

CASTING ELEMENTS THAT AFFECT WHO GETS WHAT

Many elements go into casting a role in a show. Below is a list of elements, besides the audition itself, that can affect how a role is cast, and some may surprise you.

TYPE – Each actor is a specific physical type. Generally, types fall either into 'leading man/woman' or 'character man/woman'. Leading roles include characters like Marian in THE MUSIC MAN, Sky Masterson in GUYS AND DOLLS, or Irene Malloy in HELLO, DOLLY. Character parts are frequently comic, villainous, or off-beat and include Tevye in FIDDLER, Dolly in HELLO, DOLLY; or Marcellus in THE MUSIC MAN. ***It is vital that an actor know his/her type and what roles he/she is right to play, and it is also important to realize that there is not an appropriate major role for every actor in every show.***

HEIGHT AND AGE: In casting a show, the Director must create a realistic visual picture for the show to work artistically and be believable. Ideally, a 5'10" girl is probably not going to be cast as a romantic lead opposite a 5'2" boy, nor can a 14-year-old boy be cast as THE MUSIC MAN if the Marian is 18 & looks like a college student. Some roles have inherent physical restrictions which eliminate certain actors (Annie or Oliver cannot be the tallest person in the cast). Keep this in perspective when considering appropriate roles, realizing every role impacts the whole picture.

VOCAL RANGE: In musicals, songs are written in certain keys for a reason; e.g., most female leading ladies are sopranos, while most female character roles are belters. There are exceptions, but in general the keys make the sound of the show and the characters work artistically. The actor must know his/her vocal range and what roles match that.

HOW A GIVEN ACTOR FITS INTO THE WHOLE PICTURE: Probably the most important element to casting. What a given actor offers the production is a vital consideration in how they are cast. For example, two actresses audition for the role of Hodel in FIDDLER, and both fit the above criteria (vocal range, height, type). Actress A is a dancer, but Hodel is a non-dancing role. Also the director doesn't have an actress to play Chava, who has a solo ballet in the second act. He casts actress A as Chava, and she won't get to sing FAR FROM THE HOME I LOVE (which Hodel sings). Actress B will play Hodel, mainly because Actress A had to be

moved to Chava because of her dance ability, a fact that actress A will not understand, having given a great audition for Hodel. **While the audition is an important part of casting, it's not the only part, and these other elements are often transparent to the actors and their parents.**

CASTING: OTHER THINGS THAT COUNT

- Attitude
- Attendance and punctuality
- Commitment past and present to the production process (learning lines on time, being on time and present for rehearsal, etc.)
- Cooperation in the rehearsal environment
- Being a team player
- Ability to support and work well with other actors

Actors at ALHS or elsewhere in theatre must demonstrate these qualities to be successful.

CASTING: THINGS THAT DON'T COUNT

- Level of parents' contributions/volunteer position
- Holding an officers' position
- Previous lead roles
- Friendships with regard to casting

Casting is an arduous and complex process for directors. While I am happy to give student actors feedback on how to improve their auditions, THE OFFICIAL ALHS DRAMA CLUB POLICY IS THAT WE WILL NOT DISCUSS CASTING DECISIONS. This includes how and why actors were cast and, in particular, the size and prominence of a specific actor's role.

Thank you.

Ms. Frank