



## Resources For Youth Theatres

### Advice Sheet: Auditioning for Drama School

Many of our members in youth theatre want to go on and pursue theatre studies, drama or acting at third level. In many instances that means choosing the course that is right for you and auditioning. Here is a quick guide for those wishing to pursue study at third level.

#### Choosing The Right Course

When choosing the right course or school it is worth considering the following:

- Is this course more academic or practical? What are you interested in?
- Is the course a full time commitment over several years?
- Are there course fees? How much are they and are there grants available?
- How reputable is the course? Talk to some recent graduates, does the course content live up to the prospectus? How skilled are the teaching staff? Does it offer good value for money?
- What other 'hidden costs' are involved? Books, equipment, accommodation fees etc.
- Each course has its own particular criteria for auditions. Find out exactly what they are.
- How difficult is it to secure a place?
- What type of training does it provide? Is it specific to one style of acting or does it cover a broad range of disciplines?
- Audition for more than one school. Keep your options open.
- Look at other courses of study. Ultimately, acting may not be for you.

#### Choosing Your Audition Speeches

Every performance-based course is by audition, interview and maybe workshop too. Generally you will be asked to prepare two contrasting audition speeches or monologues. When choosing monologues or speeches for auditioning for drama school the choice may seem limitless. Where do you begin? Here are the essentials:

- It must come from a published and already performed play.
- It must be 3 minutes maximum. It is ok to go slightly over by a few seconds. Time yourself at home.
- Choose speeches that you really like, that you connect with and 'speak' to you. Pick something that you are interested in and excited by as this will come across in your performance.
- If you have a favourite speech from a play that you have already performed in or have seen performed then choose that. You will already know the lines and have a greater understanding of the material.

- It must be an actual monologue. Do not cobble together pieces of dialogue with the respondent's dialogue removed. No poetry or film scripts.
- Must be age and gender appropriate. No playing way beyond your age range. They want to see you, not a caricature of a 60 year old.
- Do not just take a monologue from a book of audition speeches. If you see a piece you like in a monologue book, find the play, read it and then decide. Questions may be asked of the character and context of the speech.
- Pick two contrasting pieces; one that may be very dramatic and thoughtful and one that is light and comic. Pick pieces that will show variety and your strengths, both physically and emotionally.
- You will generally be asked to prepare one modern and one classical monologue. Check each school for exactly what they are looking for.
- Modern monologues are generally seen as anything from 1960's onwards. However, this could be also from the last 100 years.
- Classical is usually seen as Shakespeare but can also include Webster, Marlowe and Greek, Jacobean or Restoration period. It must be written in a heightened language, i.e. verse.

## Practice and Preparation

Practice and preparation is essential. Every good actor rehearses and puts a lot of work into every performance, so should you.

- Start work on your speeches well in advance. There is no point picking something the night or week before you are due to go in and frantically trying to learn it. Do not cram for it. Staying up late the night before to try and learn a speech really won't do you any favours.
- If the speech is accent specific, pick one that you are confident in performing in. Your acting shouldn't just be about just doing an accent. Similarly if you are doing a Shakespearean speech don't focus on doing it in a 'posh' voice, it will just come across as stuffy and unimaginative.
- Really investigate the text. Read the whole play. Ask questions of the character and understand what every line means. If in doubt, do your research or ask someone.
- Make strong, definite and bold choices about the character, text and actions. Even if they turn out to be wrong choices they are more exciting to watch than some half-hearted attempt at nothing in particular.
- Practice your speeches as often as you can. Maybe set time aside once or twice a week to begin with and a little more closer to the time.
- Learn the lines thoroughly. Know them well enough that you can say it while washing the dishes. There is nothing worse than watching someone struggle vainly to remember lines when we should be concentrating on their acting talents.
- Do not recite the piece. That is boring and unimaginative. Instead focus on the truthfulness of the situation, show the character and tell a story.
- Get someone to help you, a drama teacher or youth theatre leader. Choose someone who knows a bit about acting. Be mindful of people charging excessive amounts of money for this service.
- If you have a friend also auditioning, maybe work together. Offer each other feedback and perform for each other.
- Do it in front of your friends and family. If you can't do it in front of them, how can you expect to do it in front of a room full of strangers?
- Look for and expect constructive criticism. You don't have to agree with it but be prepared for it.

- Try and build up your monologue repertoire. Have several different types of speeches you can use if asked.
- Try and go to see as much theatre as you can. Watch different actors in action; see the many different styles of performance, play and production. This will also give you something to talk about in the interview. You may also see some monologues that you may like to perform.

## At The Audition

- Arrive in plenty of time, at least 20 minutes before your call time. Identify yourself to the person in charge of registration.
- Wear comfortable neutral cloths. Don't wear excessive jewellery or too much make up. Avoid long scarves or anything that will distract.
- If you have long hair tie it back, off your face. They want to see you not your hairstyle.
- Be polite and courteous to everyone, don't engage in bitchiness or excessive bragging.
- Focus on yourself. Don't be intimidated by other auditionees and their tales of theatrical glory.
- Try and remain calm and focused before you go in. Being nervous is normal, try and harness that energy in a positive way.
- Be yourself. This may sound obvious but the auditionees want to see who you are and what your talents are. Don't try and be someone you are not as they will see through this. Also if you are concentrating on putting on a front you won't be able to concentrate on acting.
- Go to the bathroom before you go in. Again this sounds obvious but you don't want to be distracted by anything while you are in there.
- Don't introduce your piece with an overly long-winded explanation as to what it is.
- Take your time. Don't rush straight into your first speech when they ask you to start. Take a few moments to get yourself ready and only start when you feel you are. This is your time.
- Remember you only have a short space of time to make an impression. Use that time effectively.
- Enjoy yourself. Let them see that you are a smart, confident and talented actor who loves performing.
- Don't expect perfection. Remember they are not looking for the perfect article at this stage. Instead they are looking for someone they feel has potential.
- If you make a mistake, big or small, forget about it straight away. Don't apologise. Take a moment and then continue as you intended.
- They may ask you to redo your speech differently. This is neither good or bad, they may just want to see if you can think on your feet or take direction. Similarly they may stop you, this is not an indication of how well you are doing.
- Listen to the questions you are being asked. Don't waffle on unnecessarily.
- Don't be surprised or disappointed if they offer you no feedback. You may just get a friendly thank you and that is it, the end of the audition.

## After the Audition

Your time in there will pass very quickly. It may well be a blur. Take it for what it was. If you think you did well, then be satisfied that you did a good job. If you think you did badly, do

not beat yourself up about it. Remember there are several people in there looking at you so they will all see different things, good and bad. You may have to hang around to attend a workshop audition. If so, then relax and treat the workshop as a new opportunity to shine. Your speeches are done and dusted by then so don't sit on your laurels if you think you did well or give up if you think they went badly. If you have to wait several months for a call back for a second round of auditions then just focus on other auditions or your school work.

## What happens if you are offered a place?

If you are offered a place then, well done. You could be on the road to becoming an actor. Now the hard work really starts. If you are offered more than one place, then really it's up to you to decide. Pick the one that you really want to do.

## What happens if you not offered a place?

- Competition for drama schools is very tough. Especially for the most prestigious ones. Remember that there are people auditioning from all over the world for very limited places on some of these courses.
- There are many factors in choosing a successful candidate. Talent is the overriding factor but there are things that may simply be beyond your control. They are looking for people that they can work with over a period of two to three years and it simply may not be your time.
- It's not the end of the world. There are plenty more opportunities to audition. If you are serious, then be prepared to fail and try again and again.
- Rejection is a huge part of being an actor. If you cannot deal with it at this stage then you really aren't cut out to be an actor. This may sound harsh but this is the reality of the life of an actor. If you are not prepared for this, then really think about doing something else.
- Take the time and opportunity to work on your audition speeches and add to your repertoire.
- There is always next year.

## Where to find monologues

Here are some useful places to find monologues. Remember to have a good knowledge of the whole play. Monologues for younger actors; those in their teens to twenties can be more difficult to find.

For classical and Shakespeare see:

- <http://absoluteshakespeare.com/>
- <http://shakespeare-monologues.org/men/>
- <http://shakespeare-monologues.org/women>
- <http://www.monologuearchive.com/>

For contemporary Irish monologues and speeches check out the work of those listed and especially the plays mentioned:

- Mark O'Rowe - Terminus, Howie The Rookie;
- Eugene O'Brien- Eden;
- Gary Duggan - Monged;
- Elaine Murphy- Little Gem;

- Philip McMahon Danny and Chantelle, Still Here;
- Brian Friel- Translations;
- Enda Walsh- Disco Pigs, Penelope, Sucking Dublin;
- Marina Carr, Dermot Bolger, Ursula Rani Sarma;
- Martin McDonagh- The Cripple of Inishmaan, The Lonesome West;
- Conor McPherson – This Lime Tree Bower.

Some other useful books are:

- The Methuen book of Modern Monologues for Women. Edited by Chrys Salt;
- The Methuen book of Modern Monologues for Men. Edited by Chrys Salt;
- Contemporary Irish Monologues: 60 audition speeches for men and women. Edited by Jim Culleton & Clodagh O Donoghue;
- Audition Speeches for Young Actors 16+ Edited by Jean Marlow.

## Some drama schools in Ireland...

- The Lir Academy <http://www.thelir.ie/>
- Gaiety School Of Acting <http://www.gaietyschool.com/>
- Liberties College Bull Alley <https://www.libertiescollege.ie/courses/>
- Colastie Dhulaigh <https://www.cdcfe.ie/courses-categories/performing-arts/>
- Dundalk Institute of Technology <http://tinyurl.com/y4j8xvkf>
- Inchicore College of Further Education  
[https://www.inchicorecollege.ie/our\\_courses/](https://www.inchicorecollege.ie/our_courses/)
- Sallynoggin College of Further Education <http://tinyurl.com/yxa6tqk6>
- Kinsale College <https://www.kinsalecollege.ie/theatre-performance-5.html>

## ... and the UK

RADA <http://www.rada.ac.uk/>

LAMDA <http://www.lamda.org.uk/>

Royal Central School of speech and Drama <http://cssd.ac.uk/>

Drama Centre <http://tinyurl.com/y49u9jbf>

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland <https://www.rcs.ac.uk/>

Also check out the following: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wfRhIA9yLi0>

***Always check the website of individual institutions for the most up to date information on course requirements, deadlines and course fees.***

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