

Theatre Focus Program

The Theatre Focus of the Academy for the Fine Arts located at Gov. Thomas Johnson High School, is an opportunity for students to participate in an intensive focus into the art form of acting and theatre. The philosophy of all instructors in the Theatre Focus program is to engage students in an experiential learning opportunity, defined as learning through reflection on the process of doing.

Audition Process

The audition process is divided into four sections over a 45-60 minute time period. There will be at least two auditors in your audition group. Students will be placed in a group of approximately six candidates. The intention of the audition process is to discover each candidate's ability to:

- work in a team environment with a goal in mind (Work Ethic)
- take direction from the auditors (Direction Taking)
- build a fully realized character for the stage (Character Building)
- quickly make instinctual choices when given a script (Risk Taking)
- prepares for an audition with all required materials completed (Preparation)
- be a positive presence for all candidates (Social Skills)
- enter the imaginary world of play (Imagination)
- connect to the thoughts and feelings of the character (Emotional Connection)
- stay focused on the task presented in the imaginary situation (Concentration)
- use his or her body to respond to the circumstances of the imaginary situation (Physical Response)
- memorize a given script completely and with absolute precision (Memorization)
- speak clearly with volume control for the given circumstance and performing space (Vocal Quality)

The four sections of the 45-60 minute audition block will include:

Section 1: Student "slates" and getting to know you activities directed by the auditors (i.e. ice breaker type activities)

Section 2: Improvisation work with other candidates (i.e."Party Quirks, School Bus, The Wave, etc.)

Section 3: Performance of ONE of the approved monologues attached to this packet (candidate choice).

Section 4: Cold reading of a duet scene with other candidates

Scoring

Students and parents should understand before auditioning that acting is an extremely subjective art form. While a rubric is included to guide you in your preparation, keep in mind that there are other factors that go into our decision process, including:

- Feedback from candidate's teachers
- Grades from past fine arts classes
- Grades from past academic classes

It would be less than ideal for auditors and actors in an acting audition to rely on "numbers" and "scores" only in the selection process. We are an art form, not a mathematical equation or science project. Through this comprehensive audition process we make informed, professional choices that the auditors feel are best for the student and the Theatre Focus program.

Feedback Opportunity

If a student would like to receive constructive feedback on their specific audition, the lead auditor will be happy to discuss the audition, including notes from each auditor to the student. Included in this feedback will be the visible strengths of the student and suggestions for further study and growth. This feedback will be honest and direct. Parents wishing to assist their child in growth in the arts, particularly acting auditions, should ask their child what was discussed with the lead auditor. Parents should allow the child to explain what they learned and where they need to improve. In our experience as professional educators and acting instructors, true support and learning happens for the potential Theatre Focus student when parents discuss outcomes with their child.

Scoring Rubric

Academy for the Fine Arts, Theatre Focus

Work Ethic: Displays the ability to work in a team environment with a goal in mind for the group.

Ineffective 0	Developing 1	Effective 2	Highly Effective 3
------------------	-----------------	----------------	-----------------------

Direction Taking: Displays the ability to take specific directions from the auditors

Ineffective 0	Developing 1	Effective 2	Highly Effective 3
------------------	-----------------	----------------	-----------------------

Character Building: Builds a fully realized character for the stage

Ineffective 0	Developing 1	Effective 2	Highly Effective 3
------------------	-----------------	----------------	-----------------------

Risk Taking: Displays the ability to quickly make instinctual choices when given a script

Ineffective 0	Developing 1	Effective 2	Highly Effective 3
------------------	-----------------	----------------	-----------------------

Preparation: Prepares for an audition with all required materials completed

Ineffective 0	Developing 1	Effective 2	Highly Effective 3
------------------	-----------------	----------------	-----------------------

Social Skills: Demonstrates a positive presence for all candidates and adjudicators

Ineffective 0	Developing 1	Effective 2	Highly Effective 3
------------------	-----------------	----------------	-----------------------

Imagination: Displays willingness to enter the imaginary world of play

Ineffective 0	Developing 1	Effective 2	Highly Effective 3
------------------	-----------------	----------------	-----------------------

Vocal Quality: Speaks clearly with volume control for the given circumstance and performing space

Ineffective 0	Developing 1	Effective 2	Highly Effective 3
------------------	-----------------	----------------	-----------------------

Emotional Connection: Displays a connection to the thoughts and feelings of the character

Ineffective 0	Developing 1	Effective 2	Highly Effective 3
------------------	-----------------	----------------	-----------------------

Concentration: Focused on the task presented in the imaginary situation

Ineffective 0	Developing 1	Effective 2	Highly Effective 3
------------------	-----------------	----------------	-----------------------

Physical Response: Uses his or her body appropriately to respond to the circumstances of the imaginary situation

Ineffective 0	Developing 1	Effective 2	Highly Effective 3
------------------	-----------------	----------------	-----------------------

Memorization: . Memorizes a given script completely and with absolute precision

Ineffective 0	Developing 1	Effective 2	Highly Effective 3
------------------	-----------------	----------------	-----------------------

Monologue #1

When I was very small...we used to take our sleds out in the wintertime and the only hills we had were the ice covered stone steps of some houses down the street. And we used to fill them in with snow and make them smooth and slide down them all day...and it was very dangerous you know...far too steep...and sure enough one day a kid named Rufus came down too fast and hit the sidewalk...and we saw his face just split open right there in front of us...and I remember standing there looking at his bloody open face thinking that was the end of Rufus. But the ambulance came and they took him to the hospital and they fixed the broken bones and they sewed it all up...and the next time I saw Rufus he just had a little line down the middle of his face...I never got over that...That that was what one person could do for another, fix him up--sew up the problem, make him all right again. That was the most marvelous thing in the world...I wanted to do that. I always thought it was the one concrete thing in the world that human being could do. Fix up the sick, you know--and make them whole again. This was truly being God...

Monologue #2

Betty is a teenager whose parents split up five years ago. She talks to a friend.

BETTY: One day, five years ago, the end of the world came. I sat on the grass and watched the moving men load the truck. All the furniture was on the lawn, the dining room set, the cherrywood dresser, sofas, mattresses. All her bags and trunks, and boxes and boxes and boxes. Furniture always looks so sad outside of a house. Have you noticed that? it's funny how you see all the dents and gouges and chipped paint you never saw before. Everything looked so shabby. For a moment I was almost happy to see it go. Then suddenly I had this fear, I *knew that* they were going to pull up my house and put it in the truck. It hit me like a twig thwacks back in your face. Everything would be gone. There'd be nothing left but an empty lot full of weeds. "Put it back!" But they're just standing there...looking at the air and not seeing anything. "Do something! Do something before it's too late!" They keep looking in the air. I'm screaming but no one hears me, nobody does anything. STOP IT! STOP IT! If I close my eyes...and wish really hard...everything will be alright. Any minute now Mom's going to say, "Open your eyes. No one's leaving, no one's taking the house. I've just been fooling you. This is a joke, a test. Just want to see if you're a good girl." When I open them, my house will be back in the ground. The furniture will zip back in like a movie playing backwards. The piano will be in its place under the staircase. The dining room table will be set for dinner...Everything will be the way it's supposed to be...And I will have a happy family.

Monologue #3

Everyone tried to tell me Mr. McKenzie left because of the low pay and because he got a better job with IBM, but that's not true. Mr. McKenzie wasn't interested in that material stuff. He was interested in us. He cared. He made us work hard. Be serious about what we were doing. He was a real teacher. I used to dream he'd marry my mother and be my father. 'Cause he was like what a father should be. I never missed having a father till Mr. McKenzie came along... then I thought in some kind of crazy way that I finally had one. I never told anyone that till now. The day that George Blake tore Mr. McKenzie apart in class was the day Mr. McKenzie quit. I mean he stayed till the end of the year, but his spirit died that day. I could see the change in his eyes and the way he held himself. I tried to say things to make him feel good about himself again, but he wasn't listening anymore. George Blake spray-painted Mr. McKenzie's sport coat yellow. When Mr. McKenzie grabbed him, George just laughed in his face. Said it was time for him to get a new sport coat, that he looked like a bum and that it was hard to be taught by the dullest man in the world but did he have to look like a bum as well. He said father made more in a month than Mr. McKenzie made in a year and he'd get his father to replace the sport coat he'd ruined with something that had some class. Mr. McKenzie could have reported him, but he didn't that wasn't his way.... He just died inside. And then at the end of the year he left.

Monologue #4

From You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown

CHARLIE BROWN: I think lunchtime is about the worst time of day for me. Always having to sit here alone. Of course, sometimes, mornings aren't so pleasant either. Waking up and wondering if anyone would really miss me if I never got out of bed. Then there's the night, too. Lying there and thinking about all the stupid things I've done during the day. And all those hours in between when I do all those stupid things. Well, lunchtime is among the worst times of the day for me. Well, I guess I'd better see what I've got. Peanut butter. Some psychiatrists say that people who eat peanut butter sandwiches are lonely...I guess they're right. And when you're really lonely, the peanut butter sticks to the roof of your mouth. There's that cute little redheaded girl eating her lunch over there. I wonder what she would do if I went over and asked her if I could sit and have lunch with her?...She'd probably laugh right in my face...it's hard on a face when it gets laughed in. There's an empty place next to her on the bench. There's no reason why I couldn't just go over and sit there. I could do that right now. All I have to do is stand up...I'm standing up!...I'm sitting down. I'm a coward. I'm so much of a coward, she wouldn't even think of looking at me. She hardly ever does look at me. In fact, I can't remember her ever looking at me. Why shouldn't she look at me? Is there any reason in the world why she shouldn't look at me? Is she so great, and I'm so small, that she can't spare one little moment?...SHE'S LOOKING AT ME!! SHE'S LOOKING AT ME!! **(he puts his lunch bag over his head.)** ...Lunchtime is among the worst times of the day for me. If that little redheaded girl is looking at me with this stupid bag over my head she must think I'm the biggest fool alive. But, if she isn't looking at me, then maybe I could take it off quickly and she'd never notice it. On the other hand...I can't tell if she's looking, until I take it off! Then again, if I never take it off I'll never have to know if she was looking or not. On the other hand...it's very hard to breathe in here. **(he removes his sack)** Whew! She's not looking at me! I wonder why she never looks at me? Oh well, another lunch hour over with...only 2,863 to go.

Monologue #5

Adapted from MAKIN IT by Cynthia Mercati. Larry talks to a school counselor. The counselor has just said to Larry that he seems a little “different” from the other students.

LARRY: Different. There’s that word again. “You’re so different from the other kids,” the teachers always say. “You really care about Henry the eighth and how many wives he had — or why Russia invaded Afghanistan.” And then everyone stares at me. Even my father says it. “You’re such a different kind of kid. When I was your age, I was always with my friends or shooting baskets or just goofing off. You’re always in your room reading.” One day a guy in class asked me what kind of music I liked. Without thinking, I said, “Classical.” He laughed so hard he turned red. Right then I decided I’d never — ever — let anyone know what I was really, *really* *thinking* or wanting — or feeling. I could fit in if I pretended more, played the game. But I can’t seem to figure out how — or maybe it’s just that I won’t. My father says that I’m stubborn. “It’s amazing. A quiet, shy kid like you, so stubborn.” I guess that’s something to be proud about. Only the way he said it, it sounded like I was stubborn about the wrong things. Different. It’s the ugliest word in the English language. I hate different. So I guess I hate me. But someday I’m going to find a city or town or a world where *everyone is* different and no one cares.

Monologue #6

PLEASE DO BOTH MONOLOGUES!

Adapted from You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown

LUCY VAN PELT: Do you know what I intend? I intend to be a queen. When I grow up I'm going to be the biggest queen there ever was, and I'll live in a big palace and when I go out in my coach, all the people will wave and I will shout at them, and...and...in the summertime I will go to my summer palace and I'll wear my crown in swimming and everything, and all the people will cheer and I will shout at them... What do you mean I can't be queen? Nobody should be kept from being a queen if she wants to be one. It's usually just a matter of knowing the right people... ..well.... if I can't be a queen, then I'll be very rich then I will buy myself a queendom. Yes, I will buy myself a queendom and then I'll kick out the old queen and take over the whole operation myself. I will be head queen.

SALLY BROWN: A 'C'? A 'C'? I got a 'C' on my coat hanger sculpture? How could anyone get a 'C' in coat hanger sculpture? May I ask a question? Was I judged on the piece of sculpture itself? If so, is it not true that time alone can judge a work of art? Or was I judged on my talent? If so, is it fair that I be judged on a part of my life over which I have no control? If I was judged on my effort, then I was judged unfairly, for I tried as hard as I could! Was I judged on what I had learned about this project? If so, then were not you, my teacher, also being judged on your ability to transmit your knowledge to me? Are you willing to share my 'C'? Perhaps I was being judged on the quality of coat hanger itself out of which my creation was made...now is this not also unfair? Am I to be judged by the quality of coat hangers that are used by the dry cleaning establishment that returns our garments? Is that not the responsibility of my parents? Should they not share my 'C'?

Monologue #7

Suzie tells a new friend about her older brother.

SUZIE: Michael and me — well, we're closer than most brothers and sisters. I guess we had to be. We're what the school psychologist calls — products of a broken home. It was more than broken, it was all smashed to pieces. Mom and Dad got a divorce. Not so awful, right? But then Dad remarries. Worse, but not tragic. Then Mom dies unexpectedly. An accident. And Michael and I have to move in with Dad and Patricia. I guess it all hit me pretty hard, but it destroyed Michael. He'd lock himself up in his room for hours at a time. Well, when he finally came out of it, started eating again and talking and stuff, the only one he seemed to care about was me. And I loved Michael more than anybody else in the whole world. When I was still little and played with dolls, if anything would happen to them — you know, like if an arm or leg came off, I'd take it to Michael. He wouldn't tease me or anything. He'd just look very serious and say something like, "Well, unfortunately, I think we can save the limb." That always used to crack me up, 'cause I was little and I thought only trees had limbs. And Michael would fix my doll, and bandage my scrapes, and hold me when I was sad. And when I'd try not to cry, he'd say, "It's okay, Suzie, you're allowed to cry. In fact, you're supposed to cry because it relieves eyeball tension." And of course I'd just laugh and laugh. Eyeball tension.

Monologue #8

ERICA: Most people think I'm weird because I volunteer down at the local homeless shelter. "Why do you want to hang around those low-lives?" It's just that one day, I walking around feeling really sorry for myself because my mother wouldn't let me pierce my nose – everyone else was getting it done. Anyway, I walked by this vacant lot that was really, really littered. Suddenly, this guy sits up from beneath all these cardboard boxes. I'd never seen anybody so dirty. Beard down to here. Hair down to here. It was his eyes, though. When I looked into them, it was like everything just disappeared...except for this eyes. It was like I was seeing myself – but he wasn't me – but he was me. I just took off running as fast as I could. I didn't want to feel what I was feeling. Finally, something made me stop. I couldn't just do nothing. So I bought him a pepperoni pizza, went back and plopped it down in front of him like he was going to bite me or something. he said, "Thanks, sister," and smiled. I said, "you're welcome," and really meant it. Then I walked home – the long way. I needed to think. Up to that point, my whole life was a lie. For the longest time I pretended to be something I wasn't – so other people would accept me. I finally saw someone for the first time...me. So, that's why I work at the shelter. There, I feel real.