

Viola Wisdom from Ellen Rose

Tape to Lose: a guide for the self-destructive

An audition tape for school or a job prospect is a statement about yourself: make sure that it says what you want it to about you, your standards, your depression, your self-destructive attitude. There is never time to prepare repertoire properly; everyone knows that, including those who will listen to the tape. So, go ahead and record the rep, even though you don't know it; it will make a BIG impression. Here are some other rules to follow:

1. Record on your little brother's Tape'n'Play; there's no need to get good, expensive equipment; no one will ever know the difference.
2. Record yourself in a room full of rugs, drapes, and heavy furniture; you can add reverb later electronically.
3. If you can, run the pitch up by speeding the tape up a little; those who listen to your tape will be surprised that you can play the rep in different keys!
4. Make sure to leave the submission of your resume and application to the last moment; they might feel sorry for you and give you a break.
5. It doesn't have to be your most recent playing; last year's audition tape, edited to include the new rep, will do just fine.
6. Do not sacrifice technical perfection for musicality. A musical tape will sound lively, full of character and enthusiasm, whereas a technically perfect tape shows everyone that YOU don't take risks. Extra tip: Splice in some old Primrose recordings for the hard parts.
7. Make sure that the tempi you select for the excerpts are extreme and bizarre; that way you will stand out in the listener's memory.
8. Save your best playing for the practice room; be sure to hold back when you make the tape.
9. Be sure to prepare properly for the taping sessions; late night after a heavy meal, or better yet, an all-nighter, will produce the impression you want.

Good luck! (You'll need it.)