

GETTING A SUPERIOR IN IE MONOLOGUES P.2

PREPARATION

by Lindsay Price

Everyone wants to do their best in an Individual Events competition.

Getting a Superior is not as difficult as you might think! Here are a few hints to point you in the right direction...

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Where Do I Start?

There are three areas you need to focus on to get a Superior: character, voice and movement. Study the Rules/Evaluation sheet for a list of elements the adjudicators will be looking for and what you'll need to bring to the table.

Character

Character development is key if you want to show off your skills. Here's a list of questions every actor should be able to answer about the character. If you can't answer a question, you might want to reconsider the monologue choice.

- ❖ List all known character details (name, age, family, education, occupation, etc.)
- ❖ What does my character want?
- ❖ Do they get it? Why or why not?
- ❖ What change happens to my character within the monologue?
- ❖ Who are they speaking to? What's the relationship?
- ❖ What emotions does my character experience?

- ❖ What is my character doing, thinking, feeling the moment before the monologue?
- ❖ How does my character move? How do they stand?
- ❖ At what pace does my character speak? What language do they use? What does the language say about the character?
- ❖ What adjectives describe my character? How can I physicalize these adjectives?

Voice

Pay attention to the sound of your monologue. You can have the best character development and the most interesting piece, but if you mumble, speak in a monotone, or speak so fast no one can understand a word, it won't matter. Your voice is a powerful tool; use it well.

- ❖ Project but do not yell. Yelling turns off an audience if you do it for long.
- ❖ Record the monologue and listen back. Is every word clear? Is there variety? Is the variety driven by the piece?
- ❖ Warm up your voice before you perform. Never compete without warming up first.
- ❖ Tongue twisters are an excellent way of working on your diction. Really enunciate and articulate to make every word distinct. Make tongue twisters part of your vocal warm up.

Continued Over...



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The Fine Print

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- ❖ Breathe! When you control your breath, you control your voice.

Movement

There are two types of movement in a monologue performance: Good movement and bad movement.

Good movement: Specific, character-driven blocking. A movement to impact the climax. A pose or gesture to establish character. Good movement will always add to the overall presentation.

Bad movement: Wander-itis, vague gestures, actions that come from the actor instead of the character. Moving for the sake of moving because the actor thinks they're supposed to.

» *How to achieve the good and banish the bad?*

Avoid wander-itis. Wander-itis (random, unmotivated wandering) is one of the most common movement issues. Practice your monologue pretending that your feet are welded to the floor. The more you practise, the more natural it will become.

Less is more. Create one specific move, one pose and one gesture for the piece. Each must be character-driven. Never move for the sake of moving.

Videotape your performance. Watch it on mute to focus solely on your movement. Do you stand your ground or wander? What do you do with your hands? Are your movements character-driven? Watch for adjusting of clothes, brushing hair away from the face, shuffling feet, and hands that wave about for no reason.

Perform your piece for a friend. Have them raise their hand every time you move out of character.

What Else?

Practise, practise, practise. The more you rehearse the monologue, the more you'll discover about your character, the more ingrained the piece will become. That's when you become amazing.

Time your monologue. Make sure you are well under any time limits. If you have five minutes for two pieces, don't choose two two and a half minute pieces! Going over time is the easiest mistake to make, and the easiest problem to solve.

Memorize your lines. The less time you spend with your monologue, the easier it will be to forget your lines. Write them out, say them out loud, learn them out of order, say them fast, say them slow, repeat, repeat, and repeat again.

Be prepared with your paperwork. Fill out your name, the playwright and the play neatly and in full on the evaluation sheet! If the play is from the green light list, make sure you attach a page that shows that. And for other plays don't forget to attach your permission. When you come in with the paperwork ill-prepared, it looks like you don't care about the competition. Don't be disqualified for something that's easy to fix!

Read the whole play. Read the whole play. Read it. Really. 📖