

Tips and Tools for Applying to Fine Arts Programs  
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### Getting Ready to Apply

- If you have a quirky email address (wassupbro23@gmail.com, superfunmusicgirl@hotmail.com), consider creating an email address that contains your name in a clear format (johnsmith1999@gmail.com).
- If you have a quirky message on your voicemail, consider creating a message that clearly identifies you by name and politely asks people to leave a message.
- Think about how your social media presence (FB, Instagram, etc.) reflects you. If a program is interested in you, they will likely search you on social media.

### The Application Process

- Deadlines: Meet them! Better yet, beat them!
- Carefully review the school's website for audition and application requirements. Much of the information that you'll need for Pepperdine, for example, is already listed on our website:  
<http://seaver.pepperdine.edu/finearts/undergraduate/theatre/apply/>.
- Follow the individual instructions for each school; don't assume that each college wants the same information even if the programs are similar.
- Pay attention to the order in which information is requested.
- Don't forget to list all of your extracurricular activities, Fine Arts and otherwise.

### The Campus Visit/Interview/Portfolio Review

- If you are invited or required to audition, interview, or share your portfolio in person, research the program and the faculty before you arrive on campus. Know what kinds of plays, musicals, recitals, exhibits, etc. they do.
- Dress appropriately for your audition/interview. Even if your art is cutting-edge, you can still dress up for the interview or audition. Err on the side of modesty.
- If you are interviewing for a program in technical theatre or production and design, create a portfolio that is a reflection of who you are; use it to show what you're passionate about and what experiences you've had so far. Be sure to save photos of projects you work on: scenery, props, costumes, scenic painting, etc., as well as related creative work like sculptures, collages, drawings, or videos.
- If you are interviewing for a visual arts program, make sure the images in your portfolio have been printed or uploaded with the highest resolution possible. Your portfolio needs to demonstrate diversity in form and content. Multiple graphite drawings of your favorite movie stars or animals copied from magazines

or photos do not show a lot of diversity in subject, form or content, nor do quick sketchbook drawings. Paintings, photos, drawings, or ceramics with representational or emotive forms do.

- Be ready with at least 2 questions about THEIR program. Specificity will prove that you've done your homework and that you're genuinely interested in THEM. No one wants to get the impression that they are your "safety" school.
- Be prepared to answer the "why this school?" question with specifics about THEIR program, and don't say "the location, obviously."

### The Live Audition (Music and Theatre)

- The audition begins the moment you arrive on campus, and it ends when you leave campus.
- Pay attention to time limits; these will be different for each school.
- Engage the whole body in the audition; don't perform from the neck up.
- Treat other students who are auditioning with respect; they might end up being your classmates for the next four years.
- Treat student workers at the auditions with respect. The faculty value first impressions and input from their student workers.
- Monologue Preparation (Theatre)
  - Prepare the type of monologues that the school has requested. "1 classical, 1 contemporary" is different than "1 comic, 1 dramatic."
  - You might want to research the "do not" lists on the internet for audition material to avoid.
  - As a general rule, avoid "monologue books" for your monologue material.
  - Read the entire play from which your monologue is taken. You should be able to talk to the audition panel about why you made a particular choice for that character at that point in the play.
  - Don't select a monologue laden with profanity or sexual themes just because you think it will shock us or show us that you're mature.
  - Choose pieces/characters that are close to you, for which you feel something, that speak to your own humanity.
  - Some schools will want you to slate, but others won't require that. If possible, ask someone outside the room how you're expected to introduce yourself and your pieces. Or better yet, ask this question via email or phone before you arrive on campus.
  - Avoid using the members of the audition panel as your scene partners. Select a focal point above their heads, and visualize your scene partner there. Face front.
  - Don't bring props; choose pieces that are prop-free.

- Don't throw furniture in the audition. (It happens, and it's frightening.)
- Music Preparation
  - If an accompanist is provided, treat that person with courtesy and thank her/him afterward. She/he may very well be one of the faculty members evaluating you for the program.
  - Have your sheet music hole-punched and neatly placed in a folder for the accompanist-- no loose sheets of music.
  - Be sure you sing what you do well. Don't choose a song that stretches you beyond your capabilities at your age. We would rather hear a simpler song done superbly.
  - Sing with your eyes open, in character.
  - If you are performing a piece in a language other than English, know what the words mean and convey the emotion of the piece.
- Assume that the faculty WILL know the play or opera/score/oratorio from which your pieces originate. There is no need to summarize the plot of the play or opera before you begin.
- Parents should not enter the audition room.

#### The Recorded Audition (Music and Theatre)

- Pay attention to digital details! Choose file names that are clear and concise.
- Make sure that you upload the correct audition for the correct school. Don't say, "Hi, Chapman!" when you're uploading the video to Pepperdine.
- Dress appropriately. Just because this audition is recorded does not mean that gym shorts and a tank top are acceptable.
- Select your filming location carefully. If you are filming in your bedroom or in your house, think about an area that has a neutral backdrop. You want the viewer to focus on you, not the poster or family photographs behind you.
- Check the audio levels before you submit the video.
- The camera doesn't need to zoom in and out.
- Allow the camera to capture your whole body, not just your face. Engage your whole body in the performance.

**REMEMBER TO BREATHE!**