



Canberra Philharmonic

Auditions 101

UPDATED 4 SEPTEMBER 2023

Contents

Being in a Philo show	2
Booking an audition	2
Location and facilities	5
On the day	6
Singing audition	8
Dance audition	11
After the audition	13
Callbacks.....	14

Being in a Philo show

What are the expectations of cast members in Philo shows?

If you are auditioning for a Philo show, we ask that you be aware of the expectations for our casts. These include:

- Becoming a financial member of Philo before the first rehearsal
- Being on time and present to every rehearsal you are required for, unless you've discussed with the production team of your absence in advance
- Learning and rehearsing your part, including taking time to practice outside of rehearsals if needed
- Taking direction from production team members
- Contributing, along with everyone else involved with the show, to the administration and management of the production (for example, the construction of scenery, the organisation of props, moving the production in and out of the theatre)
- Being respectful to everyone involved in the show

What are the financial costs involved with being in a Philo show?

If you are cast in a Philo show, you must become a financial member of Philo before the first rehearsal. Membership costs between \$15-\$30 for a year, and can be purchased [here](#).

Cast members are also responsible for providing their own makeup and their own costume accessories (shoes, socks, underwear, stockings, etc).

Booking an audition

How do I book an audition?

There is a link to book an audition in the audition pack. That link will take you through to an online form to book your audition.

The form will ask for:

- your name and contact details
- your preferred times for a singing and a dancing audition
- any particular roles you are auditioning for
- your availability across the rehearsal period
- any information we need to know to make your audition as accessible as possible
- some optional demographic questions

You will then receive an email confirming the time of your audition, along with any audition material. This email is a manual process, and may take up to 24 hours to come through – so please be patient! If you haven't received anything from us after 24 hours, let us know at secretary@philo.gov.au and we'll chase it up for you. Check your

spam inbox before following up!

The audition form has asked for my previous theatre/performance experience, but I haven't performed in a musical before. How do I fill out the form?

Use this section to outline anything related to performance (e.g. singing in a choir, taking dance classes, doing stand-up comedy) or any special skills you might have (e.g. you're an ice skater, you can juggle).

If you absolutely can't think of anything to put, that's ok. You can still submit the form and schedule an audition with that section blank.

What are you going to do with my information? Am I going to get spam emails after signing up?

Your contact details and personal information are kept confidential and not shared with anyone outside of those who need it to schedule and organise auditions. We will only contact you with information about the auditions for the show you have signed up to audition for, nothing more.

If you are successfully cast in the show, we will keep your contact details on file up until the show is finished. Once the show is finished, your contact details will be deleted.

If your audition is unsuccessful, your contact details will be deleted as soon as the show has been cast.

If you would like to be kept up to date with Philo news beyond your audition, you can follow us on Facebook and Instagram, or sign up to our mailing list at www.philo.org.au.

I'm not an active member of Philo / I haven't done a show with Philo before. Can I audition?

Yes! We welcome everyone and anyone to audition for our shows.

If you are successful in being cast in the show, you will need to become a financial member of Philo before the first rehearsal. Membership costs \$15-\$30 for a year, and can be purchased [here](#).

If the cost of becoming a financial member of the society would be a barrier to your participation in the production, please reach out to secretary@philo.org.au to discuss alternative arrangements.

I can't make any of the times available on the audition booking form. What should I do?

We try to offer a variety of times to audition, but they fill up quickly and we can only see so many people in one audition round.

If you're not able to audition at any of the remaining available times we recommend that you:

- Reach out to us at secretary@philo.org.au to be put on a waiting list for a particular time. Sometimes people have to cancel, and we'll let you know as soon as possible if we have free spots available.
- Follow us on Facebook and Instagram to be the first to hear if new audition dates are released. If we've got a lot of demand for auditions that we can't meet, we often open up more times.

I signed up for an audition but I can't make it any more. What should I do?

Please contact secretary@philo.org.au if you need to cancel or reschedule your audition. It really helps us make the most of our limited audition slots if you're able to let us know as soon as possible.

I'm not going to be available for callbacks. Can I still audition?

If you know you aren't able to attend callbacks, please note that on your audition form. We can then discuss with you whether we can accommodate that. Not attending call backs may be difficult if you are interested in a lead role.

I'm not going to be available across the whole rehearsal period / I have commitments that might prevent me from attending rehearsals. Can I be in the show?

We totally understand that everyone has other commitments in their life that compete for their time. However, cast members need to be able to attend rehearsals to learn and refine the show. If you are absent from too many rehearsals, it will make it harder for you and the rest of the cast to learn the show.

If you know you aren't going to be able to attend some rehearsals, please note that on your audition form. We can then discuss with you whether we can accommodate those absences in our rehearsal schedule.

I'm not going to be available for all of the performance dates. Can I still be in the show?

Unfortunately, no. All cast members are needed at all performances, along with all dress rehearsals (generally the Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before opening night). This is non-negotiable.

If you can't be available for this show, we encourage you to follow us on social media or sign up to our mailing list at www.philo.org.au to be the first to know about future productions.

Location and facilities

Where are auditions held?

Auditions are held at our rehearsal studio at 18 Collie Street, Fyshwick. Our rehearsal studio is accessed by walking up the driveway, behind One Stop Auto & Tyre.



How do I get there / where do I park?

Fyshwick is best accessed by car. We have an arrangement with Schiavello (next door to Philo) that allows attendees to our rehearsal studio to park in their carpark outside of business hours. It's the best place to park on the day for your audition. There is also 1-2 hour street parking on Collie Street. The street parking is untimed after 12:30pm on Saturdays, and untimed on Sundays.

Please DO NOT park in the Philo driveway.

If you can't access Philo by car, the best public transport option is the #56 Bus that departs from the City Interchange. The 'Albany Street before Collie Street' stop is just around the corner from the Hut. Alternatively, the #2 Rapid Bus stops at the Canberra Outlet Centre, which is about a 16 minute walk to Philo. The trip is around 40-50 minutes one-way from the city.

Does the audition venue have a bathroom?

Yes, Philo's rehearsal studio has one gender-neutral bathroom. The bathroom is unfortunately not wheelchair accessible and in a fairly tight space. If you think this will cause issues with your audition, please contact us at secretary@philo.org.au to discuss further.

Does the audition venue have food/drink/kitchen facilities?

There is no food for purchase at Philo, but there is a Subway and Hungry Jacks a short walk away. The Canberra Outlet Centre is also nearby (about a 3 minute drive, 16 minute walk).

Please be mindful when bringing food into the audition venue:

- Don't bring anything with a strong smell that might upset others.
- Be mindful of allergens, particularly products containing nuts.

If you have concerns about allergies, please reach out to secretary@philo.org.au so we can let the others attending your audition time know to be aware.

There is a kitchenette at the audition venue, which includes a microwave (if you need to heat up food) or a fridge (if you need to keep food cold while you audition).

The kitchen sink is available if you need to fill up a water bottle.

Soft drinks and water are in the fridge and can be purchased for \$2.

Is the audition venue accessible for those with limited mobility/in wheelchairs?

The audition venue is on one level, with one slight step up needed to enter the audition room. The driveway up to the audition venue is gravel and on a slight incline. At the top of the driveway the site is paved and flat. The rehearsal room is flat.

If you need to park closer to the audition venue for accessibility reasons, please reach out to secretary@philo.org.au so we can work with you to make it as easy as possible to attend.

The bathroom at the audition venue is unfortunately not wheelchair accessible, and in a fairly tight space. Contact us if this is likely to cause any issues with your audition.

On the day

What do I wear? What do I bring?

For your audition, make sure you wear clothes and shoes you can move and dance in. Exercise clothes are fine.

Make sure you bring:

- A bottle of water
- A pencil and notepad/paper, if you find that writing things down during the audition will help
- Your backing track on a device with a 3.5mm headphone jack (preferred) or Bluetooth (to connect to our speakers) AND/OR sheet music, for your singing audition.

Can I wear a mask to my audition? Will I be able to socially distance?

You are welcome to wear a mask when attending your audition but it is not required. If you do wear a mask, we recommend that you take off your mask when doing your singing and dancing audition.

Our venue is small, and our auditions can have quite a few people attending. Social distancing may be difficult, particularly in the dance audition where 15-20 people will be in the one room. Reach out to secretary@philo.org.au if you have questions about social distancing.

Where do I go on the day? Do I need to tell someone I've arrived?

On the day, head to our rehearsal venue. It'll be clearly marked and the door will be open.

You'll enter into our waiting area / lounge / kitchenette. It's a bit small, but there's space for around 10-12 people to wait on chairs and couches ahead of their audition.

When you arrive a member of the Philo committee will welcome you, and check your name off on a roll to indicate that you've arrived. You'll get a sticker to write your name on which we encourage you to wear.

What time do I need to get there? What if I'm running late?

When you sign up for an audition, you'll be given a time slot for both your singing and your dance audition. We recommend that you arrive at least 15 minutes before your first component (singing or dance) to allow time to relax and settle before auditioning.

If you're running late, please don't stress. When you arrive, let the committee member know. We'll then try to fit you into an upcoming singing or dance audition slot. Please be aware that if you're late, and we're fully booked, we'll do our best to fit you in later in the day but you may need to wait a while before you're called. We may also ask to reschedule your audition to another day.

What do I do while waiting for my audition?

Once you've let us know you've arrived, feel free to relax. Some people are happy to chat to the other auditionees who are waiting; others prefer to sit quietly and focus on their audition. Please be mindful of the way that other people may be preparing for their audition, and ask if you're unclear whether someone else wants to chat.

The walls between the audition room and the waiting area are fairly thin, so we ask that you keep the noise down if you are talking. Please also silence your phones or any other devices that might make a loud noise.

Once you've arrived, don't leave the venue until you've done both parts of your audition! If you need to duck out for any reason (e.g. to head back to your car, to take a phone call), let the committee member know and they'll try to make sure you don't miss your audition time.

How will I know when it's time for my audition?

For the singing audition, a member of the production team will come out of the audition room and call your name. That's your cue to enter!

For the dance audition, a member of the production team will announce that it's time for the dance audition, and ask everyone allocated to that time to head into the audition room.

Should I warm up (for singing and dancing) before coming to my audition? Is there space to warm up at the audition venue?

We recommend that everyone warm up their voice and body before coming to the audition.

- If you're new to singing, have a look at some vocal warmups on YouTube (like [this one](#) or [this one](#)).
- If you're new to dancing, we recommend doing some stretches in advance of your audition (similar to if you're about to do a workout or run). Again, there are videos on YouTube you can follow along to.

There is limited space to warm up at the audition venue. We ask that you warm up at or in your car, or at home before you leave for the audition. Warming up in front of other people can be awkward and distracting, particularly if other people are trying to focus ahead of their audition. Sound also carries into the audition room, which can be distracting for the person auditioning and the audition panel trying to listen to them.

Will the audition be recorded?

The production team may record the audition to refer back to later when making casting decisions.

Any recording of the audition will be deleted after casting decisions have been made.

Singing audition

What's a singing audition? What will I need to do?

In a singing audition you will need to perform a song (or two, if you are auditioning for a lead role) for the audition panel.

The goal of a singing audition is to:

- Show off your vocal talent (the way your voice sounds, whether you can stay on pitch and in time with the music)
- Show the audition panel how you 'act' through singing (the way you convey the emotion or story of the song)

Who will be in the room for the singing audition? Where do I stand?

In the room will be you, an accompanist at the piano, and the audition panel (3-4 people). Say hello and introduce yourself when you enter!

The audition panel will be sitting at a table; you'll be performing in front of them. Generally people stand for their singing audition, but if you need to sit or something to rest on, please note that in your audition form and we'll try to accommodate it.

What song should I sing for my audition?

The specific requirements for shows differ, but the production team will likely ask you to sing a song of your choice in the style of the show. Check the audition pack for the specific requirements for the show you are auditioning for.

Here are some general tips for choosing a good audition song:

- Sing a song you know. Performing a song you already know means you're less likely to be impacted by nerves when auditioning, and better present your authentic self.
- Sing a song in a similar style to the show you are auditioning for. If you're yet to listen to a cast recording of the show – go and do that now! Broadway and/or West End cast recordings of the show can be found on Spotify, Apple Music and sometimes YouTube.
- Sing a song that shows off your voice. You want a song that shows off your comfortable range, shows your talents as a singer, and one where you're confident in getting all the lyrics out. Being in tune, in time and confident are the most important things.
- Sing something with story or emotion. Remember that this is theatre, and you're telling a story when singing. You don't have to sing something from a musical, but you do have to act while singing.
- Get to the best bits early. We unfortunately don't have time to listen to everyone's full songs. The audition panel may cut you off early if they've heard everything they need to. So make sure whatever you're singing shows off your voice early on in the song. If this means trimming your song to start in the middle, that's perfectly ok!

The production team may ask you to sing a song again, or ask you to perform it differently. This is to see how you take direction and whether you can adjust your performance to feedback.

If you're auditioning for a lead role, the production team may ask you to also sing a song from the show. They may send through an excerpt of sheet music from the show for you to learn ahead of your audition.

- You will not have time to learn this song during your singing audition. You will need to set aside time to learn and practice this song before your audition.
- To prepare, listen to the song on a cast recording. Beware that sometimes the sheet music can differ slightly from the cast recording – but if that's the case, the production team will highlight what's different.
- If you don't read sheet music, learn by singing along to the cast recording.
- Try to avoid copying the cast recording exactly though - we want to hear your version and interpretation of the song!

Do I need to perform a song from a musical?

No, you can perform any song. However, we recommend it is at least a song in the musical style of the show, and which has an emotion or story you can perform.

Do I need to know the song by heart? Can I refer to sheet music/lyrics while performing?

We strongly recommend you sing a song you know by heart. Referring to sheet music or lyrics while singing makes it much harder for you to perform the emotion or story of the song.

What is a backing track? Where do I find backing tracks for the song I want to sing?

A backing track is an audio file that only has the instrumental part of a song, not the vocal part. Backing tracks can be a good idea for an audition, because you can practice singing along to them at home.

You can find backing tracks on YouTube. You can also purchase backing tracks from sites like www.pianotrax.com or www.musicbackingtracks.co.uk. These can often be more reliable and better quality than YouTube, particularly for more obscure songs.

For your audition your backing track MUST NOT have any vocals. We want to hear you singing, not someone else! Make sure you check this before arriving at the audition.

How do I play my backing track in my audition?

We can play your backing track from your phone or device via an AUX cable (which fits into a 3.5mm headphone jack) or Bluetooth. If possible, the AUX cable is preferred as it's faster and more reliable to connect to than Bluetooth.

Someone will be available to set up the sound and press play on your device once you are ready to perform.

If I bring sheet music will you provide a pianist to accompany me?

There will be a pianist at auditions if you want to perform your song with the piano.

You are responsible for bringing the sheet music and making sure it is arranged correctly for the pianist to play. Instructions on how to tape your music so it is in the right layout for the pianist are [here](#).

Your sheet music must be in the key you wish to perform it in.

You can take a minute at the beginning of the audition to talk to the pianist about any particular ways you want the song performed (e.g. the speed you want to sing at, or if you want to start at a particular bar.) Please mark clearly on the sheet music any annotations the pianist should be aware of, and go through the annotations with the pianist before singing.

Keep in mind that the pianist may not have seen or heard your song before. They will do their best to make you look as good as possible. If they make mistakes, keep on singing confidently - it will make it easier for them to catch up to you! Remember, you know the music best, so lead the way!

We don't tolerate any abuse or disrespect towards our pianists – they're doing their best, just like you.

Where do I find sheet music for the song I want to sing?

You can purchase sheet music from sites such as www.musicnotes.com or www.sheetmusicdirect.com.

Do I have to bring a copy of my sheet music for the pianist if it's a song the production team have requested me to sing for a role / part of the audition pack?

No. The pianist will have copies of all of the song selections from the show that the production team have asked people to prepare in advance.

However, if you want to sing a song from the show that is not an excerpt provided in the audition pack, you should bring your own sheet music and/or backing track.

Can I ask the production team questions about the song(s) they've asked me to prepare before singing (when auditioning for a lead role)?

Yes, but within reason. Keep your questions short and to the point.

Some questions about the song (such as its context in the show, what emotions are being conveyed, the meaning of particular lyrics etc.) can be answered by doing some research before your audition. Google a synopsis and character list of the show to get an idea of where the song fits into the story.

Dance audition

What's a dance audition? What will I need to do?

In a dance audition the choreographer will teach everyone a short dance routine. Everyone will then be split into groups, who will perform the routine without the choreographer.

The goal of a dance audition is to:

- Show off your dance talent (how well you move, how well you execute a given routine, how you 'perform' while dancing)
- Show how quickly you are able to learn choreography.

Who will be in the room for the dance audition? Where do I stand?

In the room will be everyone in the dance call (around 15-20 people), the choreographer, and the audition panel (3-4 people).

The choreographer will be standing in front of the dance mirror, and everyone else will find space in the room facing the mirror to learn the routine.

Give yourself enough space so that you can move and do the routine, but also see the choreographer (particularly their feet and arms). If you need to ask people to move a bit so you can see or have space, do so politely. Keep in mind that you'll have more space when actually performing the routine in your small group later in the audition.

I'm not a confident dancer. Can I not do the dance audition?

You've still got to do a dance audition! Not all roles in all musicals require excellent dancers, but the production team still need to know the dance skills of everyone they're casting. That allows them to tailor the choreography and requirements of the show to the cast.

Remember, the dance audition is about more than just choreography - it's also about the energy you bring to the routine, how well you perform/act/characterise the song, and how well you take direction and work with the choreographer and your fellow auditionees. Don't write yourself off, put yourself out there and show the audition panel why you will shine on stage no matter what level of dancer you are.

Also keep in mind that the choreographer and production team aren't out to embarrass you. They want to help you to show off the best that you can do!

I have a physical condition which means dancing will be difficult. Can I not do the dance audition?

If you have a condition that means that dancing is difficult – that's fine. Make a note of that on your audition form, and we'll discuss with you what accommodations we can make.

I was sent a video of a routine by the production team to learn. Do I need to master this routine before the audition?

The choreographer may decide to send out all or part of the dance audition routine to auditionees in advance of the audition.

You are not required to learn and master the routine ahead of the audition. The choreographer will still teach the routine in the dance audition.

However, we recognise that not everyone learns choreography well under pressure, and that when cast in a show many people need time to practice routines to perform them well. If you are one of those people, you are welcome to use the video sent out by the production team to help you learn the routine in advance of your audition.

Keep in mind that the video may not be the full routine. There may still be a section of the routine that is taught on the day.

Can I ask the choreographer questions about the routine during the audition?

Yes, but within reason. Keep your questions short and to the point, and be mindful of not disrupting the audition for everyone else.

Also keep in mind that the choreographer is teaching the routine to the whole group, not just you. You're not going to get a detailed dance lesson during this audition.

Can I take notes on the routine during the dance audition?

Yes, you can take notes on a notepad/on your phone if it helps you remember the routine.

Keep in mind that the audition may move quite fast, so you may need to take notes at speed! You also won't be able to refer to the notes when performing the routine in your small group at the end of the audition.

After the audition

I've done my singing and my acting audition – can I go home?

Yes! If you've done both parts of your audition, you're free to go. We ask that you don't linger around the audition venue after your audition as there may be a group of auditionees after you, and space at the venue is limited.

When will I hear back about the audition?

The audition panel will let you know at your audition when you can expect to hear back about callbacks or the final casting of the show.

After callbacks, we aim to finalise a cast as soon as possible. You will receive an email or phone call with the final result of your audition as soon as the cast is finalised (including whether you have offered a role in the cast as a lead role or in the ensemble).

We aim to let everyone who auditions know the outcome of their audition before the cast list is announced.

My circumstances have changed since my audition, and I need to change my availability / role preference. Who do I talk to?

Email secretary@philo.org.au with your updated information and we will factor it into the casting process.

I feel like I could have done better in my audition. Can I audition again?

Unfortunately not – we only allow for one audition per person to keep it fair across everyone.

If you don't end up getting cast in the show, there are other ways to be involved, including as backstage crew, technical support, costume creator or theatre usher.

Follow us on Facebook or Instagram, join our mailing list (www.philo.org.au), or reach out to us at secretary@philo.org.au to see what opportunities are available.

How can I get feedback on my audition?

If you would like feedback on your audition, please email secretary@philo.org.au with your contact details, and the day/time of your audition.

We'll endeavour to get feedback back to you as soon as possible. Please note that our production teams are volunteers, and provide feedback in their free time. This may delay or limit the amount of feedback we can give.

Where can I see the final cast list?

The final cast list will be published on the Philo website (www.philo.org.au) along with Facebook and Instagram.

Callbacks

What is a callback?

A callback is a second round of auditions. If the production team want to see more of what you can do, or if they're considering you for a lead role, they may ask you to attend a call back. If you are not specifically asked to attend a callback, you will not be needed at the call back session.

A callback may consist of:

- Another singing audition, potentially singing a duet or multi-part song with other people.
- Another dance audition
- An acting audition, where you might be asked to learn and perform a dialogue scene, potentially with another person.

In particular, the callback might focus on how you perform alongside other people.

If the production team want you to learn new material for the callback, they will send that through to you. That may include an excerpt of a song, a scene of dialogue, or a dance routine.

Callbacks will work in much the same way to the first round of auditions – you will be given a time to be at the audition venue, and will be called in to perform the prepared material as required.

Callbacks are often structured a bit more flexibly than the first round of auditions, so be prepared to go with the flow. You may do singing one moment, dance the next, and then over to acting. Feel free to ask any questions of the production team or committee representative present if you're uncertain what you should be doing.