

Auditioning and Summer Programs

Objectives: By the end of the session students should be able to..

- Pick summer programs to apply to based on their personal goals
- Prepare musical excerpts for an audition that showcase the full-range of their skills

Materials

- Guided notes sheet (btnworkshop.com)
- Slideshow (btnworkshop.com) and projector
- Student electronic devices
- Writing utensils

Welcome to the session and duet (15 min)

- Play
- Introduce co-presenters
- Check students' homework from last session (Transcription)
- Why are summer programs important?
 - Get a new perspective on your playing
 - Meet new students
 - See professionals play
- **Activity: Have students write down on their guided notes sheet what they are hoping to get out of a summer program**

Summer Programs (25 min)

- Hybrid (combos and big bands)
 - Summer camp experience
 - Interlochen
 - Litchfield
 - New York City
 - Summer Jazz Academy (JALC)
 - Jazz House Kids
 - Fordham
 - Brevard
- Big band
 - Next Generation Jazz Orchestra
 - National Youth Orchestra for Jazz
- Combos
 - Brubeck Jazz Summit
 - Vail Jazz Workshop
 - Next Generation in Women Jazz Combo
- Pause for Q&A
- There are already some notes about each program on the slides, but try to add more information based on personal experience or students' experiences
- **Activity: Have students circle 1-2 programs that they're interested in on their guided notes sheet. Give them (5-6 min) to look up more about those programs on their devices**

Audition example (10 min)

- Show the NYO audition requirements as an example
- **Activity: Have students raise their hand to share what they think judges will be looking for in each audition requirement**
 - **Don't be picky about student answers, the important part is that they are thinking about the audition requirements**
 - **When students are finished, show the slide with all the "answers" and go over it briefly**

Musical Preparation: what to do for each kind of requirement (25 min)

- **Activity: Starter questions**
 - Ask students what they would be looking for if they were evaluating a student playing their instrument
 - Think/write on notes sheet (2 min)
 - Pair (3 min): Share with a partner
 - Share (2 min): Have partners share what their partner said
 - Do the same for the question, "what skills do you have that you'd like to highlight in your audition"
- Prepared excerpts (sheet music)
 - Focus on the specifics of the sheet music (style, tempo, articulations, dynamics, rhythms)
- Prepared Tunes (chosen from list)
 - Play to your strengths. Don't choose a song that you struggle to play over or that's in a difficult key for your instrument
 - Have the song memorized
 - Don't play the melody straight from the lead sheet (if applicable). Have an interpretation of the melody that still works for the lyrics
 - **Activity: Go back to the NYO auditions slide and ask students which optional improvisation piece they would choose**
 - Think (1 min)
 - Pair (2 min): Share answers with a partner
- Transcription
 - Play to your strengths. Pick a transcription with a reasonable level of difficulty that shows good technique on your instrument
 - Make sure that your transcription is accurate
 - Capture the essence of what you're playing. It's not just the notes, it's the feel and environment of the song
- Play anything
 - What skills do you have that you haven't shown in other parts of your audition?
 - What kind of program is it?
 - Example: For big band showing more of your comping instead of soloing would be best
 - Do you have doubles?
 - Programs love if you can play doubles; it gives them more options

Non-Musical Preparation (10 min)

- Ask for outside opinions
 - Teacher, yourself, your peers.
- Plan whether you want to have a live band, backing track, or acapella
 - For live bands, you need to plan ahead and play
- Don't worry about the small things, worry about the big picture of YOUR sound
- Personal Demeanor (humble confidence)

- Show that you are confident in your playing and your audition pieces without seeming arrogant
- Interview questions
 - Show that your passionate about music and improving
 - Answer with specifics about yourself and the program
- Finances
 - Most programs have scholarships opportunities when you ask
 - Provide any scholarship options that you know of locally to help students pay to go to programs

Closing (jump to homework if time is tight)

- There a lot of summer programs to choose from so decide based on what you want to get out of it
- Preparation is key
- Make sure to showcase *everything* that you can do well on your instrument
- Homework for next session: Get started working on your audition

Optional Activity: Audition planning

- Have students choose on the programs they circled and look-up and start creating an audition plan following the steps on the slide
- Both presenters should be walking around the room helping students with this