BACHELOR OF FINE ARTS (Music Theatre)

Audition Technique for Songs

CREATING A GREAT 90-SECOND CUT OF YOUR SONG

Cutting the Text

- Before you do anything, ensure you know the entire plot of the show that your song is from, who sings it, and where it comes in the show

- Then start by reading the text of the entire song through, out loud (things always sound different in your head than when you speak them)

- Identify the arc of the song (i.e. the journey for the character - where are they intellectually, physically, emotionally, at the beginning of the song vs where are they when they’re finished? Is there a big shift in their thought process somewhere through the song? It’s important to know this before you make any cuts that render the song pointless/illogical

- See if there are obvious things to cut first (e.g. repeated lyrics)

- Ensure the cut makes textual sense. Don’t make any cuts that jump halfway through one sentence to the middle of another!

- Speak the entire text of the song through again once you’ve cut it: if it sounds weird, or illogical, or has an enormous jump in intensity/thought process that seems too big, then see if there are better cuts that you can make.

Cutting the Music

- Look to see if there are repeated musical ideas/melodies. Often you’ll find that repeated lyrics you might be thinking of cutting will also be repeating the same music, so this can be easy.

- See if the lyrical cut you’ve made works in a musical context. Ensure the cuts make musical sense. Things to consider here include: *time signatures *key signatures *tempo markings *phrasing *accompaniment

OTHER TIPS:

- Ensure there is a journey for the character through the song (i.e don’t start 32 bars before the end or stop halfway through the song)

- Mark all cuts clearly and cross out parts you will not be singing

- If in doubt, run through your cuts with a competent musician who can guide you.
HOW TO MARK YOUR CUTS

It’s really important that all cuts are marked clearly for the accompanist.

You should start by using a black marker to cross out any music that you don’t want played:

NB: If you have cut a full page of music, then you can just leave the whole page out.

To clearly show where the cut begins and finishes, add brackets:
Here’s the how the full cut looks (in this song, from page 149 to page 179 - a big cut)

CUTTING YOUR OWN MUSIC: OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Make sure your music is clear and clean. If it’s a photocopy of a photocopy of a photocopy, you might need to find a better version.

- That also means there shouldn’t be any missing parts of the score that have been cut off during photocopying (bass lines in the accompaniment, for example, or the clef-signs on the left hand side of the page).

- And ensure you have a run through with a good accompanist before your audition - you don’t want any nasty surprises by what you hear when you walk into the room, particularly when it can be avoided with good preparation.