

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 will be held virtually and each student will be allotted **fifteen minutes** with the auditor. The intention of the audition process is to discover each candidate's ability to:

- 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 audition block will include:

1. Discussion of TWO PRE-SUBMITTED VIDEOS of the approved monologues attached to this packet (candidate choice)
2. Interview with the auditor
3. Given Circumstances and Directorial Note Application
4. Questions

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.

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| Ineffective 0 | Developing 1 | Effective 2 | Highly Effective 3 |
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Direction Taking: Displays the ability to take specific directions from the auditors

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| Ineffective 0 | Developing 1 | Effective 2 | Highly Effective 3 |
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Character Building: Builds a fully realized character for the stage

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| Ineffective 0 | Developing 1 | Effective 2 | Highly Effective 3 |
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Risk Taking: Displays the ability to quickly make instinctual choices when given a script

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| Ineffective 0 | Developing 1 | Effective 2 | Highly Effective 3 |
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Preparation: Prepares for an audition with all required materials completed

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| Ineffective 0 | Developing 1 | Effective 2 | Highly Effective 3 |
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Social Skills: Demonstrates a positive presence for all candidates and adjudicators

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| Ineffective 0 | Developing 1 | Effective 2 | Highly Effective 3 |
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Imagination: Displays willingness to enter the imaginary world of play

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| Ineffective 0 | Developing 1 | Effective 2 | Highly Effective 3 |
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Vocal Quality: Speaks clearly with volume control for the given circumstance and performing space

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| Ineffective 0 | Developing 1 | Effective 2 | Highly Effective 3 |
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Emotional Connection: Displays a connection to the thoughts and feelings of the character

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| Ineffective 0 | Developing 1 | Effective 2 | Highly Effective 3 |
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Concentration: Focused on the task presented in the imaginary situation

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| Ineffective 0 | Developing 1 | Effective 2 | Highly Effective 3 |
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Physical Response: Uses his or her body appropriately to respond to the circumstances of the imaginary situation

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| Ineffective 0 | Developing 1 | Effective 2 | Highly Effective 3 |
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Memorization: . Memorizes a given script completely and with absolute precision

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

In this dramatic monologue, a friend talks to their friend about how they have a difficult time opening up to people they care about.

I keep things in. Things. Emotions. My emotions...I know that that's probably not a good thing. Life has made me that way I guess. I have a tendency to show no emotion when I am feeling emotion.

I just have a hard time opening up to someone. I get closed off. I feel that by being emotional in front of someone, kind of makes me very vulnerable and weak and I have a hard time with that. You know, being in that state of vulnerability, it's not a place where I like to be because I feel like I'm not in control. When I'm not in control, I get anxiety.

Whenever I truly loved anybody and opened myself up to them, they have always stabbed me in the back. I have a hard time with that; trusting people. It can be anyone...friends, family, boyfriend. I'm not sure if I truly trust anyone in my life. It's sort of a protective shield I've put up and it only gets stronger with time.

I do desire to be more vulnerable but at the same time I desire to stay protected. I feel torn. Every time I do take a risk, I get hurt. Not sure if I should keep taking those risks.

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 work 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

A child doesn't get along with their mother. They live together. Just the two of them. They are masters at pushing one another's buttons.

Look, I know you haven't felt well lately. I know that you aren't well...so it makes it hard for me to tell you this...I wish we were close. I wish we were friends. I, I don't like waking up in the morning, scrambling your eggs with you shouting obscenities in the background at me about things that don't deserve shouting.

I understand it's hard for you. I get that but you forget that I'm a person. I'm not, you know, some worker that you've hired to cook and clean. I am your daughter. I don't feel like I'm your child, but I am, I guess. These are the cards we were dealt, Mom. I'm sorry I'm not all that you hoped for and that this life we live here together isn't glamorous and that Dad abandoned us when I was born and you shouldn't make me feel like it's my fault! (beat) I didn't even know the guy. I never even met him and I, I just want to say that I try, you know, I try to be there for you and do all the things a good child is supposed to do for their mother but you are so rude and I can't take it anymore!

(beat) Be nice...to me. I'm worth enough to be treated nice. Treat me nice before I have an outburst. A real outburst. I'm talking a sumo outburst. Huge. So...treat me nice. (beat) Do you want more coffee?

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.

Monologue #9

In this serio-comedic monologue piece, a friend has had it with their roommate for never cleaning up after their leftovers in the refrigerator.

Just once I would like to see you clean out the refrigerator Mara. Unbelievable! You think you would have some freaking decency. Why do I always have to do it?! It's like you don't care. You simply don't care if we have people over and they look into our fridge! It's disgusting. Just *once* I would like to see you clean out the refrigerator. YOU'RE the one who spills the ice tea or the soda! YOU'RE the one that loves keeping food wrapped up until it becomes moldy! Are you waiting for it to get up and walk itself out of the refrigerator? Are you? Really? Am I the only one responsible enough to take a minute out of my day and clean up once and awhile?

(pulling "items" out of the refrigerator)

Look at this stuff. Look at this! Macaroni and Cheese that has been in here three Macaroni and Cheeses ago! No wonder we don't have enough bowls and dishes! No wonder! Look at this Mara, a dish of left over chinese food that has all kinds of yellow, blue, green and white mold on it! Beautiful! That looks appetizing. Oh wait! What about this?! Look at this Mara, some left over chicken fingers from, God, must be six months ago at least.

(she smells the food and GAGS)

You have got to be kidding me, right? I am NOT cleaning it up this time. YOU CAN! You can clean it all up and wash out the refrigerator, actually, SCRUB the inside of the refrigerator from God only knows what else because I just had my nails done and I am NOT ruining them!

(storms out of the room)

Monologue #10

In The Last M&M Samurai comedic monologue, a friend talks to their close friend about why they shouldn't eat the last m&m in the bag.

You always gotta let the last man go. It's honorable. He's the last guy to make it out of the bag. The warrior. He's the last samurai man.

You have to give it some thought and wonder, how did this little m & m do it? How was he skilled enough to be the last m & m in the bag, out of all the other M & M's in the bag? All the different colors. All the different sizes. I always let the last one go because he was the strongest, the swiftest, the smartest peanut out of the bunch. If you respect the candy, you gotta respect the nut.

Some people will call it science. Others will call it luck. I like to call it destiny. it was destiny combined with talent that made this little fella survive. Picture it. All of these other peanuts, some bigger than you, some faster than you, some smarter than you...all fighting to stay in the back of the bag when you turn it upside down to eat one of them. This little fella beat the odds. He deserves to be set free, just on moral obligation alone. Call me crazy but no matter what you say, I'm always going to let the last man go.