

A Jury/Barrier Checklist

(from someone who's been on both sides of the table)

By Peter Saleh

- ✓ 1) *Be warmed up, but don't over practice* on the day of your jury. If its not there by jury day, it's likely not going to make much difference once the relative pressure of the situation comes up.
- ✓ 2) *Dress Professionally*. Again, this will affect how your playing is perceived. Once you get your big-time solo gig, you can dress like Steve Schick, but until then, dress nice. Be sure, though, that any obstructive sleeves or noise making apparel have been dealt with. You might also want to practice in the shoes/shirt you plan to play in, a day or so before your jury.
- ✓ 3) *Act professionally*. Be relaxed, but don't come across as too casual or indifferent as this could transfer to how your playing is perceived.
- ✓ *****4)** *For the 15-20 minutes immediately prior to your jury, find a way and a place to focus and calm yourself*, and don't be too social. That crowd of people around the door will still be there to talk to after you've finished. Many times, this is a pivotal factor in jury performances that should've gone better.
- ✓ 5) *Bring in only your relevant books*, sticks, and music for your solos and barrier material and nothing else. You don't want the panel to have to wait while you dig something out of your bag.
- ✓ 6) *If you're on after a snare drum jury, check to see if it's been turned off*. Make a note at the top of your music, if you think you'll forget.
- ✓ 7) *Make a photocopy of your solo* and hand it to the panel so they may follow it as you play. If it is on the long side (7+ pages), reduce it down to size (@ 2 pages per side)
- ✓ 8) *If you have a choice, play your stronger/comfortable material first*. This will give you a chance to ease into the situation and ease the nerves for the following pieces.
- ✓ 9) *Don't rush into playing either your solo or your barriers*. Allow the panel to finish writing down their previous comments and let them ask you to begin.
- ✓ 10) *Play things more slowly than you think you should*. Chances are, your perception of tempo will be slightly off and you'll end up wanting to rush things.
- ✓ 11) There is no rule that you should play your solo and your barriers with the same sticks/mallets, or even two consecutive etudes from the same book that way. Since you're playing on only one instrument, your choice of implement will make a difference. Use your ears.
- ✓ *****12)** *Once you start playing, DO NOT STOP!* Time is one of the only things than can be expected to be the same player to player (especially on barriers) and when you stop the time, it always bumps you down. It is a sign of poor mental preparation.
- ✓ *****13)** *Over anything else, the panelists (especially your teacher) just want to hear you play **well!*** This does not necessarily mean loud, fast, or anything else, just WELL. Don't try and change anything because you think the panel might prefer to hear things another way. Prepare your jury so that you'll have to do as little thinking on your feet as possible.
- ✓ 14) *Take note of your jury experience*, what you liked and didn't like about your performance, and what you can do to help, change, or reinforce these things. Actually read and think about the comments and sheets you receive as it is another opportunity to improve and progress. Many times, the panelists will all write similar things. If this is the case, it's a strong sign that something clearly needs to be changed.
- ✓ 15) *Enjoy the process!*

(By the way, many of these points can also be useful audition tips)