



The Harker School Casting and Placement Policy for Upper School Students

First and foremost, all performer placement for Harker productions is fair. Whether for chair position in the orchestra, solos in choir or dance productions, or a role in a play or musical, all performers will be considered for all roles or placement. Casting and placement is decided regardless of any exterior factors outside of each student's effort and abilities relative to their peers.

Considerations that will not play a role in casting or placement include: age, race, color, sexual orientation, relationship with directors or other Harker staff, and annual giving contributions. There are no 'favorites' in the Harker Conservatory at the middle or upper school level. We are not able to cast more students than will fit into a given production or ensemble, although we do make an effort to offer as many opportunities as possible.

Directors will never reconsider casting or placement decisions after the fact. However, students are welcome to come in to speak with a director in private about ways to learn from the audition experience and to get suggestions for the future, ***72 hours after casting results are posted.***

Considerations for S@TC, Fall Play, Student Directed Showcase, & Musical Casting:

Professional actors audition often, and all actors regardless of their level must develop a tolerance for hearing the words "no, thank you." Casting is always out of your control, so if you have done your best to prepare for and complete the audition, you have already succeeded.

The only two things you can control around casting are:

1. your preparation, and
2. your attitude

Focus on these and you are already having a successful audition. Congratulate yourself for bravely auditioning and the good things that happened in your audition and immediately learn from and forgive yourself for anything that didn't go as well as you'd hoped.

Often, there are many actors considered for a role, and we usually have about twice as many people auditioning for roles than we have room to put into cast or ensemble. This means that a large number of people will always be disappointed and there is no way around that. How everyone deals with the casting is the place where true artists emerge from the pack.

An actor's reaction to casting says a great deal about the kind of artist he or she is, and a poor reaction often confirms the wisdom of the casting that caused that reaction.

Considerations for casting in a play or a musical:

- 🎬 Scheduling conflicts must be minimal. Please note that the last two weeks of rehearsals, called Tech Week, are mandatory and no conflicts may exist during that time.
- 🎬 Positive attitude - the cast and crew work closely together and everyone involved must be a member of a positive, collaborative ensemble.
- 🎬 Facility with text - including diction, phrasing and vocal commitment.
- 🎬 Movement and comfort with physical characterization (gestures, posture, etc.)
- 🎬 Preparedness - auditions that are memorized, rehearsed, clearly thought out.
- 🎬 Arc of a given student's training in the Conservatory. Students may be given a challenge in one show and then a role that plays into their strengths in another. The needs of one performer may be the deciding factor for a role.
- 🎬 Age and character type - This includes the look, as well as the energy and temperament that play well for a role. However, we may cast against type on occasion.
- 🎬 Comic timing, if required.
- 🎬 Chemistry with scene partners - the chemistry actors share on stage may play a factor for some roles.
- 🎬 Courage - taking risks in classes, auditions, rehearsals and performances.
- 🎬 Professionalism - the artists involved must have good work habits (being on time, memorizing before the deadline, arriving prepared, etc.)

Successful performers must focus on their preparation and attitude and not worry about what is out of their control. They never pre-cast the show. And finally, successful performers trust the director's casting and understand the complexity of creating an artistic ensemble

Considerations for instrumental group placement and solo assignments:

- All students who wish to enroll in orchestra are welcome to, provided they play one of the approved instruments in the ensemble.
- Auditions consist of performance excerpts from the year's repertoire as well as sight-reading. Excerpts are emailed to students by the end of June.
- Students are judged on articulation, phrasing, tone and rhythmic accuracy.
- Grade and experience level also play a role in placement.
- Orchestra seating is purely organizational and does not impact how involved a student is in the orchestra program.

Considerations for choir placement and solo assignments:

- 🎬 Music reading skills (pitch, rhythm)
- 🎬 Pitch and tonal accuracy and tonal memory
- 🎬 Vocal maturity & tone quality
- 🎬 Vocal technique
- 🎬 Breathing, posture, diction, dynamics
- 🎬 Balanced ensemble
- 🎬 There is no set number of slots to be filled. For example, an ensemble may be as small as six or as large as more than 20, with the exception of Downbeat which is 15-16 members.
- 🎬 Ability to hold own part while singing in mixed formation
- 🎬 Intermediate dance skills (Downbeat)
- 🎬 High performance energy

Choral Solos

Solos likewise are treated the same as regular auditions. Those who choose to audition are considered for the appropriateness of the voice to the solo. Sometimes we will stretch a student when we give him/her a solo, sometimes we will play to his/her strengths.

Considerations for dance placement, choreography and solo assignments:

- 🎬 Scheduling conflicts must be minimal. Please note that the last two weeks of rehearsals, called Tech Week, are always mandatory and no conflicts may exist during that time. For dancers, this means the last week of your designated dance class (or classes), is mandatory, plus the entire last week or technical rehearsals and performances.
- 🎬 Facility in movement and dance experience are primary. What technical dance skills do you possess and at what level are they? Flexibility is also important.
- 🎬 Style of dance (jazz vs. hip-hop, etc). We want to place you in a style that will best suit your abilities; for example, if you are a lyrical dancer and have never tried hip-hop before, we most likely will not place you in a hip-hop dance. Some dancers are ready to be challenged, so we may push them in the direction of a more difficult routine or style.
- 🎬 Energy/commitment to the movement, performance (i.e., smiles)
- 🎬 Attitude and professionalism in rehearsals, backstage, etc. (Are you easy and pleasant to work with?)
- 🎬 How quickly do you learn the movement? Do you practice outside of scheduled rehearsals? Are you prepared to move on at the next rehearsal?

Considerations for theater technology job assignments

- 🎬 Scheduling conflicts must be minimal.
- 🎬 Positive attitude - the cast and crew work closely together and everyone involved must be a member of a positive, collaborative ensemble.

Tech certificate students will be placed according to their needs for the certificate, but other students will be assigned based on the needs of the show, and the needs of the student's growth. Student requests and experience will be considered, but the production staff will make final decisions. Gender, annual giving contributions, family relationships should not be considerations - all effort will be made to be fair.

The Harker Conservatory has a wide variety of exciting opportunities for you. We look forward to seeing you at auditions!