



DANZ

Landing a Role

- Audition advice for dancers

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Getting an Audition

This resource has an international, particularly European, focus however the much of the content is relevant to all auditions.

There are two main ways to find a job on the international audition circuit;

- The hit or miss option.
- The research option.

Hit or Miss

The hit or miss option consists of a travel adventure overseas while looking out for dance opportunities along the way. This is not a truly effective way to get a dance job, however it may be appropriate if getting a dance job isn't the main focus of your trip. If there happens to be an audition going on in the country you are in and you hear about it, then you may attend. If there are no auditions going on then you can carry on with the sight seeing you wish to do.

There have been many cases of people being in the right place at the right time and this is the best hope for you if you are auditioning without prior research. On the bright side of the "hit or miss option" you may avoid the masses of dancers who will inevitably turn up for a pre-arranged audition.

Caring less about whether or not you land a job can free you up to just enjoy a dance class here and there, which may or may not open a door to a short term or if you are incredibly lucky, long term contract.

The beauty of travelling in Europe is that there are always classes happening and even if you are not attempting to find a job, simply attending class is a great way to meet people while on your travels.

When in a new country, find out where the freelance classes are being held. Attend them and check the notice boards at the studios. They are often a great way to get unlisted auditions for smaller or pick up companies, which may suit your travelling lifestyle. Talk to people when attending class. Most people will be wanting a job themselves so some may be reluctant to let you in on the information. Keep your ear to the ground.

Researching for auditions

The more focused way of landing a dance role in a company is to do your research first. This method makes use of *PREPARATION, PROFESSIONALISM, PERSEVERANCE!*

In New Zealand:

Check out the DANZ web site www.danz.org.nz - auditions are listed in the events diary.

Subscribe to NZ Dance News emails through the info & resources section of the DANZ site (a free service sponsored by DANZ).

Visit the Big Idea web site www.thebigidea.co.nz - it has job listings and the opportunity to advertise yourself as an artist as well as a weekly email newsletter you can sign up for.

Contact agents such as www.talentonline.co.nz or www.humangarden.co.nz and ask around.

In Australia:

Look for auditions posted on www.answers4dancers.com

Read the auditions code of practice on www.liveperformance.com.au/pdf/AuditionsCode.doc

Do a quick Google search of the key words 'dance auditions Australia' - this pulls up a variety of audition opportunities, agencies and information.

In Europe:

Search the web, telephone directories and magazines to get contacts. Find out audition dates.

Visit The Place and Pineapple studios in London to check their notice boards for auditions or to ask about companies to contact.

Search magazines such as Dance Europe www.danceeurope.net and Juice (offices at The Place). Job opportunities and auditions are also listed on www.theplace.org.uk

Join the Independent Dance Artists Network for email information about opportunities in the UK through www.danceuk.org (networking and professional development section).

In the US:

Look for job opportunities posted on www.dance.net and on www.danceusa.org/our_members/auditions.htm

Check out Dance Magazine and the Dance Annual Directory on line at www.dancemagazine.com/dance_annual

When planning to go overseas:

- Do you have the money to go?
- Are you in good physical condition and fit to dance?
- Are you prepared for the cultural experience of dancing in another country? If you are serious about working overseas you have to want more than just a dance job – The cultural difference may well prove to be the hardest part of the job.

Find out well in advance who is auditioning and when, then plan a schedule. It will help to know when you may need to have a fill in job to cover costs.

Think about making your travel itinerary around the companies you wish to audition for, by contacting and compiling responses from companies about auditions. Collect notes on each company; make sure all contact details are correct.

Find a company you would be interested in joining and contact them to find out if and when auditions are being held. The earlier you contact companies the more time you have to prepare yourself and your itinerary.

Gather a list of several other companies in the same vicinity in case you need to attend class.

Pre-audition work

Prepare in advance:

- CV – Make sure it's concise (not more than two A4 pages). If you are newly out of training a simple list of your training background will usually be fine. Have your CV up to date and include your local contact details.
- A recent photo, head shot.
- DVD/Video footage of yourself - Make sure the footage is good quality, clear, well lit and not too long. They will need to know who is who and what is going on! Have several copies of it, ready to drop in or send off. Never give away your master copy.

Write a speculation letter or email your expression of interest and always personalise it - address it to the company Director and state why you are interested in working for that particular company. Make it real. Send your CV and photo with the letter and if it's an invitation only audition send your video/DVD.

Follow up with a phone call and try to speak to the company Director. Have your questions prepared and don't waste their time - it won't get you an audition.

Each company is different so always check:

- If they hold an audition
- Audition date
- What experience they are looking for
- Age of dancer required
- Gender
- Height requirements
- Any specifics they may need to tell you so you know whether you are a possibility for the position
- Location of company and location of audition
- How long the audition is expected to last
- Call back date (so you can work out your onward travel)
- Fee if there is one
- What to bring (always bring more rather than less e.g. even if it's a contemporary company take your pointe shoes)
- Whether you need to pre apply, send a video/DVD of yourself
- What the audition style is and who will be taking the audition
- What to expect in the audition (will you need to have solo ready, will you need to be prepared to do voice work)
- What language the audition will be held in
- How many roles are being offered through the audition
- How long the potential contract is and when it would commence
- Pay per annum
- Find out about the artistic policy and company structure
- Contact names of the choreographer, the audition director and the production team (remember these for the audition)

If you are really interested in a company you can ask to watch a rehearsal. It will give you a better understanding of how they operate, what they are looking for (if they are indeed looking) and it shows them you are interested.

Be brave - Look through the audition notices and attend one, two, three... as many as possible without expectations of landing a role. The art of a great audition is all in the practise. Knowing how to audition well is vital.

Preparing for an audition

The more you know about the choreographer's working process the less likely you are to be taken by surprise. See if you can attend a company class before the audition takes place to get to know the style and the teachers.

It is important to be fit to dance as companies don't care whether you've been travelling and haven't attended class - what you show them is what they believe they will be getting.

Will you be fit to dance?

- Will you be jet lagged from travel? (Schedule an extra day to recover after a long flight).
- How is your physical fitness?
- Have you been attending regular classes?
- Have you been eating and sleeping properly?
- Are you keeping in good mental condition?
- Is the partying that you may be doing at the youth hostel you are staying at having a negative effect on your chances of getting a job?

Travelling to the audition

The best advice is be very organised. If you are travelling you need to be prepared for changes of audition days and call backs. Landing a job can destroy the best planned itinerary.

Check well in advance whether you need a visa or work permit – contact the embassy of the country you're visiting or Google "British work visas" or "USA immigration".

What to pack:

- Your CV and head shot in several forms, CD, email, hard copy.
- DVD/Video, master and several copies (leave a master copy at home in case of accident or theft).
- Dance clothes that will serve a range of settings, e.g. clothes that are warm, clothes that show your body to it's best, bright colours to stand out amongst the crowd, enough to go a couple of days away from a laundry.
- Medicine if you are on any, plus comforts like heat rub for sore muscles etc.
- Ear plugs because hostels can be loud and if you have to get up early for an audition you want to sleep as well as possible.
- Jandals to wear in the hostel shower to protect your feet from any nasty fungi that may be lurking.
- A cellphone that works in the country you're in (it's really important people can let you know you've got that job!).
- Keep what you need to a minimum. Remember you will have to carry this around with you. A sturdy back pack or a suitcase with wheels is often a help for tired bodies.

Always arrange a place to stay in advance; it's hard enough dealing with audition nerves without worrying about where you are going to stay and how to get there. Take advantage of friends, cousins, people who know people and take a chance in asking them if you can stay. One day someone may be asking you the same favour.

If possible arrive a day early and find the studio prior to the audition day. Get lost on the day it doesn't matter not on the day it does.

Have enough money to get you from A to B and back, carry your driver's licence and passport (not in the same wallet though, as having them both stolen would be a disaster!).

If you're a nervous first time traveller pre-book everything and it'll take a load off your mind. Be flexible though - you may be 'Called Back' and have to miss a train to the next city or the next audition.

Plan plan plan...and try to think of everything.

The Audition

Be Prepared

Now that you've got the dates and set everything up it's important you are as ready for the audition as possible (and not just physically).

Bring head shot with your name and phone number on the back of it and your CV.

Dress appropriately for the style of dance. Bring a back up outfit if you are auditioning for commercial work. Make sure your outfits are dance proof, and you don't have to be constantly fiddling with your clothes or hair.

Take water and food to the audition - it may run longer than you thought and it's best stay on top of your game by being hydrated and fed.

Be prepared for crowds of people attending the audition. Watch out for your personal space and maintain a good attitude.

Be versatile, you never know what changes have happened since the time you called to find out who is teaching and his/her style.

Warm up thoroughly prior to the audition beginning. This will get your head and body into a good, active and safe space to work to your fullest ability.

Be aware that auditions have a habit of running over time.

During the audition

Hopefully you've established by now what style of dance you will be auditioning in. And that you've asked what they are looking for in an employee. Hold these ideas in mind.

Remember that everything you do from the moment you walk in the door will be noticed and taken into account. Be professional and respectful at all times (and to everyone).

Arrive on time and be willing to work hard.

On entering the audition, address the choreographer, audition director and production team by name. Be polite and remember you are going into their space.

Pay attention. A choreographer wants to see how fast and accurately you pick up movement, dance with their style, how you perform it and how well you retain it.

Be respectful of others in the audition. Not only will a choreographer be looking for dance ability but also how well you work in a team.

Don't draw attention to yourself when waiting your turn on the side.

Be prepared to take risks in the audition, there may be something asked of you that you haven't done before or is unexpected (like reading from a script, or improvising with props).

Take chances with movement, throw yourself into it.

Be confident, perform as if to an audience (which in fact you are) and don't look to the choreographer for validation.

Show your passion about what you are doing and maintain a positive attitude.

Thank the organisers and the choreographer before you leave.

You have only one shot ...perform as if your life depended on it.

Call back

Only go on a call back if you are interested in taking the role. Don't waste their time.

Wear exactly what you wore to the initial audition.

Be ready to expand on what you did in the first audition and to work in more detail.

Ask questions if you don't understand.

What next?

If you get accepted then congratulations!

If you get a no, yet you are really keen to be part of the company don't stop the contact, you never know when they may need you. "Can I take company class?" may land you a role that you didn't get through the audition.

Good luck!

Further information

General information to start with:

www.danz.org.nz

www.ausdance.org.au

www.danceuk.org

www.danceusa.org

www.theplace.org.uk

www.pineapple.uk.com

www.dancemagazine.com/dance_annual

More detailed information related to auditions:

www.liveperformance.com.au/pdf/AuditionsCode.doc

www.answers4dancers.com

www.dance.net

DANZ National; phone (04) 801 9885, Email danz@danz.org.nz

DANZ Tamaki; phone (09) 815 1420, email auckland@danz.org.nz