

How to Work On a Monologue

First, performing a monologue is not fundamentally different from acting a role in a full-length play.

- There are some differences, obviously, between performing an entire role in a full production and doing a 2 min audition piece; but these differences are really rather superficial and are not nearly as critical as many teachers of so-called 'Audition' workshop would have you believe.

The best definition I know of acting is this: *Acting is human behavior under imaginary circumstances.*

- As Stanislavski says in his book AN ACTOR PREPARE: Never lose yourself on the stage. You can never get away from yourself. The moment you lose yourself on the stage marks the departure from truly living your part and the beginning of exaggerated false acting. Therefore, no matter how much you act, how many parts you take, you should never allow yourself any exception to the rule of using your own feeling. To break that rule is the equivalent of killing the person you are portraying, living, human soul, which is the real source of life for a part.
- Always and forever, when you are on stage, you must play yourself. But it will be in an infinite variety of combinations of objectives and given circumstances which you have prepared for your part and which have been smelted in the furnace of your emotion memory.

4 Questions to ask yourself:

- 1: Who are you talking to?
- 2: What do you want from them? What do you need from them?
- 3: What do you need to do to get it? (This is your ACTION)
- 4: What do they do in response to your trying to get whatever it is you want? And how do you adjust accordingly?

Other Things To Think About:

- The moment before: First action comes in response to something
EXPECT TO WIN!!!

Monologues only get long because you don't get what you want right off the bat: They are not memorized speeches.

- Be careful of list: Make sure they grow organically

- The stakes must be high but never artificially boost them up so as snuff out any life.
The higher the stakes the better: The more you can personalize, the better.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS THAT YOU ARE WORKING MOMENT-TO-MOMENT, THAT YOU ARE ALIVE AND REALLY DOING YOUR ACTIONS.

Better to be simple and believable and perhaps not as emotionally full as you would like than to pretend like you're sad or happy or whatever.

- Always make some kind of choice; bland is worse than not trying something. On the other hand, again, only make a choice which you can support organically.
- **Make your MONOLOGUE a DIALOGUE**
The more you can ACTIVATE the other person the better.
USE active verbs to express you emotions and feelings and this helps

APPROACH THE ROLE JUST AS YOU WOULD ANY OTHER ROLE; DON'T SHORTCHANGE YOURSELF BECAUSE YOU'RE ONLY DOING 1 TO 2 MINS.

YOU MUST DO THE SAME KIND OF PREPARATION YOU WOULD DO FOR AN ENTIRE ROLE

READ THE PLAY AND DO NECESSARY RESEARCH

So what do you look for in an audition monologue?

- Don't show off your range. Show the auditors, casting directors, etc., that you can ACT. That is, pick a character who is relatively close to you in age and don't pick a scene or character that is too far-out or bizarre. The auditors and casting directors are ultimately not interested in how clever or how courage you are: They want to know if you can act. PLEASE DON'T BEG.
- So choose pieces that will show-off your strengths: DO WHAT YOU DO BEST.
- And don't choose a piece that is too demanding emotionally - you're just setting yourself up.

Second, use only well-written monologues

- First and foremost, pick one that has a **CLEAR ACTION**; talky, narrative monologues don't make it (Ones that just

TELL A STORY, or, for instance where the character is just recounting some past event); The character must be trying to get something from whoever it is he/she is talking to he/she must be playing an action.

- Next, make sure THE RELATIONSHIPS are clear
- Next, make sure the stakes are high: Your monologue must not be about the day that nothing happened; but it should also not demand anything emotionally of you which you can't prepared for on the spot.
- The monologue must BUILD to something, it must have some shape: it should go somewhere-it should not just be a character rattling on to no effect; and it should end with a GOOD BUTTON: a nice clean ending.
- **Beat** is a subject change, a mood change. A mood change from one sentence to another, by using an action verb and using an action verb helps you becoming better in doing a monologue. The monologue comes alive when you read the piece aloud and becoming a better actor.

Here are some other tips on picking good monologues:

- Internal, reflecting pieces don't work as well as ones directed outward to another character(s)
- Avoid dialogues that require you and the auditor to imagine a verbal response from the other imaginary character -this just comes across as silly
- Usually, though not always, avoid overdone or very famous selections; but if you can do them well, go for it.

Good sources for monologues

- There are many good collection of monologues you can order collections by phone by calling
The Drama Book Shop: 212/944-0595
Or Theater Books: 212/757-2834

One example: THE ACTOR'S BOOK OF CONTEMPORARY STAGE MONOLOGUES, Nina Shengold, Ed

- But look anywhere for good pieces: Novels/Movies are good sources of monologues - keep your eyes open and ears too - can find lots of interesting material in novels and movies
- Write your own: But it must be a good one (clear, strong action clear relationship, etc) Make up play, author, etc.

NOTE: I believe you can do it, its tough out there and criticism can help you or break you. Remember your self-esteem. Don't bring yourself down if you don't get anything.

If you want to be in the business of acting, be a professional and act like you're in the business of acting.

NOTES: Once you found a good monologue, make a copy of it. Or type it up, for it can be readable for you to read and save a copy on your computer, disk, or flash drive that means you have a clean copy every time you print it out. If you have good handwriting that's fine too. With your copy of the monologue, mark whatever you need to do to for example your active verbs. SEE SAMPLE. If you are auditioning in front of casting director please do not give your draft away. Keep extras copies of your monologue. That's what I did. You can use my ideas.

I found this on YouTube on what Casting Directors look for. Please check it out.

ANOTHER TIP: Use YouTube in part of research of musicals plays or other plays. Sneak peeks of musicals.

NOTES: I got this information from my class in Acting Class. You can use it.