



MADRAS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
(An Autonomous Institution affiliated to the University of Madras)



Department of English and Proscenium (Theatre Society of MSSW)
present: INTERDEPARTMENTAL MONOLOGUE COMPETITION

(Open to all UG & PG students)

Date and Time: **13th October 2018, 10 a.m.-12 noon**

Venue: **Auditorium**, MSSW.

The rules are as follows:

1. The participants need to pick two monologues each, ensuring that there is at least one classical and one contemporary play. Similarly, they need to choose at least one comic and one tragic speech. So, a male actor might pick *Hamlet* and *Dirty Linen* (OR) *Henry IV* and *Glass Menagerie*.
2. The participants will be evaluated on clarity of utterance, emotion, stance, etc.
3. Extra points will be awarded for those who do not look into the script, but those with a script will not be disqualified.
4. No special costumes are required.
5. The judge's decision will be final.
6. **Preliminary auditions are compulsory.** Contact Ms. Iswarya V, Staff Co-ordinator between 9-11 October (1 - 2 p.m.) for further details.

Contact: Iswarya V (9791121987)

Audition Monologues

For Male Actors

SET - A

Classical - Tragic : *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare

Contemporary - Comic : *Dirty Linen* by Tom Stoppard

(OR)

SET - B

Classical - Comic : *Henry IV, part I* by William Shakespeare

Contemporary - Tragic: *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams

SET - A

1. Context: Hamlet has been contemplating suicide because he does not know whether to trust the ghost of his father that appeared before him and asked him to avenge his death. As he keeps debating with himself, his love Ophelia walks in.

HAMLET

To be, or not to be: that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffl'd off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause: there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despis'd love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,

The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action. — Soft you now!
The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remember'd.

2. Context: McTeazle, a British MP, has been carrying on a scandalous affair with the office secretary Maddie and now has to advise her to keep mum about it because being exposed can cause him a major public embarrassment.

(The italicized words correspond to COCKLEBURY-SMYTHE's momentary reappearances, in the first case to take a bowler hat off the hat stand and in the second case to change hats because he has taken out MCTEAZLE's hat the first time.)

MCTEAZLE.

Maddie-ning the way one is kept waiting for ours is a very tricky position, my dear. In normal times one can count on chaps being quite sympathetic to the sight of a Member of Parliament having dinner with a lonely young woman in some out-of-the-way nook - it could be a case of constituency business, they're not necessarily screw-oo-ooge is, I think you'll find, not in 'David Copperfield' at all, still less in 'The Old Curiosity Sho'-cking though it is, the sight of a Member of Parliament having some out-of-the-way nookie with a lovely young woman might well be a case of genuine love match destined to take root and pass through ever more respectable stages—the first shy tentative dinner party in a basement flat in Pembridge Crescent for a few trusted friends—Caxton Hall—and a real friendship with the stepchildren—people are normally inclined to give one the benefit of doubt. But the tragedy is, as our luck would have it, that our gemlike love which burns so true and pure and has brought such a golden light into our lives, could well become confused with a network of grubby affairs between men who should know better and a bit of fluff from the filing department—so I suggest, my darling, if anyone were to enquire where you may or may not have spent Friday or indeed Saturday lunch time or Sunday tea time, forget the Charing Cross, the Coq d'Or and the Golden Ox.

SET - B

3. Context: Teased for drinking too much, the boastful Falstaff goes into a long

speech on the excellent virtues of drinking “sack,” a strong wine. Just then, LANCASTER has bid him a curt farewell.

FALSTAFF:

Good faith, this same young sober-blooded boy doth not love me, nor a man cannot make him laugh. But that's no marvel, he drinks no wine. There's never none of these demure boys come to any proof, for thin drink doth so overcool their blood, and making many fish-meals, that they fall into a kind of male green-sickness, and then, when they marry, they get wenches. They are generally fools and cowards, which some of us should be too, but for inflammation. A good sherris-sack hath a twofold operation in it. It ascends me into the brain, dries me there all the foolish and dull and crudy vapours which environ it, makes it apprehensive, quick, forgetive, full of nimble, fiery, and delectable shapes, which, delivered o'er to the voice, the tongue, which is the birth, becomes excellent wit. The second property of your excellent sherris is the warming of the blood, which, before cold and settled, left the liver white and pale, which is the badge of pusillanimity and cowardice. But the sherris warms it and makes it course from the inwards to the parts extremes. It illumineth the face, which as a beacon gives warning to all the rest of this little kingdom, man, to arm, and then the vital commoners and inland petty spirits muster me all to their captain, the heart, who, great and puffed up with this retinue, doth any deed of courage, and this valour comes of sherris. So that skill in the weapon is nothing without sack, for that sets it a-work, and learning a mere hoard of gold kept by a devil, till sack commences it and sets it in act and use. Hereof comes it that Prince Harry is valiant, for the cold blood he did naturally inherit of his father, he hath, like lean, sterile, and bare land, manured, husbanded, and tilled with excellent endeavour of drinking good and good store of fertile sherris, that he is become very hot and valiant. If I had a thousand sons, the first humane principle I would teach them should be to forswear thin potations and to addict themselves to sack.

4. Context: Tom Wingfield has been working in a boring factory job for the sake of his family, while he actually wants to be a writer. His nagging mother keeps complaining that he selfishly goes out to watch movies every night and might abandon their family one day as his father had already done.

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's all I ever think of. Why listen, if self is what I thought of Mother, I'd be where (*pointing at the father's picture*) 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 cathouses 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...

For Female Actors

SET - A

Classical - Comic: *As You Like It* by William Shakespeare

Contemporary - Tragic: *Silence! The Court Is In Session!* by Vijay Tendulkar

(OR)

SET - B

Contemporary - Comic: *While The Auto Waits* by O. Henry/Walter Wykes

Classical - Tragic: *Antigone* by Sophocles

SET - A

1. Context: The shepherd Silvius has been wooing the village-maid Phebe, who in turn has been rejecting his advances because she has set her heart on the young man Ganymede. Unfortunately for her, Ganymede is not a real man but only the sharp-tongued heroine Rosalind in disguise. She tries to put sense into Phebe's head without revealing herself as a woman.

ROSALIND

And why, I pray you? Who might be your mother,
That you insult, exult, and all at once,
Over the wretched? What though you have no beauty, —
As, by my faith, I see no more in you
Than without candle may go dark to bed—
Must you be therefore proud and pitiless?
Why, what means this? Why do you look on me?
I see no more in you than in the ordinary
Of nature's sale-work. 'Od's my little life,
I think she means to tangle my eyes too!
No, faith, proud mistress, hope not after it:
'Tis not your inky brows, your black silk hair,
Your bugle eyeballs, nor your cheek of cream,
That can entame my spirits to your worship.
You foolish shepherd, wherefore do you follow her,

Like foggy south puffing with wind and rain?
You are a thousand times a properer man
Than she a woman: 'tis such fools as you
That makes the world full of ill-favour'd children:
'Tis not her glass, but you, that flatters her;
And out of you she sees herself more proper
Than any of her lineaments can show her.
But, mistress, know yourself: down on your knees,
And thank heaven, fasting, for a good man's love:
For I must tell you friendly in your ear,
Sell when you can: you are not for all markets:
Cry the man mercy; love him; take his offer:
Foul is most foul, being foul to be a scoffer.
So take her to thee, shepherd: fare you well.

2. Context: Ms. Benare is stuck inside a courtroom as a mock-trial that first started as a game has become serious, with charges mounted against her relating to her real-life conduct. As a schoolteacher who has had an affair with a married man, they call her immoral and unfit to teach, demanding that her pregnancy must be terminated.

BENARE

Yes, I have a lot to say. [*Stretches to loosen her arms*]. For so many years, I haven't said a word. Chances came, and chances went. Storms raged one after another about my throat. And there was a wail like death in my heart. But each time I shut my lips tight. I thought, no one will understand. No one *can* understand! When great waves of words came and beat against my lips, how stupid everyone around me, how childish, how silly they all seemed. Even the man I call my own. I thought, I should just laugh and laugh till I burst. At all of them... that's all—just laugh and laugh! And I used to cry my guts out. I used to wish my heart would break! My life was a burden to me. [*Heaving a great sigh*] But when you can't lose it, you realise the value of it. You realise the value of living. You see what happiness means. How new, how wonderful every moment is! Even *you* seem new to yourself. The sky, birds, clouds, the branch of a dried-up tree that gently bends in, the curtain moving at the window, the silence all around—all sorts of distant, little noises, even the strong smell of medicines in a hospital, even that seems full to bursting with life. Life seems to sing for you! There's great joy in a suicide that's failed. It's greater even than the pain of living. [*Heaves a deep sigh*] Throw your life away – and you realise the luck of having it. Guard it dearer than life – and it only seems fit to throw away. Funny, isn't it? Look after it. And you feel like throwing it away. Throw it away – and you're blissfully happy it's saved! Nothing satisfies. The same thing, again and again. [*In a classroom manner*] Life is like this. Life is so and so. Life is such and such. Life is a book that goes ripping into pieces. Life is a poisonous snake that bites itself. Life is a betrayal. Life is a fraud. Life is a drug. Life is a drudgery. Life is a something that's nothing—or

a nothing that's something. [*Suddenly striking a courtroom attitude*] Milord, life is a very dreadful thing. Life must be hanged. *Na jeevan jeevanamarhati*. 'Life is not worthy of life.' Hold an enquiry against life. Sack it from its job! But why? Why? Was I slack in my work? I just put my whole life into working with the children... I loved it! I taught them well! I knew that life was no straight forward thing. People can be so cruel. Even your own flesh and blood don't want to understand you. Only one thing in life is all-important—the body! You may deny it, but it is true. Emotion is something people talk about with sentiment. It was obvious to me. I was living through it. It was burning through me. But—do you know?—I did not teach any of this to those tender young souls. I swallowed that poison, but didn't even let a drop of it touch them! I taught them beauty. I taught them purity. I cried inside and made them laugh. I was cracking up with despair, and I taught them hope. For what sin are they robbing me of my job, my only comfort! My private life is my own business. I'll decide what to do with myself; Everyone should be able to! That can't be anyone else's business; understand? Everyone has a bent, a manner, an aim in life. What's everyone else to do with these? [*At once, in the light, playful mood she has in school.*] Hush! Quiet there! Silence! What a noise! [*Comes out of the witness box and wanders as if in class.*] Sit still as statue! [*She's looking at each figure frozen still.*] Poor things! Children, who are all these? [*Light illuminates each face one by one. They look fearsome, silent, ghostlike.*] These are the mortal remains of some cultured men of the twentieth century. See their faces—how ferocious they look! Their lips are full of lovely worn-out phrases. And their bellies are full of unsatisfied desires. [*Sound of the hourly bell at the school. A distant noise of children chattering. For a moment, she is silent and concentrates on the sound. She loses herself in it. The sound then recedes and is heard no more. Silence. Looking around her as if she is walking up, she is suddenly terrified of the silence.*] No, no! Don't leave me alone! I'm scared of them. [*Terrified, she hides her face and trembles.*] It's true, I did commit a sin. I was in love with my mother's brother. But, in our strict house, in the prime of my unfolding youth, he was the one who came close to me. He praised my bloom every day. He gave me love... How was I to know that if you felt like breaking yourself into bits and melting into one with someone—if you felt that just being with him gave a whole meaning to life—and if he was your uncle, it was a sin! Why, I was hardly fourteen! I didn't even know what a sin was—I swear by my mother, I didn't! [*She sobs loudly like a little girl.*] I insisted on marriage. So I could live my beautiful lovely dream openly. Like everyone else! But all of them—my mother too—were against it. And my brave man turned tail and ran. Such a rage—I felt such a rage against them—I felt like smashing his face in public and spitting on it! But I was ignorant. Instead, I threw myself off a parapet wall of our house—to embrace death. But I didn't die. My body didn't die! I felt as if feelings were dead—but they hadn't died either then. Again, I fell in love. As a grown woman. I threw all my heart into it; I thought, this will be different. This love is intelligent. It is love for an unusual intellect. It isn't love at all—it's worship! But it was the same mistake. I offered up my body on the altar of my worship. An intellectual god took the offering—and went his way. He didn't want my mind, or my devotion—he didn't care about them! [*Feebly.*] He wasn't a god. He

was a man. For whom everything was of the body, for the body! That's all! Again, the body! [*Screaming.*] This body is a traitor! [*She is writhing with pain.*] I despise this body—and I love it! I hate it—but—it's all you have, in the end, isn't it? It will be there. It will be yours. Where will it go without you? And where will you go if you reject it? Don't be ungrateful. It was your body that once burnt and gave you a moment so beautiful, so blissful, so near to heaven! Have you forgotten? It took you high, high, high above yourself into a place like paradise. Will you deny it? And now it carries within it the witness of that time—a tender little bud—of what will be lisping, laughing, dancing little life—my son—my whole existence! I want my body now for him—for him alone. [*Shuts her eyes and mutters in mortal pain.*] He must have a mother... a father to call his own—a house—to be looked after—he must have a good name!

SET - B

3. Context: A young high-society woman who is apparently tired of her monotonous rich circle has been 'people-watching' at a public park when a young man dares compliment her on familiar terms, calling her a "honeysuckle."

GIRL

I will excuse the remark you have just made because the mistake was, doubtless, not an unnatural one—in your circle. I asked you to sit down; if the invitation must constitute me your honeysuckle, consider it withdrawn. Now, tell me about these people passing and crowding, each way, along these paths. Where are they going? Why do they hurry so? Are they happy? How fascinating they seem to me—rushing about with their petty little dreams and their common worries! I come here to sit because here, only, can I be near the great, common, throbbing heart of humanity. My part in life is cast where its beating is never felt. Can you surmise why I spoke to you, Mr. Parkenstacker? It is simply impossible to keep one's name out of the papers. Or even one's portrait. This veil and this hat—my maid's, of course—are my only protection. They furnish me with an incog. You should have seen the chauffeur staring when he thought I did not see. Candidly, there are five or six names that belong in the holy of holies, and mine, by the accident of birth, is one of them. I spoke to you, Mr. Stackenpot, because I wanted to talk, for once, with a natural man—a real man—one unspoiled by the despicable gloss of wealth and supposed social superiority. Oh! You have no idea how weary I am of it—money, money, money! And of the men who surround me, dancing like little marionettes all cut from the same pattern. I am sick of pleasure, of jewels, of travel, of society, of luxuries of all kinds! A competence is to be desired, certainly. But when you have so many millions that—! [*She concludes the sentence with a gesture of despair.*] It is the monotony of it that palls. Drives, dinners, theatres, balls, suppers, balls, dinners, more balls, followed of course by dinners and suppers, with the gilding of superfluous wealth over it all. Sometimes the very tinkle of the ice in my champagne glass nearly drives me mad. You must understand that we of the non-useful class depend for our amusement upon departure from precedent. Just now it is a fad to put ice in champagne. The

idea was originated by a visiting Prince of Tartary while dining at the Waldorf. It will soon give way to some other whim. Just as, at a dinner party this week on Madison Avenue, a green kid glove was laid by the plate of each guest to be put on and used while eating olives. These special diversions of the inner circle do not become familiar to the common public, of course. We are drawn to that which we do not understand. For my part, I have always thought that if I should ever love a man it would be one of lowly station. One who is a worker and not a drone. But, doubtless, the claims of caste and wealth will prove stronger than my inclination. Just now I am besieged by two suitors. One is Grand Duke of a German principality. I think he has, or has had, a wife, somewhere, driven mad by his intemperance and cruelty. The other is an English Marquis, so cold and mercenary that I prefer even the diabolical nature of the Duke. What is it that impels me to tell you these things, Mr. Packerwacker? I am sure you understand when I say there are certain expectations of a young lady in my position. It would be such a disappointment to certain members of my family if I were to marry a commoner, as we like to call them. You simply cannot imagine the scandal it would cause. All the magazines would remark upon it. I might even be cut off from the family fortune. And yet... no calling could be too humble were the man I loved all that I wish him to be.

4. Context: Antigone, the daughter of Oedipus, is about to go against the edict of King Creon and bury her brother's body after he died in war. Her only surviving sibling Ismene tries to caution her against doing anything rash and incurring the wrath of the king.

ISMENE

Sister, please, please!

Remember how our father died:

hated, in disgrace,
self-dismantled in horror of himself,
his own hand stabbing out his sight.

And how his mother-wife in one
twisted off her earthly days with cord;

And thirdly how our two brothers in a single day
each achieved for each a suicidal nemesis.

And now, we two are left.

Think how much worse our end will be than all the rest
if we defy our sovereign's edict and his power.

Remind ourselves that we are women
and as such are not made to fight with men.

For might unfortunately is right
and makes us bow to things like this and worse.

Therefore shall I beg the shades below
to judge me leniently as one who kneeled to force.
It's madness to meddle.