Drama Audition Brief

Please select one monologue to perform from the list below. You will experience many other types of performance besides working on text on our Drama course (for example, devising, physical theatre and improvisation) but these pieces are representative of some of the 20th and 21st century play-texts that you will also encounter.

We would like you to perform off-script and also to perform any actions that are implied by the script. There are other characters’ voices within some of these monologues; think carefully about how you can distinguish between voices in these cases. Where there is non-standard punctuation or grammar, consider what that indicates about how the piece might be performed.

You may want to look at the rest of the play to put these monologues into context, but we would also be happy to see a fresh interpretation of the piece in isolation.

We are looking for these qualities in your audition:

- Creativity in interpreting the role
- A work ethic shown in your preparation
- Individuality
- Enthusiasm

Audition scripts:

**Female roles:**

- Caryl Churchill – *Escaped Alone* (2016)

**Male roles:**

- Tennessee Williams – *The Glass Menagerie* (1944)
- Athol Fugard - *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1972)

**Winnie:** And now? [Long pause.] Was I lovable once, Willie? [Pause.] Was I ever lovable? [Pause.] Do not misunderstand my question, I am not asking you if you ever loved me, we know all about that, I am asking you if you ever found me lovable – at one stage. [Pause.] No? [Pause.] You can’t? [Pause.] Well I admit it is a teaser. And you have done more than your bit already, for the time being, just lie back now and relax, I shall not trouble you again unless I am compelled to, just to know you are there within hearing and conceivably on the semi-alert is … er … paradise enow. [Pause.] The day is now well advanced. [Smile.] To speak in the old style. [Smile off.] And yet it is perhaps a little soon for my song. [Pause.] To sing too soon is a great mistake, I find. [Turning towards bag.] There is of course the bag. [Looking at bag.] The bag. [Back front.] Could I enumerate its contents? [Pause.] Could I, if some kind person were to come along and ask, What all have you got in that big black bag, Winnie? give an exhaustive answer? [Pause.] No. [Pause.] The depths in particular, who knows what treasures. [Pause.] What comforts. [Turns to look at bag.] Yes, there is the bag. [Back front.] But something tells me, Do not overdo the bag, Winnie, make use of it of course, let it help you … along, when stuck, by all means, but cast your mind forward, something tells me, cast your mind forward, Winnie, to the time when words must fail – [she closes eyes, pause, opens eyes] – and do not overdo the bag.

**Jenny:** I’m Jenny, I’ve told you who I am. We’re neighbours. You’ve probably seen me getting into my car – or – like your husband over there – watched me in the mornings taking off my uniform when I’ve driven back totally exhausted from the hospital at a time when most people are getting up and listening to the radio while they have their breakfast. In fact I could probably fall asleep there and then, but what I like to do instead is curl up in a chair with a nice piece of toast or a nice egg and watch one of those old black-and-white films on TV. Today for example there was one where Humphrey Bogart pretends to be in love with Audrey Hepburn but ends up loving her – really and truly loving her. After that – well you’ve probably heard – I like to play the piano for a bit. I’m not too bad at playing the piano – I took it quite seriously as a child – and I always warm up with scales and things like that – but the funny thing is, is that although I can get all the notes and understand just how intensely the composer must’ve imagined it, there’s no life to my playing. Emotionally it’s dead. Because you know what it’s like when the sun shines of a TV screen so the picture disappears and all you see is the glass surface of it? Well that’s what my playing’s like – hard and colourless.

**Sally:** … cats are filthy their bites are poison they bite you and the bite festers, but that’s not it that’s not it I know that’s just an excuse to give a reason I know I’ve no reason I know it’s just cats cats themselves are the horror because they’re cats and I have to keep them out … a cat could be under the bed in the duvet in the pillowcase in the wardrobe a cat could be in a shoe on a hanger under my dress in a woolly hat inside a coat sleeve a cat could be in any of the drawers so I tip them all out and shake every – cat behind the books on the shelf behind the dvds a cat could be in the teapot with the keys a cat could be on the ceiling a cat could be on top of a door a cat could be behind me a cat could be under my hand when I put out my hand. I need someone to say there’s no cats, I need to say to someone do you smell cat, I need to say do you think there’s any way a cat could have got in, and they have to say of course not, they have to say of course not, I have to believe them, it has to be someone I believe, I have to believe they’re not just saying it, I have to believe they know there are no cats, I have to believe there are no cats. And then briefly the joy of that.
Tennessee Williams, *The Glass Menagerie* (1944)

**Tom:** What do you think I’m at? Aren’t I supposed to have any patience to reach the end of, Mother? You think I’m crazy about the warehouse? You think I’m in love with the Continental Shoemakers? You think I want to spend fifty-five years down there in that celotex interior? With fluorescent tubes? Look, I’d rather somebody picked up a crowbar and battered out my brains than go back mornings. But I go. For sixty-five dollars a month I give up all that I dream of doing and being, ever! And you say self- self’s all I ever think of. Why listen, if self is what I thought of Mother, I’d be where he is, GONE! I’m going to the movies! I’m going to opium dens, yes, opium dens, Mother. I’ve joined the Hogan Gang, I’m a hired assassin, I carry a tommy gun in a violin case. I run a string of cat houses in the Valley. They call me Killer, Killer Wingfield. I’m leading a double life: a simple, honest warehouse worker by day, by night, a dynamic czar of the underworld, Mother. On occasion they call me El Diablo.

Oh I could tell you many things to make you sleepless. My enemies plan to dynamite this place. They’re going to blow us all sky high some night. I’ll be glad, very happy, and so will you! You’ll go up, up on a broomstick, over Blue Mountain with seventeen gentleman callers.

You ugly, babbling old witch....

**Hamm:** Enough of that, it’s story time, where was I? *(Pause. Narrative tone.)* The man came crawling towards me, on his belly. … No, I've done that bit. *(Pause. Narrative tone.)* … He raised his face to me, black with mingled dirt and tears. … Come on now, come on, present your petition and let me resume my labours. *(Pause. Normal tone.)* There’s English for you. … *(Narrative tone.)* … It’s my little one, he said. … My little boy, he said, as if the sex mattered. Where did he come from? He named the hole. A good half-day, on horse. … It was a howling day, I remember … The wind was tearing up the dead pines and sweeping them… away. *(Pause. Normal tone.)* A feeble bit, that. *(Narrative tone.)* Come on, man, speak up, what is it you want from me, I have to put up my holly. *(Pause.)* Well to make it short it finally transpired that what he wanted from me was … bread for his brat? Bread? But I have no bread, it doesn’t agree with me. Good. Then perhaps a little corn? *(Pause. Normal tone.)* That should do it. *(Narrative tone.)* Corn, yes, I have corn, it’s true, in my granaries. But use your head. I give you some corn, a pound, a pound and a half, you bring it back to your child and you make him—if he's still alive—a nice pot of porridge. … A nice pot and a half of porridge, full of nourishment. Good. The colours come back into his little cheeks—perhaps. And then? *(Pause.)* I lost patience. *(Violently.)* Use your head, can’t you, use your head. You’re on earth, there’s no cure for that!
Athol Fugard, *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1972)

**Styles:** I used to like General Cleaning. Nothing specific, you know, little bit here, little bit there. But that day! Yessus … in came the big machines with hot water and brushes – sort of electric mop – and God knows what else. We started on the floors. The oil and dirt under the machines was thick, man. All the time the bosses were walking around watching us:

*[Slapping hands together as he urges on the ‘boys’.]*

‘Come on boys! It’s got to be spotless! Big day for the plant!’ Even the big boss, the one we only used to see lunch-times, walking to the canteen with a big cigar in his mouth and his hands in his pockets … that day? Sleeves rolled up, running around us:

‘Come on! Spotless, my boys! Over there, John …’ I thought: ‘What the hell is happening?’ It was beginning to feel like hard work, man. I’m telling you we cleaned that place – spot-checked after fifteen minutes! … like you would have thought it had just been built.

First stage of General Cleaning finished. We started on the second. Mr ‘Baas’ Bradley came in with paint and brushes. I watched:

W-h-i-t-e l-i-n-e

*[Mr ‘Baas’ Bradley paints a long white line on the floor.]*

What’s this? Been here five years and I never seen a white line before. Then:

*[Mr ‘Bass’ Bradley at work with the paint-brush.]*

CAREFUL THIS SIDE. TOW MOTOR IN MOTION.

*[Styles laughs.]*

It was nice, man. Safety-precautions after six years.