

What Does “Same Style of the Show” Mean and Why Do Music Directors Pick It?

Musicals have distinct genres. You would not say that *Oklahoma!* and *Hamilton* have the same type of music. Different styles of music require different skills. As much as the music director might love that you can sing screamo, they don’t want to hear that for *Annie* auditions. This is a guide on how to find the right song while avoiding common pitfalls, how to get the best cut from the song, and why telling a story is the most important part of an audition.

Finding the Right Song

A good first step is to research the show and *who* you want to audition for, as sometimes different characters are written in different genres. *Addams Family* is a blend of flamenco-style Spanish, vaudevillian, jazzy, contemporary, and Sondheimian ballad (All of this information is found on the *Addams Family* musical Wikipedia page.) The composer, Andrew Lippa, stated that he wrote the music to match the characters’ personalities. Gomez with Latino heritage has a very flamenco sound to his music. On the other hand, Fester is written with vaudeville and jazz in mind to match his chaos. Wednesday has more pop/rock to match her edgy young adult behavior. If you want to audition for a specific character, this can be a useful tool to get the creative team to see you in that role. Theatre Trip and Musical Theatre Resources are both wonderful resources:

[The Best Audition Songs for The Addams Family | Theatre Trip](#)

[Musical Database | Theatre Trip](#)

[The Best Audition Songs for The Addams Family \(By Character\) – Musical Theatre Resources](#)

Keep in mind that if you find a song from a database of “best audition songs for x character” you will probably NOT be the only one singing it. This is not necessarily a problem, but keep that in mind that you will be directly competing with whoever sings the same song.

If you want a broad audition, it is a great idea to look more towards the overall genre of the show. *Addams Family* is a Contemporary Musical. You can always look towards Lippa’s other contemporary works such as *Big Fish*, *A Little Princess*, and *The Man in the Ceiling*. Other Contemporary Musical writers include Pasek and Paul, William Finn, Jeanine Tesori, and Eddie Perfect, to name a few. You can look at shows by them.

I would also advise staying away from the strongly overdone songs. If someone walks in the room with “Defying Gravity”, you could almost feel the auditioners roll their eyes and stop caring. Overdone songs change throughout the years, so feel free to research and check what the most recent overdone songs are today.

Remember to keep your song's material appropriate and follow the guidelines set by your Music Director. If they say bring a track, don't do acapella. If they say one minute, don't sing a five-minute song. If they say to sing a song not from the show, don't prepare the opening number. These actions, while might seem like it would benefit you, only make you seem like someone who does not follow directions well, a skill necessary for producing a fun and productive rehearsal atmosphere.

One final note: there is no one "perfect" audition song for one character. You need to find the song that works for YOU. You need to be able to sing it well. Sing it in a higher or lower key if you need to. Don't push your range trying to sound like someone else. Your voice is unique to you – find what works for it!

Picking the Right Cut

You found your song. Now it's time to pick a cut. My biggest advice is to find a section of the song that tells a story. The audition panel will note if you pick a section that goes nowhere. Tell a story! A lot of that involves prescribing actions, aka giving yourself blocking, for your audition. Nerves can make people shut down, but I promise that as a Music Director, I would rather have someone nervous and still acting as opposed to just standing there doing nothing. When you pick a cut, write out the lyrics and separate them into distinct beats. Find where the pauses and changes in emotional direction occur.

Here is an example:

If my audition song was "Somewhere Over the Rainbow", here is what I would do. I would separate the first lyrics into beats:

1. Somewhere over the rainbow
2. Way up high
3. There's a land that I heard of once in a lullaby

Then I would give myself something to do in each of the lines. Whether its an action of the lack of action, it tells a story.

1. Somewhere over the rainbow
 - a. Notice the rainbow.
2. Way up high
 - a. Gesture to it – see it as if it were there
3. There's a land that I heard of once in a lullaby
 - a. Pull back into myself – reminisce about my childhood

Rinse and Repeat for every section of the audition song. Notice that the beats can happen in the middle of a line. They can also be an entire line. There is no *wrong* way of doing it – you just need to commit to your story. However, do not involve the table in your audition. Don't get up close to the table. If your audition actions involve you picturing a person, do not make it a person

at the table. It is a very uncomfortable situation. Always look right above the head of the person sitting at the center. Stare at the wall. Picture your scene partner is there (a great skill in cold reads when someone at the table is reading with you).

The joys with modern technology mean that you can Frankenstein different parts of the song together. If you like the first verse and want that to lead to the bridge and chorus, you can do that easily. Directors will not care (unless it is Sondheim... do NOT mess with Sondheim, Trust me.)

One final note is to be confident. The auditioners don't want you to fail. We are rooting for you every time. Also, bad auditions happen. It does not mean you are a bad performer. It does not mean you won't get cast. Oftentimes, the commitment to an audition song and read is more important than a voice crack or lyric mishap. Be confident and keep going. That level of resilience is what directors talk about after you leave the room.

Conclusion

Telling a story in your audition is so important. Break apart your song and find the story in between the lines. Give yourself something to do, especially if you get nervous. There is no shame in cutting apart and reshaping a song if it works well. You need to find what works for you and the story you want to tell. Finding the right song can feel difficult, but some simple research about the roles you want, style of the show you are auditioning for, and overuse songs can help you find the exact song that works for you. Follow the audition guidelines, be kind, remain confident, and remember that you are unique. Do not try to dull your own sparkle. Directors cast you for you – not because they think you can change.