

CAMBRIDGE
SCHOOL OF
VISUAL &
PERFORMING
ARTS

What we look
for in an audition

PREPARING FOR YOUR AUDITION

When applying to performing arts programmes it is very important to fully understand not only the audition requirements, but also the performance skills the audition panel hopes to see. It is of course necessary to submit the requested audition pieces for your area of performing arts. It is also important to show your strengths as a performer; to communicate your understanding as well as show your level of technical ability.

At CSVPA we want students who demonstrate a real passion, motivation and enthusiasm for the performing arts as well as clear understanding of the material they've chosen to show. The following guidelines will discuss what we are looking for and help you better prepare for your audition. Good luck!



ACTING

- Always read the audition requirements and make sure you prepare and deliver the correct number of pieces.
- When choosing your pieces make sure they are age appropriate.
- Pick something that means something to you, which speaks to you. The panel will be assessing your scene selection and the suitability for you.
- Keep it simple, avoid “wandering feet”. Shuffling around the stage for no character-related reason will make you look nervous and unfocused.
- Select a scene from something that you know well and make sure you understand the whole play. This will help you to deliver the piece better and you will know what you are talking about.
- Wear appropriate clothing, something that gives you a good line (like a simple black t-shirt and trousers)
- If you are video recording your audition, film so that your whole body can be seen. Assessing how you physically handle the text is also very important.
- Make sure the video quality of your audition is perfect. You need to be able to be seen and heard clearly.
- Ask someone to watch your audition pieces. Make sure they can understand what you are saying and the story you’re telling
- Practice, practice, practice!

WHAT **NOT** TO DO IN AN ACTING AUDITION

- Don’t just learn the scene, understand the whole play. Stay in context for your performance. If you interpret the character outside of the original context, the panel may think you haven’t taken the time to properly understand the character
- No need for movies – keep it simple
- No costumes
- Don’t play madness or drunks. They will want to see who you genuinely are as an actor
- No subtitles on video auditions
- No videos of you in a drama production – if there are more than two people on stage, it gets very difficult to figure out who we’re meant to watch

CLASSICAL & CONTEMPORARY ACTING AUDITION REQUIREMENTS

Please read the audition requirements carefully and prepare the following auditions:

- 2 x monologues - 1 x classical - 1 x contemporary
- Both approximately 2 minutes long
- Delivered from memory
- Spoken and delivered in English

CLASSICAL EXAMPLES

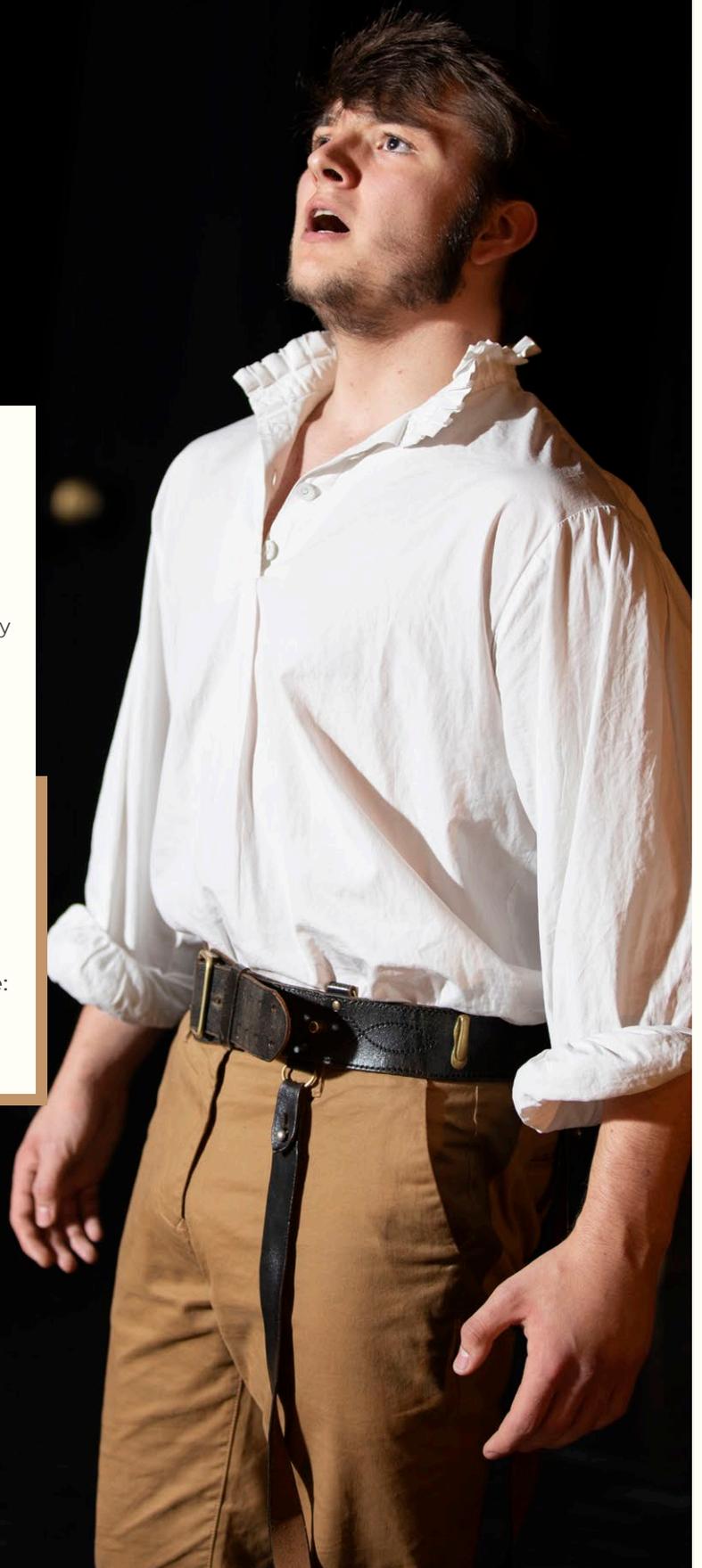
Classical playwrights include:

Shakespeare; an Elizabethan/Jacobean playwright like Jonson, Marlowe, or Webster

CONTEMPORARY EXAMPLES

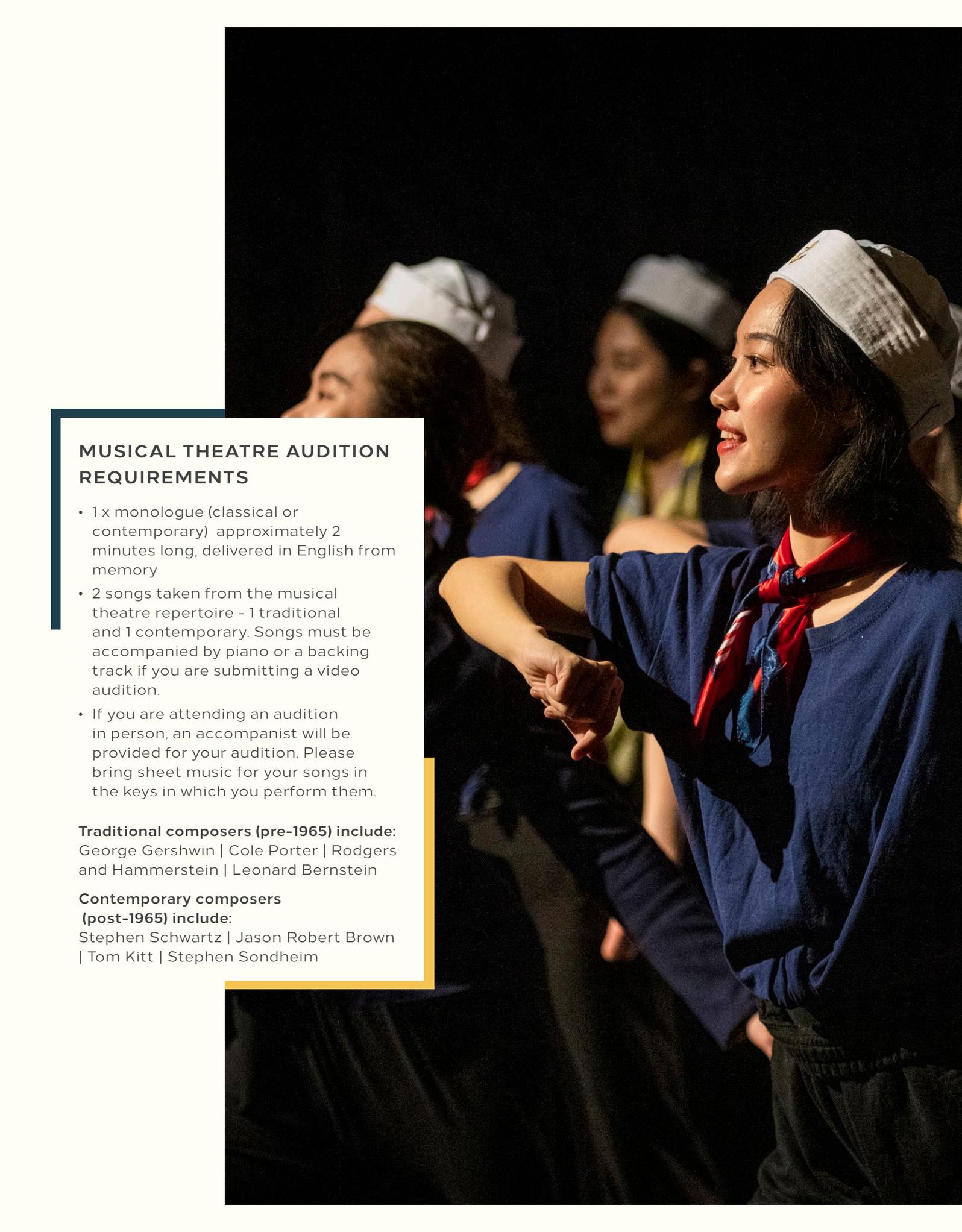
Contemporary writers from 1960 onwards include:

Caryl Churchill | David Hare | David Mamet | Martin Crimp | Sue Arnold | Clare McIntyre



MUSICAL THEATRE

- Musical Theatre is a multi-disciplinary performance art, so you have to think about preparing several elements for the audition. Always read the audition requirements and make sure you prepare and deliver the correct number of pieces
- Follow the same advice for choosing monologues as in the Acting section. Don't make the mistake of thinking that the audition panel won't be expecting high level of skill in your monologue delivery just because you have to sing as well
- You should have at least three different songs that you can sing either in their entirety, or that you can cut into 1 or 2-minute versions
- One song in your repertoire should be written before 1965. The other two songs should be contrasting songs from contemporary repertoire
- Avoid songs that are "REALLY" famous. Songs like Defying Gravity, Everything's Coming Up Roses, Back to Before and Memory are iconic musical theatre songs, and the audition panel might be immediately sceptical about your choice. And if you choose a song like that, they will expect it to be performed flawlessly
- Pick songs that you feel good about singing. Don't ever perform a song for an audition that you think sounds bad. There are literally thousands of songs in musical theatre...if one isn't working, find another. Show off your strengths as a singer.
- This isn't a concert. You will be expected to act the song. This means that you have to understand the context of the song...what is happening with the character in the moment that they are singing? Who are they talking to? What are they trying to accomplish? Emotionally, do they finish the song in the same place as when they started it? Are they making any discoveries or decisions during the song?
- Be very clear about the journey of the song. Some songs are written so that the music changes with the thought of the character. Be sure that your acting is motivating the change in music, and not the other way around.
- Most songs need genuine responses. Which words would you emphasise if you were speaking the lyrics? (Always a good idea to try the song as a monologue)



MUSICAL THEATRE AUDITION REQUIREMENTS

- 1 x monologue (classical or contemporary) approximately 2 minutes long, delivered in English from memory
- 2 songs taken from the musical theatre repertoire - 1 traditional and 1 contemporary. Songs must be accompanied by piano or a backing track if you are submitting a video audition.
- If you are attending an audition in person, an accompanist will be provided for your audition. Please bring sheet music for your songs in the keys in which you perform them.

Traditional composers (pre-1965) include:
George Gershwin | Cole Porter | Rodgers and Hammerstein | Leonard Bernstein

Contemporary composers (post-1965) include:
Stephen Schwartz | Jason Robert Brown | Tom Kitt | Stephen Sondheim



MUSIC

- Read the audition requirements carefully and send in the right number of pieces
- Practise, practise, practise! So many students do not know their pieces well enough by the time they audition. This needs to accurately represent the best you have to offer. Don't try to learn a new piece last minute.
- When sending in a video audition make sure the video quality is good and clear. If you are playing the piano, please make sure the keyboard of the piano is visible in the camera shot. If you are singing, your full body will need to be visible because the panel will want to see your full posture and how you're breathing/using your breath
- If you are sending in a video from a formal performance or recital then make sure the video recording is good and clear.
- Read about and have an understanding of the composer as well as the period the piece was written in. It will help you to understand the style of the piece and how to perform it. You should perform a Baroque piece very differently from a Romantic piece...or a 60s pop song differently from something by a more contemporary performer
- Spend the time thinking about the musical communication of the piece as well as the technical preparation.

MUSICAL AUDITION REQUIREMENTS

- Perform any two pieces which are contrasting in style
- For a pianist, this may be a piece by Bach and a piece by Liszt
- For a pop singer, this may be a song by Rihanna and a song by Whitney Houston
- Choose material that shows off your strengths
- Make sure you're ready to give your best performance by the time you record
- Composers and Producers submit two original pieces or covers that best represent your interests and work





INTERVIEWS

It is important to demonstrate that you are passionate about a career in the performing arts. If you are attending an in-person or online interview you will be asked why you want to train at CSVPA. Be sure to have done some research about the program you're applying to, so you can give a specific answer

Why do you want to study Acting/Musical Theatre/Music? What do you want to do in life? What are your ambitions? What piece or person has inspired you the most and why? Who do you aspire to be like? What experience have you had, either at school or outside of school that you think would be helpful in your future studies?

CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL OF VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

Providing pathways in Drama, Music, Fashion and Art & Design, Cambridge School of Visual & Performing Arts continues to develop the talents of many aspiring performers and artists.

Our school offers a unique and highly personalised method of learning in an inspiring and intensely creative environment designed to encourage and nurture these talents.

You will not only be actively supported through a hands-on approach and extensive contact time with lecturers, but will also be given the space and time to discover and develop your own personal 'voice' as a creative artist. Our goal is to provide the most fertile ground possible for you to grow and flourish.



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