



How to Show Your Best in Auditions



Give your best to your **preparation**.

Practice what you need to practice and *how* you need to practice. Be patiently persistent and persistently patient! Be creative and drill, drill, drill ... *Wait, both those things at the same time?* Yes! Goof around, haha, in deliberate, pinpointed ways.

Let the bow lead the show. Play with your finest tone, and you'll play with your finest intonation as well. *Speak* with the bow, from graceful contact to desired combination of bow placement, weight, and speed. Remember that differences of style boil down to differences of **articulation**.

Foster **facility**: ease of action. This is the essence of technique for all musical instruments. Don't tense up, physically or mentally. *Breathe*. Play with your finest relaxed bow hold, left hand position, and posture. Do most of your practicing standing, with mirror and metronome handy to foster facility and steadiness. Be mentally engaged but physically at ease. Play all music, especially rapid passages, with a broad sense of pulse.

Easy does it.

Use your skills, experience and creativity to make the tough stuff easy. Some music is so darned difficult, it will never be in the category of "easy-peasy" for mere mortals! But always give thought to what will make playing the music **easier**. Will tensing up, rushing, tightening the hand on tricky shifts, fast passages or weird note sequences make them any easier? NEWP!

"**Let**" is a magic word - **Let** there be release of energy from finger to finger and at every shift. **Let** the bow hair make contact with the string at the initiative of articulation. **Let** rapid passages be felt in groups of notes instead of one note after the other. **Let** your sense of musical pulse be broad and flowing.

And speaking of flowing ...

Let it **ALL** be about flow.

Guess what Item #1 is on All-State Orchestra audition evaluation forms? Note accuracy? Intonation? Rhythm? Tempo? Nope, nope, nope, and nope! All those factors are on there, of course, but the first thing audition judges are directed to listen for is **Fluidity**. Isn't that cool?

Let it **flow**! Sure, we want it to be in tune and in time, but play it with flow, and it'll truly be your best. Flow shows direction - *musical line* - and awareness of the big picture. Once your fingers know the material, it is more important to focus on flow than on individual notes.

Don't just practice the audition material: practice the **audition**.

Do tons of spot work and isolated drill, but make sure to practice playing through the entire material as well. Record yourself, listen and evaluate. Play for family and friends. It may be the last thing in the world you feel like doing, but it will really make a difference in preparing for the audition. Don't simply prepare the audition material. Prepare your **frame of mind**, and you will truly show your best!