

In the interest of social distancing and keeping everyone safe and healthy this spring, **ASYO will be holding video auditions for our upcoming 2020-2021 season.** We know that auditioning in general is a newer experience for many young musicians, and video auditions may feel like completely uncharted territory. Auditioning virtually doesn't have to be scary, though, and we've put together some helpful tips to help you prepare. An added bonus: this advice will also be great to keep in mind if applying for summer music camps and festivals that require a video audition!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED FOR A VIDEO AUDITION

- Quiet space
- Music stand/something to put your music on
- Music you plan to record
- Video recording device
- Your instrument!

RECORDING DEVICES

You can record yourself using a wide range of devices—video camera, laptop, or webcam on your desktop computer. The simplest, though, is usually to just use a smartphone. Many phones have excellent video and audio quality that are more than acceptable for your video audition. No need to get fancy—the judges aren't expecting the highest professional quality video, just a decent recording of your playing.

WHERE TO RECORD

An important part of recording a good audition video is preparing your recording space. Some things to keep in mind when picking a space to record:

- **Try to pick the largest space available** to you, like a living room or dining room.
- **Choose a time when the space will be quiet** for at least an hour. Since you'll most likely be recording your video at home, so it's a good idea to talk with your family ahead of time and pick a time when things will be relatively quiet.
- **Consider making a sign** to remind your family that you're recording so that they don't interrupt. This will help remind them that you're doing important work!
- **Make sure the room you record in is tidy** and has minimal distractions. Cleaning up the space will help prepare you to perform well and will also give your audition judge a more professional impression.
- **Ensure that the room is well-lit.** You need to see your music and the judges need to see you! Turn on lamps (bring in extras from another room, if necessary). Avoid back-lighting (where a bright light source behind you turns you into a silhouette on camera) by placing bright lights/windows behind the camera, not behind you.

SET UP YOUR DEVICE

Once you've settled on a time and place to record, you need to set up your recording device. **Make sure that your camera/phone is resting on a stable surface**—you don't want to ruin a great take with a falling camera! If you don't have a phone tripod, don't worry—most people don't. Just get creative. You can use books, or pillows, or even another music stand to prop up your device and make sure you're getting the right shot.

Try to place your recording device at least 8-10 feet away for better audio quality. If that's not possible in your space, place it as far as away as you can.

If you are using your phone, remember to record with the forward facing (not the selfie) camera and turn the phone so it's in landscape (wide) orientation.

Whether you are sitting or standing, your entire body should be included in the shot. This helps the judges assess your technique and posture. For the purposes of the audition, you want to make sure that the judges can see everything that you're doing.

TEST IT OUT

Before doing your official recording, you'll want to do a test to make sure that everything is working. Record a short video of you playing a section of your music, preferably a louder section, then watch the video back, checking to make sure everything looks good and—more importantly—sounds good!

Depending on what device you are using, you may be able to adjust audio or video settings to best suit the recording environment. Try moving the device around the room to see if a certain spot or distance from the camera sounds better.

READY TO RECORD

When recording, you'll want to play through your audition music a few times within one take. Instead of starting and stopping the video every time, just keep recording and go through your audition repertoire two or three times.

Getting the right recording takes time, and you won't get it on the first try.

When you feel like you've gotten enough takes, take a break before coming back to watch your videos. It'll give your mind some time to reset and you'll be able to listen for different things.

When you find the audition run you like best, you can trim the video to include only that particular audition run to submit.

SOME FINAL ADVICE

As you prep for a video audition, keep in mind that the impression you leave the judges matters just as much as if you were doing a live, in-person audition. Dress professionally and sound your best. Like an audition, give yourself the space to make a mistake here and there. We aren't looking for perfection—we are looking for musicality and potential.

Good luck, and play well!

