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DIVERSIONS

Audition lessons learned through trial and error

Actors must balance risk-taking

BY SIMONE JOSEPH
Staff Writer

It took Cassandra Bourne an hour longer than it should have to get to her audition. A snowstorm hit during her drive from Markham to Toronto and she could not see five feet in front of her car.

The practice room was filled with people having lunch, so she could not prepare her song in peace.

She slipped on the wet floor as she headed to the auditioning room.

By the time Ms Bourne reached her audition, she was shaken.

"I couldn't catch my breath," she said.

For performers, auditions are the equivalent of a job interview.

And sometimes, no matter how well you know your repertoire, practise a dance number or run through your lines, things go wrong.

While Ms Bourne has had dozens of successful auditions, the artistic director of the York Region Opera felt she flunked this disastrous audition in Toronto earlier this year.

And for some performers, especially amateurs, a failed audition can be devastating.

Ms Bourne said she learned from this experience how important it is to take extra time to compose yourself.

"Take the time you need. You have to give the best performance you can. Don't be afraid to say, 'I need a moment.'"

A major mistake people sometimes make when auditioning is forgetting to perform and focusing too much on giving a perfect performance, she said.

"You have to have interpretation of the text. You cannot just stand there and sing and hope



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

Cassandra Bourne said many people forget to perform and focus too much on giving a perfect performance during auditions.

you have a lovely technique... we (directors) are looking for someone who can convey an emotion."

Show you understand what you are singing about and you care about the piece you perform, she added.

Jordan Merkur, artistic director for the Red Barn Theatre in Georgina, recommends taking risks in auditions.

"It shows a passion for the work, which is what I'm looking for," he said.

He directed the comedy *The Last Resort*, featuring a character that was an undercover police agent dressed as a woman, called Freida Heitz, last year.

Even though there is an unwritten rule actors are not supposed to touch the table where the director and producer sit, people openly violated that rule.

"A lot were being very funny and campy. You would have six-foot people in heels... People try

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Tips for auditioning

For actors:

Don't try to memorize the script. Instead, familiarize yourself with the copy you should be allowed to have the copy in your hand during the audition for reference. The most important thing to do with the copy is understand what is going on in the scene.

- Don't say you are sorry if you make a mistake during your audition. Simply pick up where you left off. By doing this, you won't draw attention to your mistake.

- Don't block other actors and don't let other actors block you. If you're auditioning with several actors in the room, make sure the casting director or producer can always see their faces and yours.

- The casting director may have you deliver the lines a different way. Be ready to follow his/her direction. Listen carefully so you change your delivery correctly. The biggest mistake an actor can make during an audition is to deliver the lines exactly the same way after he/she was told to do them differently.

For dancers:

- Try not to be the first or last person along the barre. If you are last, there will be no one to follow if you forget the steps. The person who goes first may be given conservative scores or be forgotten by the end.

- When they teach you a combination to perform, try to do it exactly the way the chore-

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Anne Brodie

On Movies

Princely movie falls short with cowardly finish

The Prince and Me

Starring Julia Stiles and Luke Mably

Directed by Martha Coolidge

The ruling demographic, as anyone who watches TV knows, is tweens to 20s — the age you are when you and your friends want to sit in a car and rock out with Big Macs. The age you are when you go on group dates and wait breathlessly for the next film starring Britney Spears or cologne from Mary Kate and Ashley.

The Prince and Me aspires to entertain this age group with a nearly successful re-launching of the Cinderella story. For a long while, it is entertaining. Julia Stiles is salt of the Earth, a mid-west farm girl who has big dreams of a medical career with Doctors Without Borders, travelling the world and saving people. She is enrolled in university and works part-time at the college pub.

One day, who should stroll into her pub but the Prince of Denmark himself? English TV sensation Luke Mably plays the handsome prince with an innate good nature and believability, seemingly oblivious to the awkward and unlikely route the story takes.

He has been a bad prince at home, putting the royal lineage in jeopardy, drag racing (and being allowed to win by his minion friends), and making the rounds of pretty, royal wannabees.

Based on seeing an American low-brow TV sex romp similar to *Girls Gone Wild*, the prince figures happiness awaits him with his very own wild Wisconsin bimbo.

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