

# Contemporary Monologues For Men From Plays

## Introduction

### WHY CONTEMPORARY?

Whether you are still at school auditioning for a youth theatre, about to leave school and want to go to drama school, at drama school looking for showcase material, or a young professional actor preparing for a specific audition, a well-chosen contemporary monologue will be a key component in your audition repertoire. It should reflect something of your own taste and, depending on the style of writing, may provide an opportunity to show something more intimate, more televisual than a classical speech might allow.

The fifty monologues in this volume are from plays that have been written post-2000. With the odd exception the characters range in age from fourteen to thirty-five. There is a wide variety of character types and styles of writing from which to choose. They are all drawn from the extensive list of new plays published by Nick Hern Books.

### CHOOSING YOUR MONOLOGUE

I have often likened finding the perfect monologue to finding the perfect pair of jeans. It is rarely a case of 'one size fits all'. You might have to try on several pairs, in different stores, before you find the cut that works for you, but once you have, you will feel confident in the knowledge that you are looking and feeling your best. So it is with audition speeches. You need to find pieces that suit you, that you cannot wait to perform and that will get even better with wear.

If you are auditioning for a youth theatre:

- You will be judged on your potential and your willingness to be open, honest and free. Nobody is looking for a polished or over-rehearsed performance. It is best therefore to choose pieces that allow you to express yourself and for a panel to see something of who you really are.

Contemporary monologues for men from plays offer a rich tapestry of emotions, thoughts, and character explorations. In the realm of theater, monologues serve as powerful tools for actors to showcase their range and depth. They

allow performers to delve deep into the psyche of their characters, providing insight into their motivations, fears, and desires. In the following article, we will explore various aspects of contemporary monologues for men from notable plays, offering insights into their themes, techniques, and significance in modern theater.

## Understanding the Importance of Monologues

Monologues are not merely speeches; they are pivotal moments in a play that reveal character depth and drive the narrative forward. Here are some reasons why contemporary monologues for men are significant:

1. **Character Development:** Monologues provide an opportunity for characters to express their innermost thoughts, allowing the audience to understand their motivations and conflicts.
2. **Emotional Engagement:** These speeches evoke a range of emotions, from joy to despair, helping to create a connection between the characters and the audience.
3. **Performance Showcase:** For actors, monologues are a chance to demonstrate their skills, including emotional range, vocal variety, and physical presence.
4. **Narrative Advancement:** Monologues can serve as turning points in a story, revealing crucial information or changing a character's trajectory.
5. **Thematic Exploration:** Through monologues, playwrights can explore complex themes such as identity, love, loss, and societal issues, enriching the audience's experience.

## Notable Contemporary Plays Featuring Monologues

Several contemporary plays have produced remarkable monologues for male characters. Below are some notable works along with a brief overview of their significance:

### 1. "The Pillowman" by Martin McDonagh

- **Overview:** This dark comedy-drama revolves around a writer in a totalitarian state who is interrogated about his short stories.
- **Key Monologue:** The protagonist, Katurian, delivers a monologue that reflects on the nature of storytelling and the moral implications of his art.
- **Themes:** The exploration of creativity, censorship, and the impact of violence in storytelling are central to this piece.

## **2. "True West" by Sam Shepard**

- Overview: This play examines the tumultuous relationship between two brothers, Austin and Lee, who embody contrasting lifestyles.
- Key Monologue: Lee's monologue about his life on the fringes of society reveals his deep-seated insecurities and desires.
- Themes: The clash between ambition and failure, and the complexities of familial relationships are salient themes in this work.

## **3. "The Glass Menagerie" by Tennessee Williams**

- Overview: A classic American play that explores themes of memory, family, and the fragility of dreams.
- Key Monologue: Tom Wingfield's reflective monologue about his life and choices encapsulates the struggle between duty and personal aspiration.
- Themes: The tension between reality and illusion, and the longing for escape permeate this poignant narrative.

## **4. "Blackbird" by David Harrower**

- Overview: This intense drama focuses on the meeting of two characters, Una and Ray, years after a controversial past.
- Key Monologue: Ray's monologue reveals his internal conflict and the consequences of his past actions, offering a raw look at guilt and redemption.
- Themes: The complexities of trauma, desire, and societal judgment are intricately woven into the fabric of the play.

## **Techniques for Delivering Contemporary Monologues**

When performing contemporary monologues, certain techniques can elevate an actor's performance. Here are some essential tips:

1. Character Analysis: Understand the character's background, motivations, and emotional state. This will inform how you deliver the lines.
2. Emotional Authenticity: Tap into genuine emotions. Use personal experiences to convey the character's feelings more convincingly.
3. Vocal Variation: Play with pitch, volume, and pace to create dynamism within the monologue. This keeps the audience engaged and emphasizes key moments.
4. Physicality: Use body language to reinforce the character's emotions. Movements should complement the spoken words.
5. Connection with the Audience: Establish eye contact and engage with the

audience as if they are part of the scene. This creates a more immersive experience.

6. Pacing: Be mindful of the rhythm of the monologue. Pauses can be powerful, allowing the audience to absorb the weight of the words.

7. Rehearsal: Practice is essential. Rehearse not only for memorization but also for experimenting with different interpretations and delivery styles.

## Choosing the Right Monologue

Selecting the right contemporary monologue for a performance or audition is crucial for an actor's success. Here are some factors to consider:

1. Personal Connection: Choose a monologue that resonates with you personally. This connection will help you deliver a more authentic performance.

2. Character Range: Look for monologues that showcase a range of emotions and allow you to demonstrate your versatility as an actor.

3. Length and Complexity: Consider the length and complexity of the monologue. Ensure it fits within the time constraints of auditions or performances.

4. Relevance: Opt for monologues from contemporary plays to ensure relevance to current themes and issues, which can engage modern audiences.

5. Challenge Level: Select a monologue that challenges you as an actor, pushing you to grow and expand your skills.

## Conclusion

In the landscape of modern theater, contemporary monologues for men from plays serve as vital expressions of character and emotion. They allow actors to explore complex themes, engage with audiences, and showcase their talents. From the darkly comedic realms of Martin McDonagh to the poignant reflections of Tennessee Williams, these monologues offer a wealth of material for performers to draw from. By understanding the importance of these pieces, employing effective delivery techniques, and choosing monologues that resonate personally, actors can elevate their performances and make a lasting impact on their audiences. The world of contemporary theater is rich with opportunities for exploration and expression, and monologues are at the heart of that journey.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**What are some popular contemporary monologues for**

## **men from plays?**

Some popular contemporary monologues for men include pieces from plays like 'The Shape of Things' by Neil LaBute, 'August: Osage County' by Tracy Letts, and 'The Pillowman' by Martin McDonagh.

## **Why are contemporary monologues important for actors?**

Contemporary monologues are important for actors as they allow them to connect with modern themes, showcase their range, and demonstrate an understanding of current societal issues.

## **How can I select the right contemporary monologue for an audition?**

When selecting a contemporary monologue for an audition, consider your type, the character's age and background, the emotional range required, and how well the piece resonates with you.

## **What are the characteristics of a strong contemporary monologue?**

A strong contemporary monologue typically features authentic language, relatable themes, a clear character objective, and allows for emotional depth and complexity.

## **Are there specific plays known for their male monologues?**

Yes, plays like 'Death of a Salesman' by Arthur Miller, 'True West' by Sam Shepard, and 'The Glass Menagerie' by Tennessee Williams are renowned for their impactful male monologues.

## **How can I analyze a contemporary monologue effectively?**

To analyze a contemporary monologue, focus on the character's objectives, relationships, emotional beats, subtext, and the context within the play to fully understand the character's motivations.

## **What role does subtext play in delivering a contemporary monologue?**

Subtext is crucial in delivering a contemporary monologue as it adds depth to the performance, allowing the actor to convey hidden emotions and thoughts that aren't explicitly stated.

## Can contemporary monologues be used for both dramatic and comedic performances?

Yes, contemporary monologues can be from both dramatic and comedic contexts, allowing actors to showcase versatility and adaptability in their performances.

## Where can I find collections of contemporary monologues for men?

Collections of contemporary monologues for men can be found in published anthologies, acting textbooks, and online resources dedicated to monologue scripts.

## What should I avoid when performing a contemporary monologue?

When performing a contemporary monologue, avoid clichés, overacting, and failing to connect emotionally with the text. It's essential to bring authenticity and personal interpretation to the piece.

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