

SHOWCASE TIPS

Here are Richard Evans' tips to make your mark and maximise your impact before, during and after your showcase.

BEFORE:

- ✓ Be original in your choice of pieces. You're more likely to keep the audience's attention by choosing speeches that they may not know or don't see all the time (you'll find some useful advice on doing this on pages 114-119 of Richard's book).
- ✓ Ensure that the character(s) in the piece(s) you choose are suitable for you as you are castable now, and are performable in your natural accent. Avoid 'acting' and being what you're not.
- ✓ Go for a shorter piece, leaving the audience wanting more... rather than less.
- ✓ Choose something that will create an impact. Something upbeat and possibly comedic is more likely to do this than a speech that's serious or tragic.
- ✓ If you're doing a duologue or scene, make sure the characters are easily distinguishable (duologues with people of the opposite sex are great), so that the attention is more on you than working out who's who in the programme.
- ✓ Check who has been invited and make personal contact with those people you know personally, or especially want to see you, about 2 weeks before the showcase – several invitations can be better than one.
- ✓ Ask to check the programme and running order before they go to print, to ensure your name is spelt and displayed correctly and the details of your piece(s) are correct.
- ✓ Make sure you'll be dressed to give an idea of the part(s) that you'll be playing and wearing something memorable.

DURING:

- ✓ Ensure you're word perfect and have rehearsed thoroughly with everyone you are performing with (finding a few extra minutes before the audience comes in, if necessary).
- ✓ Be confident with what you're going to perform and give your all. Techniques for combating nerves are discussed in Chapter 11.
- ✓ Make yourself memorable and stand out. Make the stage your own, take your time and don't forget to breathe.
- ✓ Above all, enjoy what you do – if you don't, the audience won't!

AFTER:

- ✓ Remember that guests may have to get back to their offices, sometimes before the performance ends, so won't stay to chat. Don't take this personally. If they are interested, they'll make contact with you afterwards.
- ✓ When meeting audience members after the showcase, retain your memorability by looking exactly how you did onstage, rather than changing your clothes and appearance.
- ✓ Don't linger backstage. Get straight out there, before people lose interest and leave.
- ✓ Avoid asking questions such as 'Did you enjoy the show?', or for feedback or opinions on your performance, as negative responses may well knock your confidence. A far better opener is 'Thank you for coming', which isn't confrontational, puts people at ease and is more likely to lead to conversation.
- ✓ Introduce yourself and try to be subtle when asking someone's name and what they do, being sure to remember the information accurately.
- ✓ Project your personality and ensure you have things to talk about. Talking to people who have nothing to say for themselves leads to silences and can be awkward, like an incompatible first date. If you can bring topics other than 'The Business' into the conversation, all the better.
- ✓ If nobody's talking to you, pick up a tray of food and offer it around. This is a great way to start up conversations, but be careful not to intrude on existing ones.
- ✓ If you're chatting to your fellow performers, talk in a small group (2 or 3 people), rather than a large one. If someone is only interested in talking to one of you, it's far easier for them to approach a few people than a great many.
- ✓ Judge when a conversation is coming to a natural end (though don't terminate it yourself) and ask if there's anyone with whom they would like to be introduced. If so, find that person, make the introduction and say goodbye, leaving them promptly.
- ✓ Ensure you are given a list of those who attended and send them a card or letter a few days after the showcase, thanking them for coming and asking them to keep you in mind for the future.

AND FINALLY...

- ✓ Remember that nobody is going to sign you up there and then – if anyone does try to do this, treat it with caution and seek the advice of your tutors before signing anything.

If you found these tips useful, you'll find loads more, with great advice and resources at www.auditionsthecompleteguide.com and in Richard's book, *AUDITIONS: The Complete Guide* – the gift that will last a career.