

Literature Review 3

Musical Theatre Month: Jill Green's (CDG) essential audition advice and Top tips for a successful stage career from David McGranaghan

Both these articles were published on Spotlight over the last few weeks. I felt they were both of value to my Inquiry and due to the similarity of some of the content I thought I would review them together. The above articles have been written by Influential people in the industry, one being a casting director (Jill Green) who has cast the likes of Jersey boys, West Side Story and Rock of Ages to name a few. The other being a successful performer (David McGranaghan) who has worked in a variety of shows from The Royal Shakespeare company to playing Nick Massi in Jersey Boys (another factor linking the two) therefore I feel the substance of these pieces very reliable and full of essential information.

I will start with reviewing Jill Green's wise words. Regarding the context of auditions she says, **"Research and preparation are vital."** I personally couldn't agree more. There's nothing worse than being unprepared and it's not going to help you get towards that next job. Green stresses this and highlights to us that the panel are actually on our side, **"We are not waiting for you to fail, we are wanting to be wowed!"** This is an important thing to remember as so often when auditioning you can be intimidated by a panel which can create more nerves but if you know that they are willing you to do well you may be more relaxed and your performance will be a lot better.

"Take a good solid repertoire" This may seem like an obvious thing for Green to say however I know many friends who have been up the night before an audition learning songs which they can never do justice because they just don't know it well enough. It's important to have a solid say 5 or 6 songs which you can sing rain or shine for any kind of audition. No panel will accept the fact you're unprepared. Green even says, **"The most common excuse is - 'I only found out about the audition yesterday so have not had time to prepare anything'. This always causes comments or sighs from the panel. Always have at least one song you know as your emergency 'called in at the last minute' song."** If you provide the panel with this excuse you may as well have not turned up!

"More and more often I suggest bringing all styles of dance shoes in your audition bag."

This is another tip that comes into being prepared. Sadly we are not all mind readers therefore don't have a clue what the dance routine could entail, hence why you should be ready for any possibility. I have been at many dance calls before where people have not had the right dance shoes on and they have not even had a look in because they failed to be prepared! I myself often carry around everything but the kitchen sink to auditions and as much as you feel though you have your worldly belongings when they ask for point shoes and you have them you're one step closer to that job!

“There are many reasons why you were cut. Maybe your look is not right for the show, your style is not right for the show, your height does not fit with the partnering plans, you may be too similar to another dancer already cast, the track your dance is right for might require an understudy role that you might not be right for. There are so many reasons. It is even possible that you were not the best dancer in the room.”

I like how honest Green is when talking about why you were cut. It is so often you ask yourself endless questions about why it happened? Sometimes you will never know, although its a great thing to learn from. I do this myself and there is one audition that really sticks out for me. It was for a west end show and I got through the first round, we then went on to dance again however I messed up a few of the steps. Then the fateful words of ‘thank you for coming but thats all we need from you today’ came from the direction of the panel. I could hit the nail on the head, I messed up the choreography and from then on I have been determined never to do it again as it may have cost me a job! Sometimes its not as obvious to you what has happened but its always worth while trying to reflect on it so you can learn from the experience and move on.

In conclusion of the piece Green touches upon when you have that job. But even when you have that job you are still continuing to develop your professional practice as at the end of the day that job will only last so long then its on to the next audition, and for that you need to be at the top of your game. Some people think once you get that job you can become complacent and it will all be ok however Green highlights that this is not the case and you must keep working towards that next job!

“If you do get the call to say you’ve been cast, the work is now just beginning. Enjoy that show and be the best you can be in it, be a great company member, learn from everyone around you, keep up class/vocal lessons and see you in the show and then at the next audition...”

David McGranaghan’s article was aimed at giving us some tips on how to become more successful with in the Musical Theatre Industry. Although it was a lot shorter than Greens there is one particular paragraph that is very important to my inquiry.

“Put in the hours. For every year I spend out of college, I see the standard of talent rise. Performing professionally is accessible to more and more people and training gets better every year. There is a lot of talent out there and the only thing to separate you from the rest is hard work. Keep your skills up as they are all muscles and without regular use you will lose your strength, flexibility and versatility. I have let my skills slip in the past and lost work as I was not on it, and no surprise others were. Put in the hours and they will pay you back later.”

I feel passionately about this statement and its content. This is exactly what I want to highlight in my Inquiry. I want to give my audience this message but with the data to back it up.

McGranaghan has yet again highlighted to me the importance of continually developing our professional training after we graduate and how it impacts on our success, he admits himself

that by not keeping his skills up to date he has missed out on jobs which in our industry are sometimes few and far between, therefore can be an imperative mistake one which i'm sure he will not make again! Its one I know many people can make, thats why I am committed to creating an Inquiry which will help those and make our industry professionals more aware of the consequences not training after graduation brings. Also with linking in Greens advise showing them that you cannot become complacent, even when you do get 'that job!'

References

Both articles are available online at ;

Top tips for a successful stage career from David McGranaghan

http://www.spotlight.com/news/archive/2013/03/22/top-tips-for-a-successful-stage-career-from-david-mcgranaghan.aspx?utm_source=6_newsletter_March_2013&utm_medium=email&utm_term=March_newsletter_2013&utm_campaign=Performer_newsletter

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http://www.spotlight.com/news/archive/2013/03/15/musical-theatre-month-jill-greenrsquos-cdg-essential-audition-advice.aspx?utm_source=6_newsletter_March_2013&utm_medium=email&utm_term=March_newsletter_2013&utm_campaign=Performer_newsletter