

Contemporary

2025 Performing Arts Intake - Monologues
Arts Academy

Summary:

Medea: Black Medea by Wesley Enoch

Mary O'Donnell: Bombshells by Joanna Murray Smith

Biff: Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller

Therese: Face to Face by David Williamson

Jim: Going Home by Alma de Groen

Mara: Jump for Jordan by Donna Abela

Rhett: Kingaroy by Martin Buzacott

Emily: Our Town by Thornton Wilder

Lopakhin: The Cherry Orchard by Anton Chekhov

Janko: The Glass Mermaid by Tobsha Learner

Miss Yates: The Madras House by Harley Granville Barker

Cornelius: The Matchmaker by Thornton Wilder

Akhmatova: The Woman in the Window by Alma de Groen

Rosie: Things I Know to be True by Andrew Bovell

Irina: Three Sisters by Anton Chekhov

Rod: White With Wire Wheels by Jack Hibberd

MONOLOGUES

Black Medea by Wesley Enoch (Australia, 2007)

Note: this monologue is intended for an Indigenous performer.

Medea: Give me a hair and a fingernail and I will curse you, Jason. Something with your sweat and I will curse you. Everything you have done to me, come back to haunt you ten times bigger. I want you to feel empty. The kind of emptiness I feel about you. I want you to wake up every morning and feel a part of you is missing. I want you to search and everywhere you look to see me ...whenever you close your eyes to see me. Let the spirits hear me curse...let everything you love hurt you. Wherever love is inside you let it cause you pain, from the sharp hard jabs to weeping bedsores.

***Bombshells* by Joanna Murray Smith (Australia, 2009)**

Mary O'Donnell: No one can sing and dance like me. No one in the whole school. I am the Liza Minnelli of St Brigid's and nobody can say I'm not. I've got a better voice than Angela McTerry. Much better. Her only claim to fame is that she has breasts bigger than her head, of which I am envious... *not*. And I can dance which Angela McTerry cannot do even though she thinks she can. She has not got the physique. Angela McTerry does not look attractive in a leotard and somebody who loves her should tell her so. She's got calves the size of the Soviet Union just like her sister Theresa McTerry – who's getting married to Ted 'The Pot-plant' Swinbank on Saturday and thereby introducing the world to the lovely vision of Angela in tangerine chiffon. And she's got tickets on herself just because her father's on *Neighbours*. Like *Neighbours* is a big deal. *Neighbours* is *not* a big deal. The talent show is a big deal. I *love the talent show*. I love the talent show. So far there's no one who even comes close. Allison Stoddard's one-woman *Waiting for Godot* was a wank. Janice McElhone's 'Islands in the stream' didn't cut it – someone should have told her it was a duet. Veronica O'Grady's 'Abba Medley' was a travesty. A *travesty*. I hope Bjorn and Benny never hear about it. Veronica O'Grady would be banned from Sweden. Mr Burbridge said: 'Mary O'Donnell, the talent show is coming up so you had better get thinking, young lady.' Mr Burbridge knows that I *am* the talent show. The talent show would be nothing without me. It would be '*the show*'. The *show*. Because I *am* the talent. Okay. Okay. Here we go. This is your last rehearsal, Mary O'Donnell. Do not stuff it up. Do not stuff it up.

Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller (USA, 1949)

Biff: Now hear this, Willy, this is me. You know why I had no address for three months? I stole a suit in Kansas City and I was jailed. I stole myself out of every good job since high school. And I never got anywhere because you blew me so full of hot air I could never stand taking orders from anybody! That's whose fault it is! It's goddamn time you heard that! I had to be boss big shot in two weeks, and I'm through with it! Willy! I ran down eleven flights with a pen in my hand today. And suddenly I stopped, you hear me? And in the middle of that office building, do you hear this? I stopped in the middle of that building and I saw the sky. I saw the things that I love in the world. The work and the food and the time to sit and smoke. And I looked at the pen and said to myself, what the hell am I grabbing this for? Why am I trying to become what I don't want to be? What am I doing in an office, making a contemptuous, begging fool of myself, when all I want is out there, waiting for me the minute I say I know who I am! Why can't I say that, Willy? Pop! I'm a dime a dozen, and so are you! I am not a leader of me, Willy, and neither are you. You were never anything but a hard-working drummer who landed in the ash-can like all the rest of them! I'm a dollar an hour, Willy! I tried seven states and couldn't raise it! A buck an hour! Do you gather my meaning? I'm not bringing home any prizes anymore, and you're going to stop waiting for me to bring them home! Pop, I'm nothing! I'm nothing, Pop. Can't you understand that? There's no spite in it anymore. I'm just what I am, that's all. Will you let me go, for Christ's sake? Will you take that phoney dream and burn it before something happens?

Face to Face by David Williamson (Australia, 1999)

Therese: You're very sorry now. Conference in Brisbane? Like hell. They were both on Hayman Island for a week! And I had to fudge it all. Conference in Adelaide. Like hell. Trip round the Barossa in the best hotels. It went on and on. I'm "off-putting" am I? Okay, I don't go out drinking, flirting, chatting away about nothing like you do. Pushing myself forward as if I was god's gift to the universe like you do. Okay, but I also don't go cheating on someone as decent as Claire. I don't go ripping off the firm for thousands and thousands of dollars to sleep with the boss on luxury holidays. Dollars that could have gone to the men out there who actually work. And if I did do it and was caught out I'd be sensitive enough to realise I couldn't just expect to shrug it all off with a few tears and hugs!

Going Home by Alma de Groen (Australia, 1976)

Jim: There won't be any disappointment. It's different now. I've changed!

How can I convince you? *[Pause]* Look. I was happy this morning. Remember? *[Pause]*

You really don't believe me, do you? Shit. What can I say to you? Listen. I went into the studio this morning and looked at my paintings- really looked at them- and they seemed wrong. Inadequate. And do you know something? I didn't care. Because I knew that it was a good feeling, because something had happened to me, I'd grown, and I'd be able to make the paintings grow with me, that eventually they'd catch me up, and then I'd outstrip them again, and then they'd catch me again. *[Pause.]* I've had the feeling many times, but this morning I realised something I'd never fully acknowledged before: that it'll go on all my life no matter where I am or what the circumstances are. It's a race that I hold with myself that only I can win or only I can lose. It doesn't matter where I run the race, as long as I run it and don't let anything stop me along the way. *[Pause.]* I'm not going home because I failed here, or because I think it will be better. I'm not going home simply because it's time now. I was born there and I want to live and work there. Do you believe me? Come with me and you'll see.

Jump for Jordan by Donna Abela (Australia, 2017)

Note: this monologue is intended for a Jordanian-Australian performer.

Mara: Sahir, we had a house, my half of my father's house in Ammam, in the capitol city of a modern Kingdom. Now we have what? A cold and filthy bedsit on the other side of the world. You have work, you have friends at the factory, come home whistling nice happy tunes because you're thinking of that horrible block of wind and cow shit that you expect me to live in. What do I have? A landlady in yelling dresses who blocks the corridor with her bulk and sneers at my cooking. Strangers who get drunk on the steps and live in smelly dark rooms in sin. A husband who grows little sticks in little jars for a little garden that will never smell as sweet as the irises and jasmine you grew for me in Jordan.

Kingaroy by Martin Buzacott (Australia, 1996)

Note: this monologue is intended for an Indigenous performer.

Rhett: There's a legend among the blackfellas. It says the shooting stars are the souls of the dead returnin'. And, if ya open up ya world to 'em, the family ya lost'll come right back on ya. I never believed it. Then when the meteors started flyin' night after night it was like the spirits callin' out, pleadin' to the last bit of blackfella in me. Didn't know if they was real or not, but there was somethin' from long ago drivin' me to it. I claimed the rodeo for meself, eh. I got the Carnival world of free spirits to come into this place – and all o' the dead returned. I was answered. (*Triumphantly, in wonder.*) blackfella live again. Blackfella still got spirits. Blackfella got his self-respect. And tonight maybe the heavens'll be quiet at last. We'll watch, and we'll wonder why.

***Our Town* by Thornton Wilder (USA, 1938)**

Emily: I can't bear it. They're so young and beautiful. Why did they ever have to get old? Mama, I'm here. I'm grown up. I love you all, everything. - I can't look at everything hard enough. Oh, Mama, just look at me one minute as though you really saw me. Mama, fourteen years have gone by. I'm dead. You're a grandmother, Mama. I married George Gibbs, Mama. Wally's dead, too. Mama, his appendix burst on a camping trip to North Conway. We felt just terrible about it - don't you remember? But, just for a moment now we're all together. Mama, just for a moment we're happy. Let's look at one another. I can't. I can't go on. It goes so fast. We don't have time to look at one another. I didn't realize. All that was going on in life and we never noticed. Take me back - up the hill - to my grave. But first: Wait! One more look. Good-bye, Good-bye, world. Good-bye, Grover's Corners, Mama and Papa. Good-bye to clocks ticking, and Mama's sunflowers. And food and coffee. And new-ironed dresses and hot baths, and sleeping and waking up. Oh, earth, you're too wonderful for anybody to realize you. Do any human beings ever realize life while they live it? - every, every minute? I'm ready to go back. I should have listened to you. That's all human beings are! Just blind people.

The Cherry Orchard by Anton Chekhov (Russia, Translated by Michael Frayn, reprint 1995)

Lopakhin: I bought it... I bought it! One moment...wait...if you would, ladies and gentlemen... My head's going round and round, I can't speak... (*laughs*) So now the cherry orchard is mine! Mine! (*he gives a shout of laughter*) Great God in heaven – the cherry orchard is mine! Tell me I'm drunk – I'm out of my mind – tell me it's all an illusion ... Don't laugh at me! If my father and grandfather could rise from their graves and see it all happening – if they could see me, their Yermolai, their beaten half-literate Yermolai, who ran barefoot in winter – if they could see this same Yermolai buying the estate... The most beautiful thing in the entire world! I have bought the estate where my father and grandfather were slaves, where they weren't even allowed into the kitchens. I'm asleep – this is all just inside my head – a figment of the imagination. Hey, you in the band! Play away! I want to hear you! Everyone come and watch Yermolai Lopakhin set about the cherry orchard with his axe! Watch these trees come down! Weekend houses, we'll build weekend houses, and our grandchildren and our great grandchildren will see a new life here... Music! Let's hear the band play! Let's have everything the way I want it. Here comes the new landlord, the owner of the cherry orchard!

The Glass Mermaid by Tobsha Learner (Australia, 1994)

Janko: When I was a soldier we were crossing the Sava river. It is frozen over. We have packs on our backs. Heavy. Our bayonets are tied to us. We are walking. The ice is hard like glass. We are alone, there is nothing, only the cry of crows and this thud, thud. War somewhere else. Suddenly there is sound, cracking. The slab of ice we are walking on, tilts up...we are sliding, our fingers clutching at the surface, no one is screaming, it is too quick, we are sliding into the river, the freezing river. And the ice, she closes up above our heads. As if we had never been there...I see the others floating down, struggling with their packs. Like crazy ballet dancers. I am dying I think. My cousins' faces like ghosts in the green water. I cut myself free. Up up to the surface. My face is pressed against the ice. My skin sticks to it. I push my bayonet through the ice. I hear people shouting. They cut a hole and pull me free...not war. Nature. Nine men pulled down into the water. I never see my cousins again.

***The Madras House* by Harley Granville Barker (UK, 1910)**

Miss Yates: I daresay. But I won't. I've known other girls in this sort of mess – one or two...with everybody being kind to them and sneering at them. And there they sat and cried and were ashamed of themselves! What's the good of that? And the fellows hating them. Well, I don't want him to hate me. He can forget all about it if he likes...and of course he will. I started by crying my eyes out. Then I thought that if I couldn't buck up and anyway pretend to be pleased and jolly well proud, I might as well die. And d'you know when I'd been pretending a bit, I found that I really was pleased and proud...And I am really proud and happy about it now sir...I am not pretending. I daresay I've done wrong...perhaps I ought to come to grief altogether, but – *(At this moment a telephone on the table rings violently, and Miss Yates apologises – to it apparently.)* Oh, I beg pardon.

The Matchmaker by Thornton Wilder (USA, 1954)

Cornelius: Isn't the world full of wonderful things? There we sit cooped up in Yonkers for years and years and all the time wonderful people like Mrs Molloy are walking around in New York and we don't know them at all. I don't know whether - from where you're sitting - you can see - well, for instance, the way (*pointing to the edge of his right eye*) her eye and forehead and cheek come together, up here. Can you? And the kind of fireworks that shoot out of her eyes all the time. I tell you right now: a fine woman is the greatest work of God. You can talk all you like about Niagara Falls and the Pyramids; they aren't in it at all. Of course, up there at Yonkers they came into the store all the time, and bought this and that, and I said "Yes, ma'am", and "That'll be seventy-five cents, ma'am"; and I watched them. But today I've talked to one, equal to equal, equal to equal, and to the finest one that ever existed, in my opinion. They're so different from men! Everything that they say and do is so different that you feel like laughing all the time. (he laughs) Golly, they're different from men. And they're awfully mysterious, too. You never can be really sure what's going on in their heads. They have a kind of wall around them all the time - of pride and a sort of play-acting: I bet you could know a woman a hundred years without ever being really sure whether she liked you or not. This minute I'm in danger. I'm in danger of losing my job and my future and everything that people think is important; but I don't care. Even if I have to dig ditches for the rest of my life, I'll be a ditch-digger who once had a wonderful day.

***The Woman in the Window* by Alma de Groen (Australia, 1999)**

Akhmatova: Father didn't want us to write poetry. And so, we pretended we didn't. we played on the seashore. We hid our clothes and swam far out to sea at night. A monk asked us what we were doing. We had no idea we were happy. We read Pushkin and what it was like to be persecuted for one's art. Pushkin, who said, 'Go where your secret dreams lead you'. When we grew up we stood with other women outside the prisons. We saw their faces grow old as they waited for news of sons or husbands. When one of them asked us, 'Can you describe this?' we said, 'Yes, I can'. We knew there was a secret writing that inscribed the world, a kind of invisible ink of the universe. And this was poetry. And we knew that it belonged to everyone. And so we began to write for everyone. It was personal, but it spoke of everyone who lived and breathed.

Things I Know to be True by Andrew Bovell (Australia, 2017)

Rosie: I'll meet people. I told them. I'll be fine. But meeting people is harder than you think. I mean I did, meet people, at hostels and stuff but mainly other Australians... But the boys just wanted to have sex and I guess that's alright but if I wanted to have sex with an Australian boy I would have stayed in Hallet Cove. So I go to the churches I walk through the cobbled streets and everything is so beautiful. Everything is what I was expecting it to be. And yet somehow I want it to be more. I don't what it's meant to be. I don't know what I'm meant to do. I keep wondering when will life start. And then there he is. At a club in Mitte. Dancing. With his shirt off...That guy is like...fire. And then he looks over at me. Me? And I am gone. And we dance until the sun comes up. And as we come out of the club into the light, I think this is it. This is life. I am living. And when he kisses me I want to cry. Because I'd never been kissed like that. And I'd never been kissed where he kissed me or touched quite like that. Three days we stayed in bed. And after three days I knew some things too. On the third night I watch him sleeping and I do that thing you shouldn't do. I think about the future. I imagine taking him home to meet Mum and Dad and my sister and brothers and and and how they will all love him, like they love me And when I wake up in the morning he's gone...along with four hundred Euros from my wallet, my iPad, my camera, my favourite scarf and a large piece of my heart. I walk through the streets of Berlin. I feel small. I feel like I'm twelve years old, I feel ridiculous. I want to cry but I won't. Well I do, a bit. But not as much as I want to. I want my dad. I want my mum. I don't know much at all. But I know I have to go home.

***Three Sisters* by Anton Chekhov (Russia, 1901, translated by Sarah Ruhl 2009)**

Irina: I woke up this morning, got up and washed my face, and everything in the world seemed suddenly clear to me, and I knew how to live. I knew everything! Sweet Ivan Romanych! People have to work, to *labor!* Work by the sweat of our brows. No matter who we are. This is our one purpose, joy, ecstasy! The thrill of getting up in the morning and drilling a hole in the street! Or feeding sheep, or teaching children, or, or—making a train go! My God! Why be a person? I'd rather be an ox—or a simple horse--and *do* something!—Anything but a young lady, who wakes at noon, drinks her coffee in bed, and takes two hours to button a dress. Disgusting! I want to work the way I want an ice cold drink in the summertime. And if I don't manage to wake up at dawn every day and work, work!-- then promise me you'll desert me forever, Ivan Romanych.

***White With Wire Wheels* by Jack Hibberd (Australia, 1968)**

Rod: Hey, did you know Mal was buying a new car?... Mal is one of the most talented drunken drivers I've ever come across. I've seen him, pissed to the eyeballs, do the most amazing things-beautifully judged cornering and controlled broadsides. Were you there the time he roared between a tram and a parked car? (*Gesturing enthusiastically*) There just wasn't room! I screamed at him not to try it. But he ignored me and bored straight on. Not a scratch. Must've been a quarter of an inch to spare on each side. Bloody amazing performance. He should be in the racing game. I've told him numerous times... He's quite safe, really. I know. Never blotted his copybook. I feel much safer with him than my old man who thrashes around the city at a death-defying speed - thirty miles per hour. In a new Jaguar. You'd think he was running it on wop juice. (*Pause*) Anne, I've got something to tell you.... (*Coldly*) I'm calling it off....I don't want to get mixed up in any long affair at the moment....You're getting too fond of me. I think it's better to call it off now when it won't hurt you as much as it would if I called it off later on. I'm thinking of myself as well. It won't hurt me as much now as it would later on. It's easier all round. Don't you see? (*Pause*) It's just not convenient at the moment. To hell with it! I'm not going into it all. I don't have to. I've made up my mind and there's nothing you can do about it. I have my reasons, don't worry. I just don't want to see you again. Is that clear? (*Pause*) To be honest, I'm sick of you. You just don't interest me any more. You bore me. I may even hate your guts. When this happens, I naturally just move on. Simple as that. What else can you expect me to do?