for TETA 2010). It is important to rehearse the introduction as it is part of the audition.

6) It is best to select monologues from published play scripts.

7) Avoid overly offensive, sexual or profane content. Avoid dialect pieces for this type of audition.

8) Wear footwear that assists, not hinders the audition (heels that are too high are distracting and awkward).

9) Business/Business casual attire is appreciated. Be sure the student is comfortable in the clothing as well. Remind your kids that an audition is like an interview and it benefits them to dress accordingly!

10) Prepare your kids, both actors and technicians, for what questions to ask at callbacks. Remember, your kids are auditioning us too and they need to know what to ask so they can get the information they need to make informed choices! For a list of questions they might want to ask please feel free to e-mail me at jdemontmollin@uh.edu.

A great resource to help prepare your actors for auditions is the book “Audition” by Michael Shurtleff. The guideposts are great coaching points to serve as a resource for you in helping prepare your kids. (Note: There is some content that is inappropriate for some high school students, so you need to preview the book if you plan to hand it to your students).

I hope this information helps and if you have any questions as the year progresses please don’t hesitate to contact me at jdemontmollin@uh.edu.
TETA Audition Tips 11-20 by Jackie deMontmollin

The last issue of Texas Theatre Notes included ten tips for preparing your audition; if you didn’t see it, please read that issue! Here are audition tips 11-21 to consider as you prepare to audition:

11) Plan what you will wear in advance. Have a professional appearance. Select an outfit that you can move comfortably in. Men, wear hard soled shoes and ladies, wear a low heel. Jeans, flip-flops, t-shirts with writing on them, miniskirts, low cut tops should be avoided.

12) Pull your hair off of your face. Get a trim or a haircut so your hair isn’t hanging over your eyes. The eyes are important!

13) Get a good night sleep and take care of your voice. Your temptation may be to stay up all night talking in your hotel room; this works against your voice and your energy the next day.

14) Arrive to the audition and check in at least 30 minutes early so that you don’t feel rushed. Use the extra time to warm up, stretch and get focused. Be extremely polite and follow instructions. The people working behind the desk are volunteers; be sure to be pleasant to them at all times.

15) You will enter the audition room in groups of 10-25 people and sit on the side until it is your turn. Your teacher or parents cannot enter the room with you. You will have one chair to use. Don’t bring props. There will be an elevated platform to perform on; be comfortable enough in your shoes/clothing to step up on to it. There will be 30-50 college reps sitting at tables, each will have a book with your forms and they will be taking notes and reading as they watch you.

16) When you enter the room, decide where you will focus your eyes during your audition. For most monologues it is best to visualize that the other character in the scene is standing at the back of the room and talk to that “other”. Looking directly at an auditor as though they are a character in your scene should be avoided. We didn’t rehearse with you, so please don’t place us in your scene!

17) Your introduction is important, rehearse it as part of your audition to avoid seeming nervous. Talk to the entire room with an open focus during your intro. During your intro it is OK to make eye contact with auditors. ONLY say your name, the number given to you at check in, and the titles of your plays. Don’t add a synopsis of the play or any explanations. Remember, the introduction is the chance we have to see the real you. Smile and show that you enjoy auditioning!

18) The Timekeeper is an important person. He/she will be sitting alone in the back of the room. After your introduction, time begins. Make sure your pieces are under time, not by rushing, but by cutting pieces in advance. During your performance, you should be able to see the timekeeper in your peripheral vision. Do not look directly at them. The timekeeper will raise their hand to warn that you have 5 seconds left. When they close their hand, your time is up. Stop and thank your audience at that point. If you don’t stop, the timekeeper will say “thank you” to alert you that your time is up. You MUST stop at that point! Don’t beat yourself up if you get stopped. Handle it like the pro that you are! Smile, say thank you and be proud of the work you did. This will speak positively about your personal character and ability to be graceful when things don’t go as planned.

19) Bring an updated resume for callbacks. Make sure it is error free. Include your most recent SAT/ACT scores. If you GPA raises between the time you submitted your form and January include your new GPA. You may want to bring 8x10 headshots for callbacks. The headshot doesn’t need to be professionally taken, but make sure it is a clear photo, and that it looks like you (not too much makeup or overdone hair).

20) Be prepared with questions you want to ask at callbacks. Callbacks for this type of audition are basically interviews. It is also your chance to interview the school and get information you need to make a choice about where you want to study. Every school will have information to give you and it can be quite daunting to keep track. Have a notebook and following your interview, write down key points about the school that you want to remember before going on to the next school. Write down the name of the person you talked to; this will be helpful later if you want to send a thank you card for the callback or e-mail a question about their program.

21) About singing: to put it bluntly, if you can’t sing, don’t. If you plan to sing, bring clearly marked sheet music and know your tempos and how to communicate that to an accompanist. In case there is no accompanist, also bring a CD that contains only the accompaniment. There should be no other voices singing on your CD. The person running the CD player should not be expected to cue your music for you; they will simply insert your CD and press play. Be sure to test your CD on a player in advance. Just because it plays on your computer doesn’t mean it will play on a portable CD player. You will not be allowed to sing acapella.

Please remember, everyone from the volunteers to the University reps are educators that care about students. We all want you to succeed, have fun and show your very best work. Prepare well and enjoy this exciting opportunity!

This is your very own two-minute show. Your audience is on your side and wants to admire your good work!