

BA (Hons) Acting

Interview and Audition Guidelines

For your audition and interview, you should prepare two pieces: a speech from a play by William Shakespeare, in blank verse and speech from a Modern or Contemporary play. Try to choose one speech that you feel is close to you or which you can identify with. Choose the other piece to reveal a different side of your abilities. In preparing the speeches you should have read and be familiar with the plays from which they have been taken so that you understand the character and the context within which they find themselves. You may also be asked questions about your choices and the plays they come from in your interview.

When choosing and preparing your audition speeches please consider the following:

- Each piece should be approximately 1-2 minutes long when performed.
- Please do not deliver your speeches directly to the audition panel. If your character is speaking to the audience then place your audience just above and behind the panel.
- Choose pieces that speak to you, that get you excited to perform them. Don't try to pick pieces that you think we will like. Pick pieces that YOU like!
- Try to avoid speeches from the "Best Monologues of...." books. Read plays and look for something a bit unusual or less obvious.
- Choose pieces that are ACTIVE. Pieces in which the character wants something, now, from someone else. The "someone else" might be a character in the play or could be the audience. (See the samples below). Avoid "story pieces" in which the character is relating a previous event. The best pieces involve the character doing something NOW.

At the audition/interview you will have the opportunity to present your prepared speeches to the panel, who will then interview you. Your performance may be recorded on video by a member of the panel so that it can be reviewed at a later stage. The actual interview and audition will take about ten minutes.

At the end of your audition/interview you may wish to ask for feedback on your performances. We are happy to give you feedback on the day of your audition, but will be unable to do so at a later date. We usually do not give feedback unless we are specifically asked for it. Any feedback we do give should not be taken as an indication of the outcome of your audition and interview.

Below are examples of the kind of pieces you might consider. Please do not use these pieces for your own auditions. We want to see what YOU choose!

Examples:

Male Quotations Shakespeare Plays

A Midsummer Night's Dream - Character: *Lysander*

'Content with Hermia? No; I do repent the tedious minutes I with her have spent. Not Hermia, but Helena I love. Who will not change a raven for a dove? The will of man is by his reason swayed and reason says you are the worthier maid. Things growing are not ripe until their season; So I, being young, till now ripe not to reason. And touching now the point of human skill, reason becomes the marshal to my will, and leads me to your eyes, where I o'erlook love's stories written in love's richest book.'

Male Quotations Contemporary Plays

The Seagull by Anton Chekhov - Character: *Kostya*

'You see? My mother doesn't love me. No wonder. She wants to live, have affairs, wear bright clothes, and I'm twenty-five already, a constant reminder to her that she's no longer young. She's thirty-two when I'm not here, and forty-three when I am, that's why she hates me. And she knows I've no time for the theatre. She loves the theatre, she thinks she's serving humanity, a sacred art, but as far as I'm concerned the theatre of today's stuck in a rut, boring and conventional.'

Pygmalion by Bernard Shaw - Character: *Higgins*

'Eliza: you are to live here for the next six months, learning how to speak beautifully, like a lady in a florist's shop. If you're good and do whatever you're told, you shall sleep in a proper bedroom, and have lots to eat, and money to buy chocolates and take rides in taxis. If you're naughty and idle you will sleep in the back kitchen among the black beetles, and be walloped by Mrs Pearce with a broomstick. At the end of six months you shall go to Buckingham Palace in a carriage, beautifully dressed. If the King finds out you're not a lady, you will be taken by the police to the Tower of London, where your head will be cut off as a warning to other presumptuous flower girls. If you are not found out, you shall have a present of seven-and-sixpence to start life with as a lady in a shop. If you refuse this offer you will be a most ungrateful wicked girl; and the angels will weep for you. (To Pickering) Now are you satisfied, Pickering? (To Mrs Pearce) Can I put it more plainly and fairly, Mrs Pearce?'

Female Quotations Shakespeare Plays

Romeo and Juliet - Character: *Juliet*

'The clock struck nine when I did send the Nurse; In half an hour she promised to return. Perchance she cannot meet him: that's not so. O, she is lame! Love's heralds should be thoughts, which ten times faster glides than the sun's beams, driving back shadows over low'ring hills; Therefore do nimble-pinioned doves draw love, And therefore hath the wind-swift Cupid wings. Now is the sun upon the high most hill of this day's journey, and from nine till twelve is three long hours, yet she is not come.'

A Midsummer Night's Dream - Character: *Helena*

'Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born? When at your hands did I deserve this scorn? Is't not enough, is't not enough young man, that I did never, no, nor never can, deserve a sweet look from Demetrius' eye, but you must flout my insufficiency? Good troth, you do me wrong, good sooth, you do, in such disdainful manner me to woo! But fare you well: perforce, I must confess, I thought you lord of more true gentleness. O, that a lady of one man refused should of another therefore be abused!'

Female Quotations Contemporary Plays

Les Liaisons Dangereuses by Christopher Hampton - Character: *Merteuil*

'I had no choice, did I, I'm a woman. Women are obliged to be far more skilful than men, because who ever wastes time cultivating inessential skills? You think you put as much ingenuity into winning us as we put into losing: well, it's debatable, I suppose, but from then on, you hold every ace in the pack. You can ruin us whenever the fancy takes you: all we can achieve by denouncing you is to enhance your prestige. We can't even get rid of you when we want to: we're compelled to unstitch, painstakingly, what you would just cut through. We either have to devise some way of making you want to leave us, so you'll feel too guilty to harm us; or find a reliable means of blackmail: otherwise you can destroy our reputation and our life with a few well-chosen words. So of course I had to invent: not only myself, but ways of escape no one else has ever thought of, not even I, because I had to be fast enough on my feet to know now to improvise. And I've succeeded, because I always knew I was born to dominate your sex and avenge my own.'

Pygmalion by Bernard Shaw - Character: *Liza*

(Desperate) 'Oh, you are a cruel tyrant. I can't talk to you: you turn everything against me: I'm always in the wrong. But you know very well all the time that you're nothing but a bully. You know I can't go back to the gutter, as you call it, and that I have no real friends in the world but you and the Colonel. You know well I couldn't bear to live with a low common man after you two; and it's wicked and cruel of you to insult me by pretending I could. You think I must go back to Wimpole Street because I have nowhere else to go but father's. But don't you be so sure that you have me under your feet to be trampled on and talked down. I'll marry Freddy, I will, as soon as I'm able to support him.'