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## **Audition Preparation**

1. Choose a solo piece that you play really well, shows your versatility with varying tempi and moods, and is flashy enough technically to impress the panel. They may specify certain standard concerti or featured soli, so learn these standards well in advance just in case.
2. The excerpts show your abilities as a team player. Listen to many recordings of the pieces you will be playing excerpts from. Listen to recordings of the orchestra you plan to audition for. They may have a certain style that they would expect you to adhere to. You may find them on iTunes and on Naxos Music Library. Read program notes so that you understand what the composer was trying to say with the music. Know where the music slows down or speeds up and by how much.
3. Get the excerpts from the orchestra, even if you have your own. There may be mistakes in theirs or yours. If theirs has a mistake, contact their librarian. If there is a discrepancy, they may be using an edition. Perform their version. Notice all the details such as dynamic markings, tempo markings, rit's and accel's. If you play all the notes but neglect these details, that will kill your chances of winning the audition. Dynamics are extremely important.
4. Play with a focused sound that will convince them that you can be heard over the orchestra, even in a pianissimo.
5. Don't play Debussy like Wagner. Know your styles.
6. Memorize your excerpts. You will have your music in front of you, but if the lighting is bad, your contact lenses have grit on them, or you are not used to the harp, at least you still have a hope of playing well.
7. When practicing, sing the main orchestra line along with your excerpts, so that when you play for the committee, they will hear that you KNOW what the rest of the orchestra is doing in that section. Don't sing during the audition! Rotten tomatoes will ruin your outfit.
8. If it is not marked, determine what the metronome speed is for your excerpts and write it in. Then learn to play those excerpts at least two clicks faster in case the conductor asks you to.
9. Practice with the metronome to make sure you are playing the excerpts at the correct speed and are not rushing or dragging. Then turn it off to practice the phrasing.
10. Get a device such as an HD flash recorder and record yourself. Get a comprehensive list of the most common audition repertoire and start learning it long before you need it.

11. Some excerpts are like trick questions. They are completely unplayable or sound terrible as written, so everyone does their own edition. A good example is the cadenza from Waltz of the Flowers by Tchaikovsky. If you do not study with an orchestra harpist, get some lessons on your audition repertoire with one who knows the ropes. If you study with a great soloist, they should not be offended if you need a little specialized advice. Don't wait until the week before your audition; it takes time to absorb new information.

12. Be prepared for the conductor to come up onstage and conduct you. Maestro Akiyama did this to me for Symphonie fantastique, and because I had it memorized, I never took my eyes off him.

13. Read some books on audition preparation. There are some good ones out there. The Internet is also a good source of advice. Harp Column has had discussions on audition preparation, for example, but google 'orchestra auditions' and see what comes up.

14. Practice many, many repetitions, taking breaks every hour so you don't get tendonitis. Practice them in different order. You should be able to play your pieces easily.

15. Play mock auditions with simulated conditions such as a panel of your friends or teachers. Dress in your audition clothes. Have the panel make notes as you play, and then provide feedback.

16. Tune your harp carefully every day so that you can tune it perfectly on the big day, and it will stay in tune. Bad intonation will ruin an otherwise perfect audition.

### **On the day**

The panel will be listening for:

Rhythm

Intonation

Musicianship (Style, phrasing)

Dynamics

### **From Harp Column:**

*Posted by Clinton F. Nieweg*

A composite list of audition pieces and the requested edition most often asked for by the Major Orchestras in the U.S.

Bartok: Concerto for Orchestra Critical corrected edition by Peter Bartok - Rental from Boosey & Hawkes. Harp 1.

Berlioz: Symphonie Fantastique - Breitkopf/Kalmus A1307 or Barenreiter edition which has some differences. Harp 1.

Britten; Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra - Rental from Boosey & Hawkes

Debussy: La Mer - 1909/1910 edition corrected original Kalmus A1393 or 1909/1910 revised edition on rental from Durand/Boosey. Harp 1.

Mahler: Symphony No. 5 Kubik Critical Edition on rental Gustav Mahler Gesellschaft/ C. F. Peters

Ravel: Alborada del Gracioso Corrected edition Kalmus A9066 Harp 1.

Ravel: Tzigane - Rental from Durand/Boosey & Hawkes

Strauss: Don Juan Critical corrected edition Kalmus A2119

Stravinsky: Symphony in Three Movements - Rental from Schott/EAMDLLC

Tchaikovsky: Nutcracker Suite- Waltz of the Flowers - Kalmus A2173

Tchaikovsky, Swan Lake Ballet Critical corrected edition Kalmus A2186

Verdi, La Forza del Destino Overture Kalmus A2202 harp 1.

For works on rental, the excerpts for the sections to be heard should be sent by the orchestra, as an individual cannot buy these parts. Contact the orchestra librarian. Complete parts for works on sale can be bought from the publisher or any music dealer. The complete work should be learned for the audition.

Bartok: Concerto for Orchestra; Violin Concerto # 2

Berlioz: Symphony Fantastique, L'Enfance du Christ, Harold in Italy

Britten: Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra

Bruch: Scottish Fantasy

Bruckner: Symphony 8

Debussy: La Mer; Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun

Donizetti: Lucia di Lammermoor cadenza

Dvorak: Scherzo Capriccioso

Elgar: The Dream of Gerontius

Franck: Symphony in d

Mahler: Adagietto

Mascagni: Cavalleria Rusticana

Prokofiev: Violin Concerto # 1

Ravel: Piano concerto in G cadenza; Alborada del Gracioso; Mother Goose; Tzigane cadenza

Smetana: Vysehrad cadenza

Strauss: Don Juan; Heldenleben; Salomes Tanz

Stravinsky: Symphony; Petruschka

Tchaikovsky: Waltz of the Flowers cadenza; Swan Lake cadenza: Sleeping Beauty cadenza

Verdi: La Forza del Destino Overture

Von Weber: Aufforderung zum Tanz

Wagner: Tannhauser; Gotterdammerung; Isolde's Liebestod; Die Walkure