

Book That Job eZine

Choosing Monologues That Will Set Your Auditions on Fire

Actors know that having a great set of audition monologues is an absolute *must*. But it's that word "great" that can often put an actor into the throes of agony. You read the audition notices, you see what it is that the auditioners are looking for, and with a plummeting heart you realize that you have nothing suitable to audition for a role for which you are perfect.

Finding a great audition monologue is definitely a challenge. As an actor, you may feel the pressure to be out auditioning so you choose the first semi-decent piece that comes along. It's good enough, you figure; better not waste anymore time and get moving on learning this piece. Maybe you like the piece, but perhaps you do not love it. It gets the job done, but that's all it does. You show up to an audition, you do the piece, it falls flat and you move on to the next audition.

There is an easier way! Yes, finding your own perfect audition monologue is a little like looking for that ubiquitous needle in a haystack, but it is a search that is well worth your labor and will ultimately pay you back in spades.

I want to focus today on the different kinds of audition monologues that are out there for the choosing. The real focus here is to understand which kind of monologue will get you the most mileage when you step into that audition room so that you can ultimately book that job.

1) **STORY**: In my experience, this is one of the deadliest audition pieces an actor can choose.

EXAMPLE: I remember the day a long time ago, this incredible thing happened in my life that was oh so XYZ. I remember the day so clearly...it was like this and it was like that. I said such and such to so-and-so and they looked back to me with that special look that they always get on their face. I said to them this thing and then they said that thing to me, and then my mother came into the room and said this, and this, and this. And then the early morning breeze blew in...and so on and so forth...etc. etc.

Are you still with me? No, I didn't think so—and neither are your auditioners. A piece like this in the middle of a play really is pure magic. We have been on a journey with the character and as an audience member we are so curious as to why this particular character is the way they are. We, the audience, finally learn that secret and are relieved as things start to make sense as to who this person really is.

But in an audition situation, the auditioners have not had the benefit of going on the journey with this character. You have plopped them into the middle of the story and they don't really know what's going on. And typically, before you can get that "special secret" out, the auditioners—who most likely have already heard many pieces by the time you enter the room—have stopped paying attention.

For the actor, this kind of piece is also a challenge. Because the stakes are low, it's easy to want to try to fall back on emotion or mood (and, may I remind you, what does mood spell backwards? That's right!). On a busy audition day, you want something that's quickly going to get you moving forward and a piece like this just does not have enough engine power.

2) **RANT**: For the most part, another kind of audition piece to be avoided.

EXAMPLE: I don't like it when this thing happens!!! It makes me so upset and crazy. It goes like this and it goes like that...and it really makes me angry when such and such happens! Why does this happen? And why does it happen to me? And again, on and on and on...

This is actually a much easier audition piece for an actor to tap into, but again it will leave you no place to go because it usually is all about what this character does not want rather than something that they actually *do* want.

The auditioners may stick with you for little longer than the story-centric monologue, but at some point they most likely will perceive this piece as being all one note and you will lose them.

3) **ACTIVE:** This is the kind of piece that will really energize the audition room.

EXAMPLE: This is the thing that I want. And I know that you could help me get it. It's so important to me to have XYZ thing in my life. This particular short moment happen to me and now I am a changed person. I am now making a deep and personal appeal as to why I should have this incredible thing in my life. I know having this will make my life so much better. Please, won't you help me make it happen/give it to me/tell me how to get it etc. etc.

I bet I have your attention here, and that's just the kind of focused attention you want your auditioners to give you. For whatever reason you want something powerful by the end of this piece and you spend the whole piece doing anything and everything to get it. Maybe you get it by the end and maybe you don't, but you go on a journey and you take everyone in the audition room along with you. And isn't that just the reason why we all love film, theater, TV in the first place?

This piece is also much easier for an actor to step into if you've been running from appointment to appointment. You clearly and simply know what it is that you want and you go for it. It's a whole lot easier than putting yourself through a lot of emotional gymnastics. If you're fighting 100% for something that's important to you, that's where your focus is and emotions will follow.

A quick disclaimer—yes, there will be some story-focused and rant pieces that will prove the exception to the rule. The audition room is your laboratory and the final test of your audition pieces. If you've got a story-focused or rant piece that continually gets you work—for goodness sake, keep using it!

But if you keep hitting the wall, try making a shift to choosing active monologues and see how that might revitalize your auditions and your acting career to boot.

About This eZine

© 2012 Rhonda Musak, All rights reserved.

"Choosing Monologues That Will Set Your Auditions on Fire" can be found online at <http://bit.ly/MNi1aJ>

You are free to use material from the Book That Job eZine in whole or in part, as long as you include complete attribution, including live website link. Please also notify me at rhonda@artandsoulacting.com as to where the material will appear.

The attribution should read:

"By Rhonda Musak of Art & Soul Acting. Please visit Rhonda's website at www.artandsoulacting.com for additional articles and resources on acting."

(Please make sure the link is live if placed in an eZine or in a web site.)