

"What would be in a great audition for the All-State Vocal Jazz Ensemble?"

I have been asked this question several times.

Here are a few things to help you if you need it.

1. Reliable students that work the well with a positive attitude in your group(s) are most desired in this small setting. Divas and insecure personalities will cause the group to fracture. Although this is not a consideration for other All-State groups, it can make a big difference in this one with 16 singers on their own mic. This is your call before you have them send in an audition.

2. Jazz Standard with jazz accompaniment.

- The auditioner must sing a jazz tune. It is difficult to judge appropriate jazz style if the student is singing a pop or Broadway tune.

- It is important to hear their jazz solo voice. Do not have a student sing their own part from a jazz arrangement.

- Also, it is difficult to judge appropriate jazz style if the student is singing a jazz standard with a pop accompaniment. They tend to sing in the style in which they are accompanied. Here are some options for good accompaniment to help the student's jazz style in the recording:

\*\* Try using Smartmusic. You can change the key and/or tempo, cut measures and add a loop(s). Then record it, save as a sound file and burn a CD for them to practice.

\*\* Of course, piano accompaniment from a jazz chart or other jazz style recorded accompaniment.

3. Basic good vocal technique. This list is a great start from what you already know.

- intonation, breath support, correct melodic notes and rhythms as a guide

- musical effect (dynamics, phrasing, text weight, etc.)

- While showing range, think the NICEST highest and lowest note, not what they can screech out.

#### 4. Demonstrate a confident jazz style.

- TONE: Most importantly, have a blendable natural tone. If a student has an affected or forced tone, it will not be pleasant when it is amplified.

\*\* Up tunes will have more tone than air and ballads will have more air in the tone.

-VIBRATO: Only used as ornamentation or to give motion to a note or phrase. It should be controlled and used on purpose.

#### 5. Improvise

- It is not a make it or break it thing, however it raises your chances respectively. This is a jazz ensemble that will have clinicians expecting the musicians to be fearless and ready to improvise. (When in doubt, stick with doo ba, or other simple syllable combinations.)

- It doesn't have to be complicated or full of notes to show competency. Also, It does not have to be what might be considered "perfect." A good improviser makes the "mistakes" work for them. Just go for it. They need to open the door and let the spirit move them.