

# SW SUMMER MONOLOGUE COMPETITION 2017

## **Brief:**

To write a 5 – 10 minute 'Emotional' monologue

## **Word Count:**

5 minutes (Approx. 1000 words) 10 minutes. (Approx. 2000 words) Best way to time your piece is to read it aloud.

## **Judge:**

Debbie Christie, Windsor-based professional actor. Debbie is also a Director of Damn Cheek Productions which is a theatre company dedicated to taking new writing to large and small venues around the country.

## **Judge's Notes**

*I am always thrilled to be involved in new writing projects, I really enjoy the process of exploring and creating a character to bring it to life. This often means working closely with both the director and the writer – although this can be interesting when the director is sure that he/she knows best and gets frustrated if the actor starts asking the writer what their intentions were!*

*I have played many parts over the years but my most recent new writing projects have been as a fictional Prime Minister in a play called *The Speech* which we have toured around the UK (including a stint in London's Art's Theatre), *A Headteacher* in a political play called *Faction* which is currently in a research and development phase (and we are hoping to get funding to tour this next year).*

*I also had the honour of performing the winning play at The Kenneth Branagh New Writing Awards at the Windsor Fringe. This was a monologue play lasting about 45 minutes where I played a woman suffering with cancer who relived all the important conversations she had (or should have had) in her life. I thought it was a worthy winner and it was certainly an emotional roller coaster which took her on a real journey.*

*So as an actor, what do I find important in a monologue? It's about making a very specific connection with your audience. In a play with more than two people the audience is mostly a spectator, but with a monologue, they become a very important part of action.*

*I'm not a writer (you can probably tell), but if I'm performing a monologue, I want the character to have a strong intention or desire and to immediately catch the attention of the listener, drawing them in and making them want to hear the next line, then the next line. I want them to come along on the journey with me and to elicit an emotion from them. Any emotion – love, loathing, disgust, sympathy, amusement, admiration, fear but never, hopefully, indifference!*

*There needs to be a clear journey, people should want to care – and yes, a lot of this can be to do with the performance, but as the saying goes 'you can't polish a turd', so good writing makes the difference between an average experience and a great experience for the audience.*

*In a monologue the writing needs to be conversational and real. Reading words is not the same as saying words, so the dialogue must have a natural feel to it. It also makes lines much easier to learn as they are more natural. I think it's worth the writer actually saying the lines you've written out loud (or get someone else to do it) and if they sound like they're being read, try thinking about how they would sound if they're being spoken.*

*Over use of punctuation can often stilt the delivery. I know it's probably that the writer trying to help but it's not always has helpful as you might think. I once worked with a director who*

*told us to ignore every single piece of punctuation and it's amazing what a different delivery you can get from not being tied down to a comma.*

*It's also worth thinking about the little traps you put in for us actors – this can be a particular issue when lines are repeated but in different ways throughout a play. 'Where was I?' Where did we get to? What's next? So, where was I? These can be real trip ups for actors.*

*I've been in plays where we've shaved off 20 minutes by someone picking the wrong response to a line (the above lines being a real example of this).*

*This may seem obvious, but there needs to be a recognisable end point to the piece. The audience needs to know that it's finished – yes, lighting and sound can help with that, but the writing needs to show that the journey has come to an end. That said, don't feel that you need to feed every detail or explain all the time, it's OK to leave people guessing or for something to be uncertain so the audience can make their own minds up.*

*Most importantly it's got to be entertaining!*

*As an actor I feel a profound sense of duty to perform writing as it is written. Writers slave over every line and to paraphrase and cut things out can be frustrating for everyone concerned. Although a lot of that had to do with the length of rehearsal and actors preparedness, writers can help this by ensuring that the dialogue is realistic and by creating a compelling story.*

### **Deadline**

**Monday 4th September 2017.** This will be by electronic submissions only.

### **Results:**

**Monday 6th November 2017.**

### **Rules:**

Open to members only.

One entry per member.

Write on only one side of A4 paper.

Manuscripts must be typed and lines must be **single spaced**.

Title of story and page number to appear on each page.

No author's name to appear anywhere on the script.

### **Submission Rules:**

E-mail your monologue as a word .doc attachment to Terry (e-mail address available on request)

Your file should have the same name as the title of your manuscript prefixed by SWSUM17. (e.g. 'SWSUM17 – 'One Voice').

Once all the entries are in, they will be sent electronically to Debbie. You will receive an e-mail from Terry confirming when your entry has been received by Debbie.

For this competition, work may be discussed amongst members, but is entirely up to the individual and done on a mutual basis between writer and reader. Members should not discuss any other entries without the permission of the author to respect the privacy of those who wish to keep their work to themselves.

*Failure to comply with any of the rules will result in your work being withdrawn from the competition. Good Luck!*