

This document is intended to be used in conjunction with the Official Rulebook and Evaluation Criteria, and not as a substitute for either. Download the Official Fine Arts Rulebook and the Evaluation Criteria at www.faf.ag.org/rules.cfm.

MUSICAL THEATER

1. PICK THE RIGHT SCENE/SONG FOR YOU OR YOUR GROUP.

Although a song may be an impressive piece of work, don't simply choose a piece because you're a fan of the musical. Think of it this way, if the participant(s) could currently, or eventually, be cast in these same roles, you've probably found a great piece! You also want to pick something that you can connect to on an emotional level, and will give you some kind of character arc or story to tell.

2. AVOID RISQUÉ MATERIAL.

Material that contains the use of language, glorification of violence, and obscene sexual situations/lyrics should be avoided. If there is a "minor" expletive, but the piece is otherwise appropriate, feel free to substitute the word(s). Material does not need to be "Christian" or "spiritual" in nature to be considered appropriate for the festival, but try to gravitate towards "wholesome" material.

3. SHOWCASE YOUR STRENGTHS.

If you have strong dancers, try to find a piece where they can shine! On the flip side, don't pick a piece that includes heavy choreography if you don't have the dance training to back it up. The same goes for vocal & acting ability. If it doesn't necessarily fall within your wheelhouse of strengths, it may not be your song.

4. HAVE SEVERAL COACHES.

Learn your music first with a vocal coach/teacher. Once you're confident in your musicality, then move onto acting & blocking with your director, and dance with a choreographer if applicable. Don't try to learn your song at the same time as blocking/dance. Whatever the needs are for your piece, it's important to have an outside eye to coach & critique.

5. KEEP THE STORYTELLING CLEAN AND CLEAR.

Ask yourself how to most clearly portray the journey of these characters. When blocking/choreographing, make strong choices with your movements that you can justify and tie into the lyrics. Sometimes less is more, but confident is always the way to go.

6. DON'T OVERACT.

Some Musical Theater is exaggerated in nature, but every choice should be grounded in reality. If your piece takes place in a "fantasy" world, reality may be slightly skewed, but it should never come across as false. Less movement and theatrics is usually better.

7. TREAT IT LIKE AN ACTING PIECE.

Your vocal and dance technique may be flawless, but if you don't know why your character is singing at that exact moment, it will seem contrived. Analyze each line, and justify your delivery and blocking with the desires/motivation of the characters at that moment, just as you would do with a monologue.

8. REMEMBER TO RELAX.

In other words, breathe. . . When we get nervous, we can experience several physical effects including dry mouth, too much mucus, or "cloudiness" which can cause you to forget lines, lyrics, and choreography. So take some deep breaths through your nose, a gigantic swig of water, and know that you are ready to share a beautiful story with your evaluators and audience.

9. PRACTICE AND TRAIN.

Practice, practice, practice your piece! Don't trust ability alone to get you through a presentation. If you are under-rehearsed, it will show. And if you are lacking training in a certain area, take classes to sharpen your skills. Enroll in a drama class at your school. Take classes with a vocal teacher! It should also be noted that if you desire to be in Musical Theater as a career, you MUST know how to dance. There are indeed shows that do not require the athleticism of a professional ballet dancer, however dance helps aide in spatial awareness, movement qualities and faster motor skills for learning lines and lyrics to songs.

10. VISIT OTHER RELATED TOP 10 TIPS.

Because Musical Theater combines several aspects of performance, we suggest that you also refer to the relevant tips under the Vocal Solo/Ensemble, Drama, and Dance categories.