

Wicked - For Performers

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Wicked Auditions

Question:

Dear Stephen, do you hold auditions for your shows on Broadway, or do you select the actors personally, if you do hold auditions, how can people learn of them.

Answer from Michael Cole:

Dear Brian: Stephen does not hold personal auditions - this process is handled by Bernard Telsey Casting in New York City. Stephen will, on occasion, recommend somebody to be seen for a particular role, but they must then audition for the casting directors and the rest of the creative team. The best way to learn of auditions is to contact your agent and let him or her know you are interested, or by watching the trade papers for audition notices (Backstage Magazine is a good source). Best, Michael

Answer from Carol de Giere:

Hi Brian, Here's a few links that may help.

<http://www.musicalschwartz.com/wicked-auditions.htm>

<http://www.musicalsingers.com/auditioning/auditions.htm>

Wicked audition advice needed

Question:

Hello Mr Schwartz, What would you recommend as a good audition song for the Role of Galinda in Wicked? I have been suggested for casting by my agent for London and would like some first hand advice for a suitable song, i have many already in my file but would love to hear your opinion. Indeed i may not even get called for audition as i am not anything like a Galinda (im 5'6", dark hair, big belt to f#, so i assumed i would be up for ensemble, possible cover Elphaba having seen NY production with the OBC so i was a little shocked) but all the same it would be nice to be prepared. Any suggestions? With kindest Regards, Abbey

Answer from Carol de Giere:

Dear Abbey,

Since Stephen is involved in final casting of the show for the stars, I'm guessing this is not a question he would feel comfortable answering. But I'll give you some background information that might help. One thing is that everybody wears wigs so your hair color doesn't matter... If you read the audition tips on my other website <http://www.musicalsingers.com/auditioning/auditions.htm>

(from Joe Mantello, Stephen Schwartz, and others) you will see it's important to be yourself. Therefore I'd say find songs that are really you and show you off. Good luck.

Singing Popular in Audition

Question from B'way soprano:

Hello Stephen-First off let me just say that I think Wicked is phenomenal. I saw it twice in San Francisco and was amazed at the beautiful harmonies and extremely talented lead actresses. I am a senior in High School, and am now starting to audition for professional regional companies and soon Broadway (I just

turned 18). I am thinking of doing "Popular" for my "uptempo" piece at my auditions. However, I am not sure if I can cut it too 32 bars, and have it still make sense and keep the ending belt? Have any suggestions? I've been told it's a very good piece for me, and would really like to use it for audition pieces (maybe I'll even show it to you someday in an audition? Any suggestions on how to cut it down? Thanks you for being such a wonderful inspiration!

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

Dear B'way soprano: Here's the best I could come up with: Sing the first verse after the intro ("Popular, you're gonna be popular" thru "everything that really counts to be ..."), then cut to the last verse ("Popular -- it's all about popular"), and when you get to the end of that verse ("very very popular like me") cut to the very ending of the song ("La la la la, you'll be popular, just not quite as popular as me".) That's basically 32 bars, makes coherent sense, is actable, and has the last big belt note. Good luck; hope it lands you some roles. Sincerely, Stephen Schwartz

Audition

Question:

Hi Mr. Schwartz, I met you briefly when you came to see the Chicago cast of Wicked, and we talked briefly about my going to NYU for musical theatre. My question to you is this: I very much want to audition for the role of Boq, and I know that there are some auditors who specifically don't want to hear songs from the show, but in your personal opinion, would it be wise to use a song from the show, especially in this case? Thank you very much.-Drake

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

Dear Drake: Actually, by the time I get to WICKED callbacks (when we are down to final selections), we generally hear ONLY the songs from the show. However, since what Boq sings is so "bitsy-piecy", you probably should have something else appropriate for that kind of character to sing as well. Hope this is helpful and good luck, sincerely, Stephen Schwartz

Audition Songs

Question missing

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

By the time I get to hear people audition for WICKED, we are in callbacks and the actors and actresses sing part of the song or songs they would sing in the show. For the initial audition, however, I would recommend treating it as you would any audition -- listen to the material sung by the character for whom you are auditioning, think about what song is in your repertoire that seems to fit the character and style of music (if there isn't one that seems appropriate, learn one), and be sure you are well-prepared so that your audition jitters don't get the better of you too much. Good luck! Sincerely, Stephen Schwartz

Elphaba Monologue

Question:

Hi Stephen, I am auditioning for a show with Defying Gravity. I am also supposed to perform a monologue but would like it to be from the same show as my song to keep in character. I was wondering if there is a monologue of Elphabas that I can get hold of to perform for the audition? Thank you amazing Stephen!

Answer from Michael Cole:

Elphaba doesn't really have any monologues - most of her dialogue is scene work with other actors. I can't think of anything that would work as a monologue. Additionally, the libretto to the show is

currently unavailable. Sorry I can't be of more help to you. I'm sure you could find a monologue that would be well suited to use before Defying Gravity (that's not actually from the show). Does anybody have any ideas to share? Best, Michael Cole

Answer from Carol de Giere:

I've been asked this a couple of times and I've paged through WICKED the novel to see if there might be something. There's not many long passages of quotes from Elphaba. The longest I've found in a quick look is on p. 113 in my edition of the paperback. It's about Dr. Dillamond's discoveries. There's a really strong statement on p. 356 which is too short but it's marvelous. Just to give a flavor of it.....It's a personal matter, Boq; I want the shoes. My father made them and they're mine now, and Glinda gve them to this girl without my permission."Good luck. You'll probably need to find a monologue from another show in an actor's monologue book or something.

Wicked Songs For Boys

Question:

I was wondering whether there are any versions of the Wicked songs that are singable by boys? Obviously the chorus songs and those sung by male characters need not be changed, and nor do some of Elphaba/Glinda's songs like 'Defying Gravity', but some songs such as 'The Wizard and I', I can't sing, not because of the range, but because of the lyrics, so I was wondering if any versions, particularly of that song, exist where the lyrics are suitable for singing by males? Thanks very much.

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

Thanks for your message and your interest in WICKED. I'm not averse in many instances to songs that were originally sung by female characters being sung by male singers; for instance, Scott Coulter, who frequently does concerts with me, uses parts of "Just Around the Riverbend" from POCAHONTAS in a medley, and I was happy to change the line "Should I marry Kokoum" to be "Always knowing what's to come" so he could do it.

In terms of Elphaba's songs being sung by male singers: I have often sung "For Good" in concert, both as a solo and as a duet with both a female and male other singer, and it has always worked well. I think, as you point out, that this would be pretty true for many of her other songs. The one that I don't really see any way to translate in terms of gender is "I'm Not That Girl", as it would not only require a major lyric rewrite because of the rhyme scheme (the "boy"/"girl" rhymes) but feels pretty feminine to me in its attitude. As for "The Wizard and I", you could change lines like "a girl on whom he can rely" to "a boy" or "a guy", but it seems to me the main problem with singing that song out of context is not so much the gender but the whole reference to being green, etc. But I guess if you set it up correctly for your audience, you could simply switch the couple of specific gender references. And of course "No Good Deed" is so show-specific that, regardless of the sex of the person singing it, I don't think it would make sense out of context. But in terms of gender, the only song that I can't see switching is, as I said, "I'm Not That Girl". Hope this is useful. Sincerely, Stephen Schwartz

Transposing "Defying Gravity"

Question:

Dear Mr. Schwartz,

I am 17 years old and a baritone-tenor. My teacher and I are currently working in "Defying Gravity" and we have a few things to enquire about. The key of Db is fine, but to give it more oomf, I was suggested the idea of transposing it up a tone to Eb. Therefore, the highest note to hit would be a G and I think it

sounds great. Also, the final lyrics: And nobody in all of Oz,/No Wizard that there is or was/Is ever gonna bring me down. Is there any way to still keeping the essence of the verse while taking the context of The Wizard? With your permission I would like to go ahead and transpose the piece myself. If not, fully understandable. Thanks!

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

I have no objection to anyone transposing any of my songs for themselves to sing. I do the same thing when I perform them. For instance, I do "For Good" up a key in Eb and "Corner of the Sky" down a key in Bb. For solo out-of-context purposes, you should do whatever is best for your voice, though I prefer that if the original song is in a sharp key, you transpose to another sharp key; ditto for flat keys (i.e. a song in Db would be better transposed to Eb than to E, and a song in E would be better transposed to, say, A than Bb.)

As to making the end lyric more general, the only two ideas I could come up with off the top of my head, which admittedly aren't brilliant but might work for you, are: "And nobody in all the earth, Though great in fame and name and birth, Is ever gonna bring me down." OR "And nobody in all the land/No matter if they're great or grand/Is ever gonna bring me down." As I say, not brilliant, but you're welcome to try either. Enjoy singing the song! Best, Stephen Schwartz

Another Transposing "Defying Gravity" suggestion

Question:

I'm a tenor and for my senior recital I would like to sing "Defying Gravity." However the version in the song book sounds kind of awkward when I sing it as it is so low. My highest note is an A or a B_d (depending on the day). I was wondering if you could suggest a key or maybe two that would work for a tenor voice. This would really mean a lot to me. Thanks so much

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

Sounds to me as if it will work best for you in F. If you find that sits too high, of course, drop it, but I think F will probably work best. Hope your recital goes well. Sincerely, Stephen Schwartz

Defying Gravity 1 minute

Question:

I am singing Defying Gravity for an audition and it's required to be 1 minute. I'm not sure where to cut it at do you how I could cut it?

Answer from Michael Cole:

I would suggest doing the final 60 seconds of the song. Find out where the one minute mark is and then make a decision based on where that minute mark is. The end of the song is "belted" and "showy" and I'm assuming that's what you are trying to demonstrate to the auditors. Have a great audition! Michael

Defying Gravity – Wicked Talent Show

Question:

Dear Stephen, I was going to sing and act out the song defying gravity with my friends and I am puzzled on how to get the illusion that Elphaba flies upward during the chord build up. When she says it's not her it's meeeeeeee!!!! and she flies upward how could I pull off a similar effect. Thank you

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

When we were doing readings of WICKED, our director Joe Mantello simply had Idina step up onto a step unit at the point in "Defying Gravity" when she "flew". It worked surprisingly well. Audiences have imaginations; a lot of times, less literal staging is actually more effective. Just a thought for you anyway. You should be aware that, legally, the producers of WICKED will not permit any performances that attempt to recreate the Broadway staging or costumes, so bear that in mind too. This actually can help lead to some creative solutions, it seems to me. Hope your talent show goes well. Sincerely, Stephen Schwartz

Wonderful in Wizard of Oz

Question:

Hello Mr. Schwartz, it's a pleasure to speak with you. My question is this; would it be allowable to add the Wizard's song Wonderful to the local high-school's production of the Wizard of Oz. I was curious about the legal issues/personal objections from you. Thanks alot

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

Though I am flattered you might want to use "Wonderful" in your high school's production of THE WIZARD OF OZ, it is in fact not permissible, as you suspected. This actually has nothing to do with me or with WICKED; it's because when a show is licensed for a production such as the one at your high school, it is contractually agreed that the show will not be altered without the express written permission of the authors. Therefore, the authors of THE WIZARD OF OZ (or their estates) would have to give their permission to interpolate a song, be it from WICKED or anywhere else. I would be greatly surprised if they would do so. To put it into perspective, I would not allow, say, "I Don't Know How to Love Him" (from JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR) to be interpolated into a production of GODSPELL (even though I like the song.) But I thank you for your interest in the song, and I hope your production of THE WIZARD OF OZ is still, well, "wonderful". Sincerely, Stephen Schwartz

I'm Not That Girl

Question:

Hi, I am doing my 1st 'Musical-Review' in February. I'm 21+have not done a Solo since I was a 9 yr old girl! In the February Show, I'm performing 'I'm Not That Girl' from 'WICKED'. I have not yet seen 'WICKED' and am really nervous of how to portray myself. I am alone on Stage, The Song I do very well, but I feel a little silly alone on the stage. I know this is normal, but I was wondering if you could offer me any advice? I do not know what to do with my hands! Sounds silly, I know, but I'm serious Sir. Any tips you could give me would be greatfully received! Thankyou Very Much! GEMMA HANBURY

Answer from Michael Cole:

My advice would be to think about the LYRICS. Don't think about your hands. Go through every lyric and think about how you can personalize it. Make it mean something to you. Come up with people to think about. Sing it TO or ABOUT someone. Of course in WICKED, Elphaba is singing about Fiyero. But you could be singing about Doug, or Tom or ... I found the way to get rid of nerves is to do a LOT of preparation. I don't mean "vocal" practice - really go through the lyrics and find out what they mean to you. Find out which individual WORDS are important and therefore could use to be sung a little louder or softer or with more intensity, etc. Write the lyrics on a piece of paper and write next to those lyrics what they mean to you. There must be someone in school that you would want to notice you. Well imagine that person has just NOTICED you. Imagine what that would feel like. SEE someone in your head. Sing to and about THAT person. The point is - the more you have to think about the less nervous you'll be AND the better the song will come across as you'll be ACTING it!

Hope this is somewhat helpful. I'm not the greatest actor, but I do know that the idea is to come up with your own inner monologue and sing THAT. Sometimes it's helpful to SPEAK the lyrics as if it WAS a monologue. See what words you emphasize when you do that. Come up with as many different acting exercises as you can and treat this as a monologue. I'm sure you can sing the song in your sleep, right? So don't worry about the vocals - trust that they will be there. Best, Michael Cole

I'm Not That Girl

Question:

Hello Stephen. Saw Wicked in London a few weeks ago and it was fantastic! Great to see a Broadway star coming over to our little island! I am a musical theatre coach here in the UK and lots of girls like to attempt to sing 'I'm not that girl' (as well as others). The low notes in this song cannot really be reached by most of my students. They can do all the 'belt' notes but not the low ones during this song. My question is, was the low notes in that song written before the show started workshop or was it put in when you realised how wide Idina's range is? Just wondering! Thanks, Nathan

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

Dear Nathan: Actually, that song was written before Idina was involved with the show, and it was never altered, although obviously the key was set for Idina. It can certainly be transposed up, if that's easier for your students, though they would then have floating the high notes to contend with (I originally wrote it in Db). Some of our Elphabas in the various WICKED companies don't really have that last low F# and so they take that note up an octave. That's not my preference, but if the one note keeps someone from being able to sing the song, it's an acceptable compromise. Thanks for your interest and taking the time to write, sincerely, Stephen Schwartz

For Good

Question:

Dear Mr Schwartz, I regret I haven't see the show yet. I was wondering, when you wrote For Good, who decided on the top line? You or the performers? I recently sang the song with a dear friend, and we couldn't decide so we left to see who hit it when we sang it. Please reply. Thank you

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

Basically, we worked out when Idina would sing the top line and when Kristin would in the rehearsal room. Incidentally, we often change the assignments when other actresses play the roles, depending on which harmonies work best for their combined voices. That sounds pretty much like what you and your friend have done, doesn't it? Sincerely, Stephen Schwartz

For Good Accompaniment CD

Question:

My daughter and I saw Wicked in NY and loved it. We listen to the CD all the time and have the book of sheet music too. My beloved mother just died and my daughter would like to sing "For Good" at her memorial service (they were very close and Grandma was her confidant) but we can't work with the accompanist ahead of time so I thought it would be better to provide her with a CD accompaniment. Is such a thing available? Thank you for writing such a moving song.

Answer from Carol

Yes. See <http://www.musicalschwartz.com/wicked-for-good.htm> you'll find links to accompaniment CDs that include "For Good."

For Good

Question:

I know that you are ok with songs being performed in many different variations so.....Mr. Schwartz I think that the song "For Good" from "Wicked" is the best song in the whole show. The fact that the song is about two friends knowing that they have to say good-bye and them realizing to get rid of their hatred just speaks to me. A thought came to me and I was wondering what you would think. The song features two friends, well, what if somebody came up to you and said "Me and my girlfriend want to sing this for our talent show at our high school" would you be ok with that, because to me when I heard the song it sounded like it could be performed in a romantic way also, cause I might do this-what do you think?

Answer from Michael Cole:

You may absolutely perform "For Good" in your talent show. The producers have stipulated that no costuming or staging from the Broadway production be utilized and that the number of songs from WICKED be limited to three. As to the song being sung in a romantic way - well, I'm not sure about that, but let us know how it goes!

Demo CD

Question:

I just did a demo CD of the song NO GOOD DEEDS and would like to send it to have it evaluated. I am a Musical Theater major in FLorida and unfortunately you didn't come here to do a casting. One of my friends had her information sent up through Florida Theatrical and I would like to send my CD and resume up also. Please advise how I could do this. I am a student of Aaron Hagan. Annelise

Answer from Michael Cole:

Dear Annelise: Unfortunately, we had to make a policy not to accept materials in this way. The best advice I can offer is for you to contact the Bernard Telsey casting office and ask them if they are interested in listening to your demo (They are in charge of casting the show). I can't promise that they will be receptive, but it's worth a try and it's really the only advice I can give. For obvious reasons, I'm not allowed to post their contact information on this site, so you will have to find it on your own. Thanks for your understanding and best of luck. Sincerely, Michael Cole

WICKED: Casting Requirements for Elphaba and Galinda/Glinda

Question:

I've seen "Wicked" a 'few' times and I just had a question about the requirements for the actors. I noticed that all of the actresses that play Elphaba and Glinda are very tiny and seem to be all under 5'4". I know there are some shows that have height and weight reqs and I was just wondering if "Wicked" was one of those shows? And if so, what are the requirements?

Answer from Michael Cole:

I asked the casting director for his thought: "WICKED doesn't have height and weight requirements per se. However, the team generally likes the Elphabas to be taller and fit and Glindas to be shorter and petite. But there have been shorter Elphabas and taller Glindas."