

What to Expect at a Billings Symphony Auditions – for people new to the audition process

Thank you for your interest in the Billings Symphony Orchestra! Sometimes people ask us what to expect in an audition. Here's some information for you:

Billings Symphony Auditions are run in a format that is standard throughout the country. This is especially important for students who may be auditioning for colleges or other orchestras so that they get some experience with the audition process.

When you apply, you will receive an audition packet with the excerpts. Our recommendation is to prepare the excerpts in the following manner:

1. Get the audition packet online as soon as possible.
2. Listen to a recording of the piece so you are familiar with the style and interpretation.
3. Practice slowly and at different tempi so that you can master all of the notes.
4. Practice with a metronome and record yourself (on a phone is fine) playing with the metronome at slower and faster speeds. Many candidates are eliminated because of inaccurate rhythmic subdivisions.
5. Practice the excerpts slowly with an electronic tuner. Phone apps like ClearTune and Tonal Energy are great for this. Tonal Energy also has a metronome and recording capabilities included. Accurate intonation is a critical component for a successful audition.
6. Get coaching. Billings Symphony musicians are available for free coaching if you do not have a teacher, but your private teacher is the best option. Contact the Billings Symphony office (406-252-3610 or symphony@billingsymphony.org) for more information.
7. Practice auditioning! These are called "mock" auditions. The more you can get used to playing under audition circumstances the better. Half of winning an audition is having the experience to control nerves. One of our recent audition winners did a dozen "mock" auditions before auditioning for us.

When you arrive at the audition, you will be given a number and a room to warm up in.

During your audition, do not speak audibly – the screen is there to preserve anonymity. If you have a question, don't hesitate to ask the personnel manager, who will be with you during the audition process.

You will probably be asked to play 3-4 excerpts, but it's possible that fewer excerpts will be requested. Someone will say "thank you" to indicate you are finished. After your audition, wait until you are released.

In a typical audition, results are announced to the entire group of auditionees. For interns, they will be notified individually, and on site. There may be a second round of auditions, during which the same or different excerpts will be requested.

The audition process may seem very impersonal but know that everyone in the audition committee is hoping for you to play your very best! We are honored and appreciative of the effort that it takes to audition and remember that everyone on the committee has gone through the same process.

Thank you for your interest in the Billings Symphony and Chorale and good luck!