A Few Thoughts on Headshots:

- Choose a photographer that has taken shots that you like. Ask to see a portfolio or a website that shows off her work, and remember that it’s okay to ask questions to make sure that this is the right photographer for you. Do not just go off of someone’s recommendation without looking at other headshots to make sure that she takes photos in the style that you are looking for.

- Know that you are financially ready for a great headshot. Making sure that you will like what you see is really important and you do not want to regret it afterwards. Good headshots are expensive, but are a great investment when starting out your career.

- Try to find a photographer that doesn’t rely on a lot of touch ups, but knows enough about subtle makeup and lighting to take a good shot in the first place.

- In order to make sure that you like your headshots, know your body. The people in the audition want to know that the person walking into their audition is going to look like the person in the picture. Once you’ve decided to get headshots, make sure that your body is in the condition that is you and will best reflect you. A good photographer can be able to help with specific poses that show off your best sides, but also know how you think you look best.

- Show off your best qualities and don’t show the rest. Don’t be too far away, but also don’t get too close. Some of the best headshots don’t show off more than one to three inches below the collarbone on the bottom and cut off the crown of your head about two inches above the hairline. These shots, both vertically and horizontally, usually look really great. For the most part, there is no need to show a whole body shot (waist up) unless you are a dancer and are specifically showing off your body.

- If you are a male, make sure your shot is above the hairline. You will look bald otherwise. For females, straight on is the best. If you are like me and don’t like your arms, get them out of the picture. Beautiful girls often look awful in pictures shot from the side with their arms in the foreground.

- Have a clean background. Don’t have a distracting background such as taking your shot on a street corner or by lots of trees. Some photographers prefer a solid white or black background, but you also might get a good shot out of a texture, such as an old brick/stone wall (these are usually best though when they are not in focus and the camera is only focusing on the person). Remember that these are not modeling shots so you don’t need to show off your surroundings.

- Speaking of them not being modeling shots….please don’t wear something super revealing. The headshot is meant to show off your personality as well as your physical features, and you don’t want to send the wrong message. Remember that people are casting a specific type you want to make sure that your type is reflected in the picture. Too often people look like they are trying to be a model and end up with pouty, blank stares. Awesome shots come from the eyes and the smile. We need to know that there is something inside of you radiating out. We don’t want to think that you are lifeless! Have fun and be you and you will have good headshots.
• Take multiple shots if you have multiple types. You don’t have to send in the same picture if one breakdown calls for the girl next door and another wants a leading ingénue. If you can play both, have two different pictures that represent that.

• Play with shots that are not completely centered. This gives a contemporary feel to the shot.

• Take your headshot in color.

• Keep your hands out of the picture. They usually distract from the face, clutter up the photo, or cause the shot to be too far back. Having at least one shot that is clear of obstructions and if a nice shot of your face (not your body) is also helpful if your photo is being used in the program.

• Get a matte finish on your photos, not glossy. Glossy photos stick to everything and cannot be run very well through a copy machine. This may sound trivial, but your headshot may be being sent to someone who is handling many headshots, is trying to make copies for all parties involved in casting, and if she can’t make a decent copy, it’s really annoying. For the same reason, try to be able to print your resume straight onto the back of the headshot as staples don’t like to be run through the copier.

• Get your headshot digitally. Having the ability to send a high resolution shot along with your resume is crucial.