

As Music Students Prepare for Youth Ensemble Auditions...

May and June are the months when Boston and Rhode Island youth ensembles are holding auditions for membership into next fall's groups.

You may have heard students and parents discussing BYSO or MYWE or RIPPYWE. These ensembles are quite competitive and students need to prepare very well prior to the auditions. In general, students will be asked to play scales, repertoire showing contrasting musical styles and sight reading. Each ensemble has specific audition requirements, so be sure to check each website carefully! Links for these organizations can be found at www.elizabethleehey.com

Assuming that you can play your scales perfectly and your repertoire exceptionally well, here are a few more tips for audition success:

- Pace your preparation. Students should know the exact date of their auditions and "take ownership" of the process. Hopefully your teacher will guide you through your preparation so that you will "peak" at the audition time.
- Prior to your audition date, seek out players who have auditioned before and ask them what their experience was like.
- Attend a rehearsal of the ensemble you would like to play in. This will give you a good idea of the level of players, the conductor and the repertoire.
- Do Practice Auditions at home. You can do this with family or friends. Simulate the actual audition: about seven minutes, play a few scales, a section of your piece and a few lines of sight reading. Evaluate your performance and then work on your challenging passages/scales.
- Arrive at the audition venue with plenty of time to warm up.
- Wear "nice" clothes. Though not a requirement, I recommend this as "first impressions" are significant.
- Be well rested and well fed. You need physical, mental and emotional energy to play your best. Don't schedule other activities the morning of your audition. And also, don't over practice the morning of your audition. Again, pace yourself.
- Be sure to have all your equipment with you (music, reeds, swab, etc). Keep an extra reed in your pocket as you go into the audition room.
- Beware of temperature differences between the warm up room and the audition room as this can affect your instrument and reed.
- Bring along water and some food- I recommend a banana. This can have a calming effect and give you a needed energy boost.
- In the warm up room, stay by yourself to do your required warm up and maintain focus. Engaging in conversation with friends can distract you.
- Expect the unexpected! Some auditions are videoed, some have multiple adjudicators.

Good luck!