

MAD Drama Presents

Noises Off

November 8, 9, 10, 2018

Directed by Mr. Marshall Henderson
Stage Management by Erin Rooney
Technical Direction by Harry Whitmore

HOW TO STAGE AUDITION FOR NOISES OFF

There are no "set in stone" rules for auditioning for a director, a set of directors and/or producers for a production. Common sense and courtesy are your best guidelines. That said, here are many of the lessons that I and others have learned over many years that may help you in your quest for the role you're looking for. If there's something here that you don't understand, ask Mr. Henderson! Remember, these are only guidelines, suggestions -- but they are time-tested.

Here is something you should very much be aware of: We are looking for TEAM PLAYERS. You can enlarge and feed your ego in many other venues. Don't do it on our time.

The best advice is to simply show up to the auditions and have fun! People who don't audition don't get cast -- that's the one thing I **can** guarantee.

ACTING (MONOLOGUE) SUGGESTIONS

MATERIAL

Choose material (a monologue) that you are comfortable with. Choose something that will allow you to create a character on stage that comes alive for those few minutes you have on stage. Libraries, including the one at Madison, are packed with plays on the shelves that can provide you with monologues. *Don't choose a monologue from the play you are auditioning for.* If you find a section of a play's text that doesn't seem **quite** long enough (say, 1 to 2 minutes), then consider simply cutting out the interrupting dialogue of the other character(s) and see if it still works and remains logical and playable. Ready for some work? Read the ENTIRE play. Sounds like work? It's not. Take the time for yourself to read it. Many full-length plays can be read in about an hour and a half at one sitting. Reading good plays is an amazing experience. It's really the only way to truly understand the character you are playing and how he/she fits into the world of the play.

INTERNET-FOUND/SELF-WRITTEN/"SYNTHETIC"/CHARACTERLESS MONOLOGUES

You know what we're talking about. That stuff that comes up when you Google "monologues for men" or "monologues for women." You may use a "generic" monologue or one that you have located via the internet or one that you have written yourself. However, it is usually recommended that you locate a monologue from an actual published play. Many, many "internet" monologues end up sounding like "stand up" routines that a comic might use. That may be fine, but it NEVER shows off your ability to create an actual character with emotions, thoughts and dreams. Unless you're shooting for the character of "stand up comic" or "generic person" avoid generic "internet" monologues.

RESUME/HEADSHOT

If you have them, bring them. If not, that's ok. You can always develop this material as you go. If you don't know what a "headshot" is, don't sweat it.

APPROPRIATENESS

Avoid, at all costs, monologues that are filled with vulgarity or reckless hate. It's perfectly fine if a monologue is **dramatic** but not at the expense of you and your character appearing bigoted, violent or sexually inappropriate. Such monologues work in the **context** of the plays in which they appear and are legitimate in that framework, but they are distracting and useless in attempting to audition for a production.

DRAMATIC TONE

If you are auditioning for a comedy or a musical, find something upbeat or clever. You don't have to be hysterically funny, but find something light and breezy you can work with. If auditioning for a c

feel free to choose something that allows you to explore a range of dramatic emotions.

LENGTH

MAD Drama monologues are 1 to 2 minutes in length.

PROPS/CHAIRS

Avoid any monologue that would require you to use a lot of props. One or two simple things might be ok, such as a handkerchief or something your character is expected to handle or use while speaking. However, avoid props if you can. You won't have the time to set up an entire scene or deal with a lot of props. You will be provided with an optional chair if your character is going to sit during any part of or all of your monologue. You can certainly sit on the floor if your characterization requires it. Be careful of lying down fully, however; it's very hard to project your voice while lying down without some practice and, of course, your face is hard to see. Lying down isn't against any "rule" but be certain that your characterization really, really requires it before you try it.

YOUR SCRIPT

Don't bring it on stage. *Become* the character by having your monologue fully memorized days, weeks or months in advance. If you *must* bring your script on stage out of fear of forgetting, then do so, but avoid doing so to the best of your ability.

CLOTHING

Don't try to "look" like the character in your monologue or one from the play you are auditioning from. Be yourself. However, some tips are:

- don't wear clothing with writing on it; it's distracting; clothes that don't distract from *you* are the best.
- don't wear ripped, torn, or overly sloppy clothing. It just makes you look careless and sloppy.
- wear something comfortable, something you can move in without any issues.
- girls: keep the jewelry to almost zero.
- girls: wear low heels.

SLATING

If you want to look like a real pro, "slate" yourself. It works like this. Just before you start your monologue, say:

"Good morning/afternoon/evening.

My name is...

I will be performing the role of 'Tom' from 'The Glass Menagerie' by Tennessee Williams."

I will assume you will be aware of whether it's morning, afternoon or evening and that you will know your own name. If you don't know the name of your character, the name of the play and the name of the author, then perhaps you haven't done enough (any?) research on the monologue you are about to perform.

AFTER THE AUDITIONS AND CALL-BACKS

POST AUDITION

This is probably the toughest part of the audition, even more so than monologue hunting. This is the time when you feel most helpless - your fate, at least for this one role - is now out of your hands. Before you leave, make sure you know where the callback list will be posted. Once home, don't stress about the audition. Most times, actors post-audition will psyche themselves out by analyzing each and every part of the audition, then agonizing until they see the cast list. One word: DON'T. Sometimes there will be a day or two in between auditions and final casting.

If you are called back, then be prepared to work with other actors in scenes from the play, and possibly even read for characters you don't want the roles for. But whatever you do before the cast list goes up, don't stress out. It's out of your control, and if you don't get cast, it's not because you are a bad actor. MAD Drama is filled with talented performers like yourself and roles are very, very hard to come by. If you were not cast, don't get upset with anyone. It's perfectly fine and even expected for you to feel sad and extremely disappointed but do not succumb to the emotional sensation of *rejection*. Casting is based on "acceptance" and is never based on a "rejection." Think about that for a minute. I'll wait...Therefore, if you are not cast, this is no time to start blaming anyone for anything, including yourself. Remember, you will likely spend hours preparing, auditioning and going through a grueling call back process and still not get cast. That is the very nature of theatre and this process. Don't let it throw you into an emotional ditch. Proudly work on the production in any of the other thousands of ways you can contribute and get ready for next time.

Cast or not cast, after the cast list is posted, it's perfectly fine to arrange a time to speak to Mr. Henderson about your audition. If you are cast in the show, congratulations! Be considerate of others who might not have been cast for a particular production. Find the time to sincerely congratulate those who were cast.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT AUDITIONING FOR MAD DRAMA

Q. Who can audition?

Any James Madison high school student can audition.

Q. Are any roles "pre-cast"?

A. Nope. Never. All roles are wide open at the time of the auditions to be filled by any actor who best suits the role.

Q. Does it help to be a Senior?

A. Nope. But Seniors have been at it for four years and have often acquired a lot of skills that allow them to audition very smoothly and impressively. If you are an underclassman, you simply need to figure out how to out-shine them. If an upperclassman is a reliable performer, they will also have built up a lot of "street cred" which is a reflection of their work ethic. This can also work against upperclassmen, of course, if they have been less than reliable in the past. Regardless, no one is cast based on what grade they are in: they are cast entirely on the strength of their audition, what roles the script calls for, and who seems best suited to play them.

Q. Do you have to be in Mr. Henderson's Drama classes or the International Thespian Honor Society?

A. No. However, we don't have a lot of time to teach you the things you need to know "on the fly" if you aren't in a class. Acting skills, how to take direction, audition techniques and much more are taught in these classes and you can join the International Thespian Society only by being in or working on shows. Also, if two students both fit a role equally, the role will go to the Madison drama student. If you are a non-drama student cast in a large role, consider taking a Madison drama class at your next opportunity since the offer of a large role will likely not come around again.

Q. This sounds cool. How do I sign up to audition?

A. Sign up for an audition time on the list on the Sign Up sheet(s) outside the Black Box Theatre or online (usually signupgenius.com). FILL THE EARLIEST SLOTS FIRST, WE WILL NOT WAIT ON LATE PAIRS OR SINGLES AT THE END OF THE DAY.

Q. What happens when I come to the audition?

A. You will be asked to fill out an audition sheet. Give it to the Stage Manager (the one taking all the sheets). Get a CONTRACT. You will also need to know all of your "conflict" dates -- days when you know ahead of time that you cannot attend rehearsal or a portion of a rehearsal. **HAVING CONFLICTS DOESN'T MEAN YOU CAN'T OR WON'T BE CAST.** When it's time for you, you will be called. Go to the stage, introduce yourself clearly, and do your prepared piece or ask for instructions. We will also take your picture along with your name so that we can better identify you going forward.

Q. What are you looking for at the audition?

A. A general impression of YOU, particularly how your voice carries, how comfortable you look on stage, and a range of movement and emotion. I want to see what you look like, what you sound like, and how well you come across to the audience.

Q. OK, OK, what are you REALLY looking for?

A. Who seems to fit the roles available in the script. Also, who seems to fit well with the other people who also seem to fit the roles available in the script (matching).

Q. What should I remember while auditioning?

A. ENJOY YOURSELF! Show us you like performing on the stage! Move with clarity and confidence, with purpose. Speak up! Every word must be clear to the very last row. **SLOW DOWN!** Keep your character alive. **STAY** in character no matter **WHAT** happens. Forgetting a line is no tragedy; stay calm and pick it up somewhere, but don't drop out of character.

Q. I get stage fright. What can I do?

A. Use it! Everyone gets stage fright -- even the people who look like they don't, and the people who say they don't. Simply turn that nervous energy into intensity, a more motivated, driven kind of energy that **MAKES** the character do whatever s/he needs to do.

Q. What's the next step?

A. Call Backs. These can go **VERY** late so plan ahead, bring homework, arrange your ride, bring food (eaten cleanly and carefully in the hallways only) and lots of patience!

Q. What exactly are Call Backs?

A. A second working audition to help the Director, and in musicals, the Vocal Director and Choreographer to determine which actors fit which particular roles. Usually you will be reading from the show script during Call Backs. You will also be singing from the score in musicals.

Q. What if I can't come to the Call Backs?

A. Contact Mr. Henderson **IMMEDIATELY** (once the Call Back list is up). Not being at callbacks will seriously endanger your ability to be effectively cast. If you must leave callbacks early, tell the Stage Manager. We may be able to work around this. Your best bet is to plan for a ride home whenever we're finished. Other potential cast members are usually very good about helping.

Q. How will I know if I got a part?

A. There will be a cast list posted online. There will also be one posted outside of the Black Box. **SIGN** next to your name. This confirms that you are accepting the role.

Q. If I didn't get an stage performance part, can I still be a part of the show?

A. **YES!** Being on a technical crew is the best part of the fun.

STAGE CAST AUDITION PROCESS

ACTING AUDITIONS ARE REQUIRED FOR ALL STAGE CAST PERSONNEL

ALL STAGE CAST AUDITIONS ARE OPEN CALLS

Students sign up for audition "slots" for each day on sign-up sheets outside of the Black Box Theatre.
FILL THE EARLIEST SLOTS FIRST; WE WILL NOT WAIT FOR ISOLATED LATE SIGN-UPS.

AUDITION TIMES:

* Sep. 5 from 3:45p - 6:15p OPEN AUDITIONS

* Sep. 6 from 3:15p - 6:15p OPEN AUDITIONS

* Sep. 7 from 3:15p to DONE SELECTED CALLBACKS

* Sep. 9 STAGE CAST LIST POSTED ON WWW.MADISONDRAMA.COM

HOW TO BE A PART OF A TECHNICAL CREW FOR NOISES OFF

TECHNICAL CREW POSITIONS

THEATRE ARTS STUDENTS FILL THESE POSITIONS FIRST BASED ON SENIORITY;
OTHERWISE ALL TECHNICAL CREW POSITIONS ARE OPEN UNTIL THE CREWS ARE FILLED
CREWS AVAILABLE ARE:

- BUILD CREW;
- COSTUME CREW;
- DECK CREW;
- HOUSE MANAGEMENT CREW;
- LIGHT CREW;
- MAKEUP AND HAIR CREW;
- PAINT CREW;
- PROGRAM AND T-SHIRTS;
- PROPERTIES CREW;
- PUBLICITY AND FUND RAISING CREW;
- SOUND CREW;
- STAGE MANAGEMENT CREW

TECHNICAL CREW CHIEF POSITIONS

These positions are filled by Mr. Henderson in advance, often the year before or during the summer.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT TECH CREWS IN MAD DRAMA

Q. Who can sign up for a MAD Drama Technical Crew?

A. Any James Madison high school student can sign up. However, certain crews only require certain amounts of people to crew them. The larger crews are usually BUILD, PAINT, PUBLICITY and HOUSE MANAGEMENT. Smaller crews are often LIGHTS, SOUND, and STAGE MANAGEMENT. The DECK CREW can be huge or very, very small depending on the show. COSTUMES, PROPERTIES, and HAIR/MAKEUP can vary in size depending on the needs of the production. Madison Theatre Arts students often fill these positions first but any James Madison student in good standing with the school can join a crew if there is still space available.

Q. I want to be on a technical crew but I might like to do an acting audition as well. Can I audition and still be on a technical crew if I'm not part of the stage cast?

A. Of course. Sign up to be a part of a technical crew right away. That way, if you are not cast, then you are set with your tech crew and ready to go. If you are cast, then you can balance your time between scheduled acting/dancing/singing rehearsals with crew activities.

Q. Do I truly need to already know "tech stuff" to be a part of a crew?

A. Not at first, no. You'll be shown safety procedures that go along with your crew. However, if you are inexperienced otherwise, you will learn by doing like others on the crew. The Crew Chief will be your main person you will work with during the production. There will almost always be other more experienced students who you will be working with who will help you as you help them.

Q. How often do these crews meet?

A. It depends on the crew. The BUILD CREW meets at a minimum every Saturday from 8am - 2pm. Other crews meet at different times depending on what their production schedule requires. Some crews meet at people's houses to work (COSTUME CREW) or head out shopping for gear together after school (PROPERTIES, COSTUMES, LIGHTS, SOUND, BUILD).

Q. Can Crew Chiefs and crew members win awards or get recognition for their work?

A. You mean aside from the thunderous applause each night at the performances? Sure. Mr. Henderson awards DEUS EX MACHINA trophies for outstanding technical work at the annual Drama Banquet near the end of the year. The CAPPIES offer opportunities for awards and recognition for technical achievement at the Kennedy Center at the end of each school year. Also, don't forget to photograph and document your work to become a part of your technical portfolio.

Q. Can I be inducted into the International Thespian Honor Society by working on a crew or crews?

A. Basically, yes. There are very specific requirements for joining this society. However, working on various technical crews with honor will eventually make you eligible for induction.

***NOISES OFF* briefly:**

A group of actors and their director are valiently struggling to rehearse and perform a play. Things aren't going well and just about anything that can fall apart -- does.

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS:

Character List

FEMALE CHARACTERS

Dotty Otley / Mrs. Clacket: (Off stage Dotty) A late-middle-aged American actress. Forgetful. Dating Garry, though she attempts to make him jealous by meeting with Freddy. (On Stage Character: Mrs. Clackett): A Cockney Housekeeper for the Brent's home in England. Hospitable, though slow.

Brooke Ashton / Vicki: (Off Stage: Brooke) A young inexperienced American actress. Pays no attention to other performers, either in performance or backstage. She seems as though she is not really present – like she is somewhere else inside her head. Is always losing her contact lenses. One-third of a Lloyd–Poppy–Brooke love triangle. (On Stage Character: Vicki): An English woman who works for Inland Revenue and is trying to woo Roger.

Belinda Blair / Flavia Brent (Off stage Belinda): Cheerful and sensible, a reliable American actress. She may have feelings for Freddy. **(On Stage Character: Flavia Brent):** Phillip Brent's English wife. She is dependable, though not one for household duties.

Poppy Norton-Taylor: American Stage Manager. Emotional and over-sensitive, and envious of Brooke, whom she understudies. Carrying Lloyd's child. One-third of a Lloyd-Poppy-Brooke love triangle.

MALE CHARACTERS Lloyd Dallas: The director of the play, *Nothing On*. Temperamental. One third of a Lloyd-Poppy-Brooke love triangle.

Garry Lejeune / Roger: (Off stage: Garry) An American actor who never finishes a sentence. Always is completing sentences with, "you know..." Easily fired up, repeatedly tries to attack Freddy after believing that Dotty was cheating on him with Freddy. Speech affectations disappear onstage but are everpresent offstage. Dating Dotty. **(On Stage Character: Roger):** An English Real estate agent who is attempting to rent Flavia's and Phillip's home, but uses it for his own personal benefit.

Frederick Fellows /Phillip Brent / Sheikh : **(Off stage: Freddy)** An American actor with a serious fear of violence and blood. Gets nosebleeds easily. Often questions the meaning of his lines and moves. Blames himself often for things going wrong. **(On Stage Character: Phillip Brent):** An Englishman who lives out of the country with his wife Flavia to avoid paying taxes. He enters the country knowing that if he is caught by Inland Revenue, he will lose most of the year's income. **(On Stage Character: Sheikh):** A Middle-Eastern, Interested in renting Flavia's and Phillip's home and is the spitting image of Phillip.

Selsdon Mowbray / Burglar: (Off Stage: Selsdon Mowbray): An elderly alcoholic Englishman who hides his bottles onstage. If he is not in sight while rehearsing, the stage crew must find him before he passes out. Is hard of hearing when he wants to be. **(On Stage Character: Burglar):** Old Cockney man in his seventies, breaking into the Brent's home.

Timothy Allgood: An over-worked American Assistant Stage Manager. Understudies Selsdon and Freddy

SYNOPSIS

It is only hours before the opening of a British adult farce, *Nothing On*, and the touring company is hurriedly running through a final dress rehearsal in the Grand Theatre, Weston-SuperMare, before the first audience arrives.

Act One

During the first act, we are an audience to this production of a play within a play. The *Nothing On* cast is loveable, but mainly inept; however, we cheer for them under our breath and hope that they can pull it together and get the show on the road.

Dotty, the actor playing Mrs. Clackett, can't remember her entrances and exits. Garry, the male love interest, can't remember his lines. And Brooke, playing Vicki, the female lead, is constantly

posing and primping, without any understanding of what the play is about or what she is doing. Trying to pull this all together into some semblance of a presentable show is the director, Lloyd Dallas, who is sitting in the darkened auditorium shouting out directions and trying to get everybody ready for opening.

Act 2, however, dashes all our hopes.

Act Two

For this act, we, the audience, are sitting backstage; the entire set has been turned 180 degrees. We can hear the actors performing out front, but what we see is the back side of the scenery flats, the stage manager trying to keep the action flowing and everybody happy, and the various antics of the actors offstage between their exits and entrances.

The play has been on the road for one month now, and relationships between cast members, as well as the quality of *Nothing On* have deteriorated. Garry and Dotty are in the middle of an unhappy love affair.

Poppy, the assistant stage manager is pregnant; and Selsdon Mowbray, an actor in his late sixties, is trying to stay sober between scenes. Add to this, a visit by director Lloyd, who is there first of all to comfort his "overly excited" lover, Brooke, and second to try and save his play from total disaster.

Most of the company is in a continual state of agitation, and this disorder is carrying over into the play, causing missed entrances, flubbed lines, and general hilarity.

Act 3 is even more frenetic.

Act Three

It is a month later again, and the tour is reaching an end. We, the audience, are out front again, watching a performance of *Nothing On* that has reached the point of complete and hilarious deterioration. The business of performing the show has become subordinate to the business of solving personal problems.

Dotty refuses to come out of her dressing room. Garry is now drinking Selsdon's whiskey.

Scenery collapses, and props explode. Practical jokes have become common, and actors are now taking verbal, and sometimes physical, cracks at each other both backstage and on stage. Normal rules of logic and response don't apply anymore.

Ultimately, however, they carry off the show—in some semblance. The unhappy band of actors manages to get to the last line, spoken by Selsdon: "When all around is strife and uncertainty, there's nothing like . . . (takes the plate of sardines) . . . a good old-fashioned plate of curtain!"

Curtain

MAD Drama Audition Sheet - Noises Off

Welcome to MAD Drama! We are pleased to welcome you to this audition! MAD Drama is a full-featured theatre company operated entirely by Madison drama students. We hope you have a pleasant experience at this audition. **All auditions are open to any interested performers.** Every role is available at the time auditions begin. *Roles will be assigned on the basis of these auditions and call-backs only, however, current Madison drama students are given priority for casting.*

Your Name: _____

Performed Monologue: (Character / play / author) _____

Your Role Preference: (if any) _____

CLASSES

Circle Grade: [Freshman] [Sophomore] [Junior] [Senior]

Circle Class: [Drama 1] [Drama 2] [Drama 3] [Drama 4] [Tech 1] [Tech 2] [None]

Circle Thespian Honor Society Status:

[Member] [1-Star] [2-Star] [3-Star] [4-Star] [Honor Bar] [National Honor Bar] [International Honor Bar] [None]

CREWS

(BEING ON A CREW DOES NOT PREVENT CASTING)

Circle any crew(s) you are interested in or have already joined: Build/Set | Costumes | Deck | Hair & Makeup | House | Lights | Props | Paint/Set Dressing | Publicity | Sound | Stage Management | T-Shirts and Programs

STATS

Hair Color: _____ **Height:** _____ **Weight:** _____ **Girls:** Dress size: _____

Guys/Girls: Shirt size S M L XL **ALL:** Tshirt size S M L XL **ALL :** Shoe Size: _____

Guys: Pants [Waist: _____ Length _____] **Guys:** Jacket Size _____

CONTACTS

Cell Phone #: _____ **Residence (home) phone #:** _____

Best Email address P R I N T: _____

PRODUCTION

Are you willing to change your hair style (cut) if it made you look more like the character involved?

Circle: [YES] [NO]

Are you willing to dye or color your hair if it made you look more like the character involved?

Circle: [YES] [NO]

Are you willing to pay a Production Fee (that will include your show T-Shirt and rehearsal food) that will not exceed \$75? Circle: [YES] [NO]

Are you willing to either sell ads in the amount of \$75 or more or contribute at least \$75 to cover the cost of printing production programs? Circle: [YES] [NO]

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Briefly list theatre experiences, classes, summer classes, workshops, etc. List any performance roles you've had in the past or any technical crews you have been a part of:

CONFLICTS

NOISES OFF performances are: November 8, 9, 10, 2018

1. Begin listing your **CONFLICTS** below.
2. List **specific days and times** that you know you could not participate in a rehearsal or tech day.
Example: Piano Lessons, Tuesdays and Thursdays at 4:00p
Example: Oct. 15th - Out of town all day
3. *Most* rehearsals run from 3:15p – 5:15p. Later, rehearsals may run from 3:15p – to 6:15p. During “hell week,” rehearsals may stretch into the evening, past supper, etc.
4. Having conflicts is normal and will not automatically disqualify you from being assigned a role.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
3:00pm					
4:00pm					
5:00pm					
6:00pm					
7:00pm					
8:00pm					

Specific dates and times:

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Circle Grade: [Freshman] [Sophomore] [Junior] [Senior]

Circle Class: [Drama 1] [Drama 2] [Drama 3] [Drama 4] [Tech 1] [Tech 2] [Tech 3] [Tech 4] [None]

Circle Thespian Honor Society Status:

[Member] [1-Star] [2-Star] [3-Star] [4-Star] [Honor Bar] [National Honor Bar] [International Honor Bar] [None]

CREWS

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Cell Phone #: _____ **Residence (home) phone #:** _____

Best Email address P R I N T: _____

PRODUCTION

Are you willing to change your hairstyle (cut) if it made you look more like the character involved?

Circle: [YES] [NO]

Are you willing to dye or color your hair if it made you look more like the character involved?

Circle: [YES] [NO]

Are you willing to pay a Production Fee (that will include your show T-Shirt and rehearsal food) that will not exceed \$75?

Circle: [YES] [NO]

[TURN SHEET OVER]

Are you willing to either sell ads in the amount of \$75 or more or contribute at least \$75 to cover the cost of printing production programs? Circle: [YES] [NO]

OTHER EXPERIENCE

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