



## WILLY WONKA AUDITION PACKET

Welcome to the Willy Wonka audition workshop!

We're so glad that you're interested in being in our popular Elefante Spring Musical!

Some of you may already be very familiar with the audition process. Some of you might be experiencing your first audition. Either way, we're here to help you prepare.

On the following pages you'll find everything that you need to know about auditioning for this great show, such as:

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## Vocal Audition Tips

1) A musical theater vocal audition is NOT “American Idol”. This is an audition, not a “sing-off”. It’s all about storytelling. The directors aren’t so much listening to voices as looking for who can tell a story with their voice, face, and body.

2) The directors have a problem. They need to put together a big puzzle and find just the right pieces to put it together best. They are not there to “judge” you – they are really, really hoping that you’ll be the right fit for one of the puzzle pieces. Your job is to help the directors solve their problem, so there’s no need for you to be nervous!

3) If you’re nervous anyway, “hide” behind the character. Remember that it’s not “you” up there; it’s your character. Tell your character’s story the entire time when you audition. Get involved in telling the story and don’t spend time thinking about how your voice sounds when you sing. Never “break character”, no matter what happens. Make a strong, active choice for your character, and play it fully. We can't tell anything about your character if you don't show us an active personality.

4) Regardless of how your song sounds, if your eyes, face, and body don’t tell the story of the song, the audience isn’t going to understand the story. Our brains process pictures before they process words, so if your hands are busy doing something unrelated to the song (for instance: tugging at the bottom of your shirt), the audience is going to think your song is about something else (a shirt), no matter what words you’re singing!

5) Use clear diction. We need to understand every word that you sing. Stand up tall and **sing loudly** enough to be heard from way across the room, but don’t scream.

6) When you are singing, ***you shouldn’t look at anyone in the room -- especially not the director***. You should look past the director at a spot on the wall that is at your eye level. Pretend that spot is a close friend to whom you are telling your story. “The eyes are the window to the soul.” Make sure your eyes are expressing your character's thoughts and not looking around the room or glazing over with a vacant expression.

7) You do not ***have to*** memorize the song selection – we will have the words up on a music stand if you absolutely need them – but ***it will be GREATLY to your advantage if you DO memorize the words*** and can focus on telling the story. Even if you don’t have the song memorized, don’t spend your time staring at the words. Instead, only look at the words if/when you forget them.

8) If you are very young and are not really reading yet – don’t worry! We’ll work with you and “feed” you the words as you go along, but do try to see how much you can memorize at home BEFORE the audition!



## Dance Audition Hints

The choreographer (the person who invents the dance steps for a show) will teach you a small routine that you will learn in groups.

Do your best with the dance steps, but ultimately choreographers are most interested in who looks energized and excited while moving in time with the music.

Don't panic if you miss some steps, put your feet in the wrong place, or forget what to do with your hands. Even very polished dancers miss steps sometimes. No one expects you to be perfect. However, when you miss something, it is important that you keep smiling and keep going (again -- staying in character is vital in an audition)! Don't comment on your dance or point out your mistake by breaking character to apologize for it in the middle of your audition. A big smile and an air of confidence can hide a multitude of mistakes. Even if you do the steps perfectly, if you are not expressive, or if you look like you're really concentrating hard instead of portraying the mood of the character, the role might go to someone with slightly less dancing ability but who dances as a believable character.

As a general note, make sure that you are standing in a place where you can see and be seen when the choreographer is teaching the steps. Frequently, people uncomfortable with dance try to hide in the back. It doesn't work. The point is not to hide, but to show what you can do!

## "Callbacks"

Based on the auditions, we may call certain students back into the audition room or for a separate appointment to sing or read other materials that we will teach them at the time. You will receive an email if you are needed for a separate appointment, which will be on Wednesday, January 23rd. If you are not called back into the room or called for a separate appointment, that doesn't necessarily mean that you aren't being considered for a given role; it just means that we've seen all that we need to see to make our decision.

The directors may give you advice about how to sing a certain phrase, or how to read a scene. If that happens, *please* try to incorporate the suggestions into your performance. Don't do the same thing that you did before; change your performance to incorporate the directors' instructions. Everyone will notice how well you take direction, and that has a huge impact on whether or not a person gets cast.



## Casting

As mentioned on p.2, casting a show is like assembling a large jigsaw puzzle. If you are not cast in the show, that DOES NOT mean that your audition performance was not of a good quality. It simply means that there wasn't a good fit for you in this particular show. The "fit" decision usually has little to do with anything under your control. We may have had too many singers with low voices, too many tall actors, too many short actors -- you get the picture!

*Please also note that most often decisions not to cast a student are made based on the student's ability to listen, follow directions, perform with energy, and similar factors. Sometimes students, particularly the youngest ones, are not yet ready to apply the focus, patience, liveliness, and positive attitude that rehearsing a musical demands of performers.*

*Remember that the creative team is looking at your behavior for the entire audition workshop and audition process. ALWAYS avoid doing things like talking when the adults are talking or behaving in a disruptive or disrespectful manner. ALWAYS be supportive of your fellow performer. We have a zero-tolerance policy for meanness.*

All auditioning students will be notified after the callback date as to whether or not they have been cast in the show.

## Importance of Ensemble

We selected WILLY WONKA Jr. because there is a lot for the ENSEMBLE to do. Some actors cast in named roles may also double as ENSEMBLE. There are solos and acting "bits" that we will cast from the ENSEMBLE as we enter the rehearsal process.

Similarly, if you auditioned hoping to be given a certain role and you are cast with a different role, that means that the directors needed you most in the role in which you were cast. Again, remember that the ENSEMBLE is considered a role. Ask any student who has ever been in our ENSEMBLE -- they've had a BLAST, learned a lot, and were a big part of the show!

*If you audition for the show, it is understood that you are committed to being on the team and will accept whatever role you are given. Please honor that commitment.*



## Conflicts

Please review the rehearsal and performance dates on the calendar below and *email Karen@elefantemusic.com prior to the audition with a list of all conflicts*. We don't have a "spring break" at Elefante because all the schools in the area break at different times, BUT, we allow one spring break "out" per student. Please let us know which date is your spring break "out" date, if you are taking one. Beyond that we really need to disallow rehearsal conflicts.

Obviously, *if you can't make it to the dress rehearsals or performances you shouldn't audition for the show* (but you're welcome to take the audition workshop just for the experience). If you do find that you have too many conflicts to do the show, please consider taking one of our many terrific spring semester classes, including the fantastic "Wonka Extravaganza!" class, which is non-auditioned!

## Willy Wonka Calendar

<b>Jan</b>	<b>9* (wkshp), 16* (auds), 23* (callbacks), 30</b>
<b>Feb</b>	<b>6, 13, 20, 27</b>
<b>March</b>	<b>6, 13, 20, 27</b>
<b>April</b>	<b>3, 10, 17, 24</b>
<b>May</b>	<b>1, 8, 15, 22, (23), 29, (30)</b>
<b>June</b>	<b>5, 11 (Tues 5:00-8:00), 12 (Wed. 5:00-8:00), 13 (Thurs. 5:00-8:00)</b>
	<b>(performances Fri. June 14, 7:30 and Sat. June 15, 3:00)</b>

*\*workshop, audition, and callbacks 6:45-8:45 at Elefante*  
 Rehearsals Wednesday between 1/30/19 and 6/5/19 from 5:45-7:45 at Elefante  
**Reserving Thursday, May 23rd and Thursday, May 30 from 5:45-7:45 as possible additional rehearsal in case of snow days or similar issues**  
 1st tech: Tues. June 11, 5:00-8:00 at theater  
 2nd tech/dress: Wed. June 12, 5:00-8:00 at theater  
 Final dress: Thurs. June 13, 5:00-8:00 at theater  
 1st perf: Fri. June 14, 7:30 at theater  
 2nd perf: Sat. June 15, 3:00 at theater

## Class Tuition

If your student is cast in Willy Wonka, class tuition is \$550. That tuition includes costumes, tickets to the show, and all rehearsals over the 6-month period listed above.

Enjoy the audition process -- and BREAK A LEG!