

Susan McDonald

Successfully Applying as a Dancer

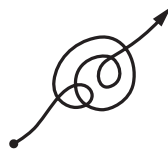
Handout

1. Application email and application letter:

- Every new application should begin with a blank page. The reader can see if you put effort into the application. Not just copy and paste. If you put effort into applying, the reader will put effort into the answer.
- Always know to whom you're addressing the letter or application. Director, choreographer, assistant? Write their name. The reader will not answer "to whom it may concern..."
- Use a formal and respectful tone.
- Clearly state for what you are applying for: an audition, taking class, asking if there are vacancies? Writing, "I want to get to know the company," is vague.
- Do your homework! Look up the choreographer/ theatre website and YouTube.
- Mention choreographers or repertoire pieces which you found interesting and why.
- Include why you then would be right for the company or project.
- Choose 3 words which you think describe yourself and include these in your letter explaining why they are applicable to you. This makes your application more personal and gives the reader an insight into you as a person, not just an application. Make the reader want to meet you.
- My advice: write a motivation extra and attach it to the email like your CV. Keep the email short and state your intention e.g. audition or take classes.

2. Dance Reel:

- Keep the video short, max. 3-4mins.
- Keep it simple. Filming in a dance studio is fine.
- You can make a short introduction where you present yourself personally.
- Ca. every 30sec a change in dynamic. Directors will scroll through and are looking that you show versatility.
- Show lyric quality, dynamic movement and partnering if possible.
- Take excerpts where you're already in flow or motion. The spectator doesn't need to see you enter the space or begin standing still.
- Don't use performance films if the quality is bad or lighting is dark.
- Avoid showing nakedness. The spectator can see your movement quality also with clothes on.
- Make the observer want to see you dance in person!



3. Tips for the day:

- Be early!
- If you're delayed, then call the theatre or send an email explaining why.
- First impression counts.
- Choose clothes which are not too baggy or oversized.
- Present yourself as you want to be seen.
- Be honest and stay true to yourself. Directors see if you're not being genuine.
- Approach all the movement or exercises with an equal open mind and body.
- Move to the front of the group; ask questions about the movement quality if you learn choreography; listen to the details and practise them.
- Take auditions as a positive learning experience. Through each audition, you gain knowledge about yourself and the theatre/ company.
- Don't take a "no" as something personal. The director/ choreographer doesn't know you. Therefore, the rejection is not personal, but regarding your presentation on that one day.
- Send an email afterwards asking for a short feedback as to why you didn't get chosen.

4. From my side:

- Take each application as a new process. Avoid copy and paste!
- Do your research before you send off your application. If I get an application, and I see the person has put effort into knowing about the work we do, I'll put effort into my answer.
- Be genuine: In your dancing but also as a person. If you're unsure about something, then mention it straight away. Don't be afraid to ask questions.
- My advice: If you really like a company, then keep the contact with them. Show your interest and ask to take class and go and watch performances. Dancers get injured, sick, or pregnant, and therefore an extra dancer may be required on short notice. In following auditions, then you will have a better chance if you've shown interest.
- We get for an open audition, between 1000-1200 applications. That means we have for each application ca. 2 mins! First impressions count. (Application letter, layout of CV and Reel.)