

## **ACTING Audition Pieces**

Applicants are welcome to choose audition pieces from this selection, OR from similar lists published by other Australian acting/drama schools. You can also make your own selection from other sources. **This document should be read in conjunction with the Acting Additional Entry Requirements and FAQ.**

### **PIECES FOR WOMEN**

**It is recommended that you read the play or watch the film in relation to these audition pieces.**

#### **AWAY by Michael Gow**

**Sydney Currency Press. 1988 Revised Edition. Sydney Currency Press in conjunction with Playbox Theatre Co 1986.**

GWEN: The things that are taken away on holidays always go in the proper order, so everything will fit. I can't help it if someone decides to be smart and funny and try to hide things in a little cardboard box. I wasn't going to have the whole routine upset, that we've been following all these years and that I thought was giving people a good life, though it seems I'm very wrong, for the sake of someone's joke.

You're developing a nasty streak. A very nasty, cruel streak. You know what you're becoming? Snide. A nasty, snide girl. No one likes a snide girl, always arguing, always throwing a tantrum, getting your own way, answering back, correcting people, criticising, complaining, no one likes that sort of girl. Unless you count your foulmouthed little English chum. You'll make a great pair. Throw your future away. Give it away. Throw what I have done, we have done, in our faces.

Sacrificed! Gone without. Gone through hardship so what happened to us will never happen to you. So you'll never know what we saw – never, never, never. Never see people losing jobs and never finding another one, never be without a home, never be without enough money for a decent meal, never be afraid that everything will fall apart at any second. Isn't that something, miss? Tell me? Isn't it?

Now my head's going to burst. I'm going to take something and then get lunch.

#### **SUMMER OF THE SEVENTEENTH DOLL by Ray Lawler**

**Sydney Currency Press. 1978. London, Angus and Robertson. 1957**

OLIVE: You never knew! Nancy used to say it was how they'd walk into the pub as if they owned it, even just in the way they walked you could spot it. All round would be the regulars, soft city blokes having their drinks and their little arguments, and then in would come Roo and Barney. They wouldn't say anything – they didn't have to – there'd just be the two of them walkin' in, then a kind of wait for a second or two, and quiet. After that, without a word, the regulars'd stand aside to let 'em through, just as if they was a – a coupla kings. She always reckoned they made the rest of the mob look like a bunch of skinned rabbits. [SOFTLY] Poor old Nancy ... I'd like to ask her. Right now, with them expected any minute, and her sitting chained up to that – book bloke – I'd like to ask her if she thinks it was worth it. And I bet that'd be one question she wouldn't be able to laugh her way out of!

**DON'S PARTY by David Williamson**  
**Sydney Currency Press Methuen Drama 1973**

KATH: Oh...they were great days...great bloody days, weren't they? Then why the hell did I have to put you on an invalid's diet because you had ulcers at the age of twenty-five because you couldn't fucking well cope with your job or anything else for that matter and why did I have to cook all your meals and wash all your clothes? Eh? Because your little mummy hadn't told you that there's a fucking great world full of people out there who don't give a stuff about little Donnie Henderson, boy wonder, prematurely retired. Whizz kid. Adolescent genius, full grown bomb out. Fizzer. Squib...

[UNDAUNTED] I had to creep around our flat while Donnie Genius is tapping out his earth-shattering novel that was going to place him and I quote, amongst the ranks of the all time fucking greats...Delusions of grandeur weren't in the race! I had to wait seven fucking years before I was allowed to have a kid. Jesus Christ! I wasn't allowed to do pottery until last year because it was so mundane. You shit me, Henderson. You shit me completely. I'm going to bed.

**SUMMER OF THE ALIENS by Louis Nowra**  
**Sydney Currency Press 1992**

DULCIE: Are they going to be surprised. Hey, fellas, what's this wet-patch? Holy Hell, someone's pissed on an RSL billiard table. (laughs) I want to make a mess of this place. We'll tear it up, piss and shit on it all and someone passing by will say tomorrow morning: I saw angels in the RSL hall. It was angels that destroyed it. (touching LEWIS' wings) Aren't they beautiful? Angels hover in the air like dragonflies. Like this. Now I have no wings. No, not yet. Angels have to think of them and then they imagine having them and there is a feeling, like it must be when boys get stiff, a growing from the shoulders. Two wings on either shoulders. But they don't look like wings at first, they look like buds, white buds. Then slowly, like a flower, they slowly open, breaking through the angels' clothes. Real slow, unfolding like in dreamtime. And then they open out, like my wings. They begin to float testing new, unnamed muscles. Then they're like a bird flying, break free of the ground. I begin to rise. Above you. Higher higher, like a cloud, my body feels light as a cloud. I begin speaking but my voice has changed, it's as loud as a scream, softer than a whisper. I speak like an angel. My speech sounds like this. (She presses her lips against his hands and says the one phrase over and over) I am saying something secret to you in angel talk.

**THREE SISTERS by Anton Chekhov**  
**Evanston, Ill. Northwestern University Press 1992; New York, NY Thatre Communications Group 1992 First Edition**

IRENA: Tell me, why is it I'm so happy today? Just as if I were sailing along in a boat with big white sails, and above me the wide, blue sky and in the sky great white birds floating around? You know, when I woke up this morning, and after I'd got up and washed, I suddenly felt as if everything in the world had become clear to me, and I knew the way I ought to live. I know it all now, my dear Ivan Romanych. Man must work by the sweat of his brow whatever his class, and that should make up the whole meaning and purpose of his life and happiness and contentment. Oh, how good it must be to be a workman, getting up with the sun and breaking stones by the roadside – or a shepherd – or a school-master teaching the children – or an engine-driver on the railway. Good Heavens! It's better to be a mere ox or horse, and work, than the sort of young woman who wakes up at twelve, and drinks her coffee in bed, and then takes two hours dressing...How dreadful! You know how you long for a cool drink in hot weather? Well, that's the way I long for work. And if I don't get up early from now on and really work, you can refuse to be friends with me any more, Ivan Romanych.

**WHEN I WAS A GIRL I USED TO SCREAM AND SHOUT by Sharman MacDonald  
London, Boston, Faber and Faber, 1992; London, Faber and Faber, 1995**

FIONA: (*very quickly*) Last week, I was on the bus, upstairs. I was going to see Dorothy and this girl up the front, she started having a fit or something. Must have been the heat. There were lots of people there between her and me but they, none of them... I went over to her and did what I could. She was heavy. I'd heard about them biting through their tongues. Epileptics. It wasn't pretty. Me and this other bloke took her to the hospital. But I saw her first. He wouldn't have done anything if I hadn't. I didn't get to see Dorothy. Well? That's worth something, isn't it? God. Are you listening? I'm not trying to bribe you. It's plain economics. I mean, I've made a mistake. It was my fault and I was wrong. I take it all on me. OK. Now if you let it make me pregnant... God. Listen, will you. If I'm pregnant it'll ruin four people's lives. Five. Right? My Mum'll be disappointed and her man'll walk out on her. That's two. Are you with me, God? I'll not be very happy. My mother'll hate me for the rest of my life for what I've done and that's not easy to live with. That's three. I'm still counting, God. Ewan'll be in for it. Well, he can't avoid it. I'm illegal and I've never been out with anybody else. Not that nobody fancied me. I wouldn't like to think I was unpopular. Lots of people fancied me. My mum said I had to wait till I was sixteen. Then she relented just when Ewan happened to be there. Poor old Ewan. That's four, God, that's four. Then there's the baby. If it's there and if I have it it's got no chance. It would be born in Scotland. Still there, are you? I hate Scotland. I mean, look at me. If I have an abortion the baby'll be dead so that'll be five anyway.

**THE KID by Michael Gow  
Sydney Currency Press 1994; Sydney Currency Press 1998.**

SNAKE: Honestly. I hate this trip. It's always chaos. Always a fight. By the time we get to Auntie Eileen's no one's talking to anyone. I have to do everything. Get the boys ready. Stock up on drinks and Marlboro and chips. Hate it. Won't it be great when we get the money? We'll be happy. We might take over a service station. Dean can fool around with his engines. I'll cook snacks and Pro can man the pumps. I'll have to help him with the change. I'll look back on all this and laugh. Hate it. All the people we end up taking along. Deans always collects someone. You must have been the first one ever to turn him down. He was that upset. He was driving like a maniac. He just drove over the median strip and back we came. Little turd. Know why he got chucked out of school? Mrs Tucker - guess what Dean called her - was wrapped in him. She used to beat shit out of him, for any reason, no reason, just so she could grab hold of him and whack his bum. One day he'd had enough and he told her to go and see one of the Abo stockmen and he'd fix her up. Poor woman grabbed all the rulers in the room and laid into Dean. He stood up, gave her a right hook and she went down like a ton of bricks. We all stood on the desks and cheered. I reckon Dean would win wars single-handed. The enemy would come to him on bended knees. People will do anything just to get a wink or a smile that says he likes you. Little turd. Foul temper. Lazy. But who cares when it's Dean?

**THE ART OF SUCCESS by Nick Dear  
London, Methuen, 1989**

LOUISA: Wind off the Thames blows down the avenues, round the rotunda, through the triumphal arches and directly up my skirt. I must have the coldest legs in England. A sailor in a Bermondsey cellar said that in China they tell of a wind disease, a cold, cold wind blowing round the body, typhoon in your arms and legs, whispering draughts at the back of your skull. I told him I think I've got it, mate, it all sounds dead familiar. He laughed and bit my nipple with splintering teeth. What I would have loved, at that moment, what I longed for, was that all the air would whoosh out of me like burst balloon, and I sink down to nothing at his feet, and teach the disbelieving rat a lesson. Here I am out in all weathers, all the entrances and exits of my body open to the elements day and freezing night, what's to stop the gale when it come in and fills me? And blows around my

bones for ever? – Wait, is he walking this way? That dragoon? He looks so sad... doesn't he look sad... I don't know, they call this place a pleasure garden, I've never seen such misery, I'd christen it the garden of wind and disappointment, or cold and frosted cunt.

**BOX THE PONY by Leah Purcell  
Sydney Hodder Headline 1999.**

LEAH: When I grow up, I took off from up'ome'der. I grabbed the essentials...And jumped in my little yellow Datsun Sunny...(sings) 'Sunny, thank you for the smile upon my face...' Good car. Straight to Sydney, Eastern Suburbs, real flash. Had to live somewhere, right? So I go to a real estate agent. 'G'Day'...and true's god, the woman behind the counter looks at me and says, 'We haven't any money, we haven't any money, take whatever you want.' So I took a one-bedroom flat. See, blackfella not greedy. So now I live in Woollahra, real fuckin' flash, which is nice...because as Aunty Pauline Hanson say, 'Too many people up'ome get paid too much money for sitting around drinking too much port.' So Woollahra feels like home. Then I gets this job presenting on cable TV and all of a sudden I'm a BIG star in Woollahra! Solid, eh? But serious now...them fellas in Sydney they different mob, eh? Up'ome'der when you drivin' and a car passes' you wave. 'Hey, cuss.' But here in Sydney, biggest mob of bloody cars, I'm wavin' all bloody day, what's wrong with them fellas? None of them bastards wave back! And another thing, you're sitting next to someone. 'G'day.' 'Where you come from?' 'Woollahra?' 'Hey, you and me and this bloke over here, same mob. We'll have to get together and have a cup of tea.' 'I'm from up'ome'der, 'Murgon.' 'My father he's white, two wives, two families, one white and one black...and...that...was...my mum. Here, wher you goin'? 'It get's better! I haven't got up to the part about me being conceived at the dump!' 'Suit yourself...'

Another, time, I'm walking down the street and this lady comes out of gate and true's god, it's like a bloody cartoon. She grabs her bag and goes...

*(As WHITE WOMAN frightened by seeing a blackfella up close, she clutches her handbag to her chest and blinks, stopping in her tracks as if she fears LEAH might hit her.)*

...like I was going to hit her or something...

She backs in her gate, up the path, falls in the front door, rolls up the hallway, doing backward somersaults...slow motion...And I stood there...thinking...

## PIECES FOR MEN

**It is recommended that you read the play or watch the film in relation to these audition pieces.**

**AWAY by Michael Gow  
Sydney Currency Press. 1988 Revised Edition. Sydney Currency Press in conjunction with Playbox Theatre Co 1986.**

TOM: Yeah, that's what I had. An infection. Everyone knew I had some infection. I was sick. I was told the infection was running its course. That I had to fight. I did. One day a doctor came and sat on my bed and had a long talk with me. He told me that before I got completely well again I would get a lot worse, get really, really sick. And no matter how sick I got not to worry because it meant that soon I'd start to get well again. He was full of shit. He couldn't look me in the face to say it. He stared at the cabinet next to the bed the whole time. And the nurses were really happy whenever they were near me, but when I stared them in the face, in the end they'd look away and bite their lips. When I was able to go home the doctor took me into his office and we had another talk. I had to look after myself. No strain, no dangerous activity. Keep my spirits up. Then he went very quiet, leant over the desk, practically whispering how if I knew a girl it'd be good for me to do it, to try it. 'It', he kept calling it. It, it. I put him on the spot. What? Name it. Give it a name. He cleared his throat. 'Sexual intercourse'. But if I was worried about going all the way I could experiment with mutual masturbation. Know what that is?

**THE FATHER WE LOVED ON A BEACH BY THE SEA by Stephen Sewell  
Sydney Currency Press in association with Playbox Theatre Co 1983.**

DAN: What's the matter with you? Haven't you got fucking eyes? Look at the place! They've turned it into a fucking prison...Jesus Christ. You never understood, did you? What did you want me to do? Turn my back on the whole thing? You bring me up to believe in truth and charity and then you want me to ignore what's going on in the world. You can napalm fucking peasants to the shithouse and still receive communion on Sunday. The cops can murder blacks in the streets, but the rule of law still holds. Did you ever ask whose law? Didn't you ever ask why you ate bread an' dripping an' them on the North Shore fed steak to their dogs? Fuck me dead. If you wanted me to be anything else, why didn't you just teach me how to cheat an' swindle a fortune for myself an' leave it at that?

*(PAUSE)*

... Why don't you say something to me, for God's sake? Why didn't you ever say anything to me? Were you frightened of me? Don't you think I need you?

**AFTER DINNER by Andrew Bovell  
Sydney Currency Press 1989; Sydney Currency Press 1997 Rev Edition.**

GORDON: I had just hoped that we might talk. Yes, over dinner. You see, I haven't had the chance to talk about it with anyone yet. When Brendon was kind enough to ask me to join you for dinner, I became quite excited. The thought of spending an evening with two of my fellow men excited me. Yes, you see I don't think I've been out with just men since I was a teenager. I've been looking forward to it all week. I thought that if anyone could possibly understand how I felt then it would be another man. I have to admit. The divorce hasn't been easy. I've been a little battered by the whole thing. We had to sell the house, of course. I've been living in a small flat ever since. I've isolated myself from the world, but then again I had to. After all the bitterness, the disappointments and rejection, there's only one thing left. There's only one thing left to come back to, Stephen – yourself. You can only come back to yourself. Only the very sad thing, the pitiful thing is, that there's not guarantee that you'll like what you find. Can you understand that, Stephen? I don't like myself very much. I don't like myself very much at all. When your wife leaves you and makes you feel as though you're not worth the ground she walks on, then you're not left with a very high opinion of yourself. And you need to talk to someone, you need to tell someone that you've been crushed. You need to shout before you go mad, before you hurt someone or shoot yourself – or her and your children, if you've got any. That's why I've come here tonight, Stephen. I need to shout. I need to tell someone...but not just anyone, certainly not a woman. I need to tell a man. I need the support of my fellow man. Because men do have emotions, Stephen, and they can express them if only they are allowed to. Believe me, a day has not passed since she left me that I haven't wept like a lost child. Collapsed on the floor in a heap of uncontrollable tears...I'm sorry.

**THE GLASS MENAGERIE by Tennessee Williams  
New York, New Directions 1949**

TOM: I didn't go to the moon, I went much further – for time is the longest distance between two places. Not long after that I was fired for writing a poem on the lid of a shoe-box. I left Saint Louis. I descended the steps of this fire escape for a last time and followed, from then on, in my father's footsteps, attempting to find in motion what was lost in space. I travelled around a great deal. The cities swept about me like dead leaves, leaves that were brightly colored but torn away from the branches. I would have stopped, but I was pursued by something. It always came upon me unawares, taking me altogether by surprise. Perhaps it was a familiar bit of music. Perhaps it was only a piece of transparent glass. Perhaps I am walking along a street at night, in some strange city, before I have found companions. I pass the lighted window of a shop where perfume is sold.

The window is filled with pieces of colored glass, tiny transparent bottles in delicate colors, like bits of a shattered rainbow. Then all at once my sister touches my shoulder. I turn around and look into her eyes. Oh, Laura, Laura, I tried to leave you behind me, but I am more faithful than I intended to be! I reach for a cigarette, I cross the street, I run into the movies or a bar, I buy a drink, I speak to the nearest stranger, anything that can blow your candles out!  
For nowadays the world is lit by lightning! Blow out your candles, Laura – and so goodbye...

**ANGELS IN AMERICA PART II - PERESTROIKA by Tony Kushner**  
**London Royal National Theatre/Nick Hern Books 1994**

BELIZE: What did you drag me out here for, Louis, I don't have time for you. You walk out on your lover. Days don't pass before you are out on the town with somebody new. But this...this is a record low: sharing your dank and dirty bed with Roy Cohn's buttboy. Doesn't that bother you at all? Your little friend didn't tell you, huh? You and Hoss Cartwright, it's not a verbal kind of thing, you just kick off your boots and hit the hay. I don't know whether Mr Cohn has penetrated more than his spiritual sphincter. All I'm saying is you better hope there's no GOP germ, Louis, 'cause if there is, you got it... And he's a clerk for a Republican federal judge ... You know what your problem is, Louis? Your problem is that you are so full of piping hot crap that the mention of your name draws flies. Just to set the record straight: I love Prior but was never in love with him. I have a man, uptown, and have since long before I first laid my eyes on the sorry-ass sight of you. But you didn't know 'cause you never bothered to ask. Up in the air, just like that angel, too far off the earth to pick out the details. Louis and his Big Ideas. Big ideas are all you love. "America" is what Louis loves. Well I hate America, Louis. I hate this country. It's just big ideas, and stories, and people dying, and people like you. The white cracker who wrote the National Anthem knew what he was doing. He set the word "free" to a note so high nobody can reach it. That was deliberate. Nothing on earth sounds less like freedom to me. You come to room 1013 over at the hospital, I'll show you America. Terminal, crazy and mean. (PAUSE) I live in America, Louis, that's hard enough, I don't have to love it. You do that. Everybody's got to love something.

**COSI by Louis Nowra**  
**Sydney Currency Press in association with Belvoir Street Theatre 1992 Paddington**  
**Currency Press 1994 Rev Edition paperback.**

DOUG: It's what I did. Burned a cat. Quite recently. It was the fault of the psychiatrist. I'd been seeing him because of my pyromania – that's a person who likes lighting fires – but you probably know that being university educated – but you know the problem with pyromania? It's the only crime where you have to be at the scene of it to make it a perfect crime, to give yourself full satisfaction. 'Course, that means the chances of you getting caught are greater, especially if you're standing in front of the fire, face full of ecstasy and with a gigantic hard on. So, the cops got me and I'm sent to a shrink. He tells me that I've got an unresolved problem with my mother. I think, hello, he's not going to tell me to do something Oedipal, like fuck her or something...but that wasn't the problem. My ego had taken a severe battering from her. He said I had better resolve it, stop her treating me like I was still a child. It made some sort of cosmic sense. I had to stand up to her. So I thought about it and realised I had to treat it like a boxing match, get the first punch in, so to speak, to give me the upper hand in our relationship. She had five cats. One night I rounded them up, put them in a cage, doused them with petrol and put a match to them. Then I opened up the cage door and let them loose. Well, boy, oh, boy, what a racket! They were running around the backyard burning and howling – there's no such thing as grace under pressure for a burning cat, let me tell you. I hid in the shrubs when mum came outside to see what was happening. Totally freaked out, she did. Five of them, running around the backyard like mobile bonfires. I figured I'd wait a couple of hours 'til the cats were dead and mum was feeling a bit sorry for herself and I'd knock on the front door and say to her "Hi, mum, I've come to talk about our unresolved conflicts" but, oh, no, one of those cats ran into the house. In a couple of minutes the whole bloody house was alight and within a half an hour there was no bloody front

door to knock on. (A BEAT) If it wasn't for that damn cat, I wouldn't be in here.

**THE GOLDEN AGE by Louis Nowra**  
**Sydney Currency Press 1989 2<sup>nd</sup> edition**

FRANCIS: Are you looking at the sunset?

*[Startled, Betsheb turns around]*

*[Smiling]* I'm not a monster...no more running.

*[Silence. He walks closer to the river]*

Look at us reflected in the water, see? Upside down.

*[He smiles and she smiles back. Silence]*

So quiet. I'm not used to such silence. I'm a city boy, born and bred. You've never seen a city or town, have you? Where I live there are dozens of factories: shoe factories, some that make gaskets, hydraulic machines, clothing. My mother works in a shoe factory. *[Pointing to his boots]* These came from my mother's factory.

*[Silence]*

These sunsets here, I've never seen the likes of them. A bit of muddy orange light in the distance, behind the chimneys, is generally all I get to see. *[Pause]*

You'd like the trams, especially at night. They rattle and squeak, like ghosts rattling their chains, and every so often the conducting rod hits a terminus and there is a brilliant spark of electricity, like an axe striking a rock. "Spiss" On Saturday afternoon thousands of people go and watch the football. A huge oval of grass. *[Miming a football]* A ball like this. Someone hand passes it, 'whish' straight to me. I duck on lumbering giant, spin around a nifty dwarf of a rover, then I catch sight of the goals. I boot a seventy-yard drop kick straight through the centre. The crown goes wild!

*[He cheers wildly. Betsheb laughs at his actions. He is pleased to have made her laugh]*

Not as good as your play. *[Pause]*

This is your home. My home is across the water. Bass Strait.

*[Silence. Stef rolls over and ends up near Francis' feet]*

What is it about you people? Why are you like you are?

*[Betsheb gathers up her flowers. As she stands she drops a few]*

Don't go. *[He picks up the fallen flowers]*

I was watching you pick these. My mother steals flowers from her neighbour's front garden so every morning she can have fresh flowers in her vase for Saint Teresa's portrait. She was a woman centuries ago. God fired a burning arrow of love into her. *[Smiling]* When it penetrated her, Saint Teresa could smell the burning flesh of her heart.

**BLACKROCK by Nick Enright Sydney Currency Press 1996**

RICKO: You back me up, I'll back you up. Then whatever happened we're not in it. I know you didn't kill her! I did. I fucken killed her (A BEAT) Shana come on to me, then she backed off. Spider says it's a full moon, heaps of other chicks down the beach, take anyone on. I knew which ones were up for it, mate. We both did. We checked them out together. And they were checking us out, weren't they? You and me and every other prick. The whole fucken netball squad. So, I get out there. Wazza's getting head from some bush-pig up against the dunny wall. One of them young babes, Leanne? I don't know, comes running up to me, calls my name, Ricko, hey, Ricko! She grabs me, pushes me off. She's on, no, she's fucken not, she's with some fucken grommet, he takes her off down the south end. I head towards the rock. I hear my name again. Ricko. Ricko. It's Tracy. Tracy Warner. I go, right, Jared was here. It's cool. I'll take his seconds. She's on her hands and knees. Says will I help her. She's lost an earring, belongs to Cherie, she has to give it back. There's something shiny hanging off the back of her T-shirt. I grab it, I say, here it is. She can't see it. I give it to her. I say what are you going to give me? She says she's going home, she's hurting. I say hurting from what? Guys, she says, those guys. Take me home, Ricko. Tells me I'm a legend, says she feels okay with me. Look after me, Ricko. Take me home. Puts her arms around me. I put mine round her. I feel okay now, Ricko. She feels more than okay. I say I'll

take you home, babe, but first things first. I lay her down on the sand, but she pushes me off. Oh, she likes it rough. I give it to her rough. Then she fucken bites me, kicks me in the nuts. My hand comes down on a rock...A rock in one hand and her earring in the other. (Silence) It was like it just happened. The cops wouldn't buy that, but. Would they? Now if I was with you...Will you back me up mate? You got to. You got to. Please. Please, Jazza.