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MA Theatre Lab – January 2025 entry

Self-tape Guidance

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Please read the following information designed to help you record your self-tape. We recommend that you prepare and rehearse your material before you start to record anything.

Setting up

The most important thing for us is that we can see and hear you clearly. You don't need to go anywhere or use any specialist equipment - you can film where you're most comfortable, using your phone, and keep it steady by propping it against some furniture or books.

If you can, try and find a plain, light-coloured wall to film in front of, so that you are the focus of the shot, rather than any pictures or ornaments in the background. You could hang a sheet up behind you if you want to cover a busy wall.

If you are using your phone to record, please ensure that the camera is NOT in 'High Efficiency' mode. You should be able to check this in your phone's camera settings. For iPhone, you will need to switch on 'Most Compatible' mode.

We can only accept **one file** so if you have different files for each element, please make sure to combine them before you upload.

Lighting

Choose a room with natural daylight if you can - make sure that the window is behind your camera, not behind you, otherwise we won't see you. If it's dark when you're filming, you could put a lamp behind your camera so that you're well lit.

Sound

Try and find somewhere quiet, so that the recording doesn't pick up any background noise or other people's conversations. Bathrooms can be a bit echoey because they have a lot of hard surfaces - rooms with soft furnishings, like a bed, will help your voice sound clearer.

Framing

Shoot in landscape, so that your tape will fill the screen when we watch it - think TV, not Tiktok.

A long shot will show your full body, with a little room above your head at the top of the shot.

A mid shot will show from your waist to the top of your head in the frame - again, with a little room at the top.

Try not to look straight down the camera when you're performing your speeches. Instead, look slightly to the side (e.g. the edge of your phone), as though you're speaking to another character in your scene. You might find it helpful to have someone stand to the side of the camera, so that you can direct your speech to them.

Set up your shot, test a couple of lines from your speeches and then watch it back to make sure you're happy with it.

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Self-tape submission

You should include 3 submissions of filmed material in one file:

1. Your audition speeches and personal statement
2. A piece of purely physical performance
3. A creative piece of your own making, possibly responding to one of the given stimulus

1. A single recording comprising (A) two speeches and (B) your statement

(A) Speeches – maximum 5 minutes' total

Please prepare two speeches of no more than 20 lines, in English and learnt by heart.

One from a 'play text' written in poetic or heightened language, preferably not prose. That could be from a 'so-called' Classical source such as Shakespeare, Ancient Greek Drama, etc. but could also be from a more contemporary source.

And a contrasting speech from a another play text – for example, more daily, less abstract or direct in style. This could be prose, but not necessarily.

Please trust your own instinct in interpreting the above.

- At least one of the pieces should be in a **long shot** (full body in the frame and leave a little headroom at the top of the shot)
- For the other speech, explore as you wish (**long shot, mid shot, close up, etc.**) as long as you are visible
- Ensure that each speech is NO MORE than 2 ½ minutes (each)
- Start by saying your **name**
- Tell us which **pieces** you will be performing (character, play title, author)

After your speeches, in the same file, please do the following:

(B) Speak about yourself – maximum 2.5 minutes' total

- In **mid shot** and tell us:
 - About your acting / performance experience to date
 - How you created the work you've submitted and how you might have done it differently
 - What interests you about the MA Theatre Lab course – (what compels you to apply)

In addition to the Submission of your speeches we would also like you to create two short pieces of original performance made in whatever space you have available to you.

Elements 2 and 3 share with us your potential for creating your own work.

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MA Theatre Lab is designed to train and support emerging independent actor/performer theatre 'makers', as well as 'interpreters' of more conventional text-based theatre. Graduates will be comfortable in collaborating on both existing play texts and devising unique performance, alike. Either as a solo artist or within an ensemble.

2. Physical Piece (around 2 minutes)

Create a purely physical performance from the following list of verbs. Choose 5 – 6 actions from this list (in no given order and you may repeat them). And remember actions can be both fully physical and/or expressive - in whatever way you wish to define this - and/or more subtle.

Look outwards // Look inwards // Rise // Reach // Descend // Try to leave // Turn // Scan // Remember something that makes you laugh or cry, but don't do either // Touch // Push // Pull // Move as fast as you can // Move as slow as you can

In this task you are not limited to staying in the frame.

As you improvise in creating your repeatable physical performance, let the actions lead you to an imaginative engagement. How do the actions develop / choose their own order through improvising?

Suggested **Performance Qualities** - how you might improvise / interpret the actions:

Play with Tempo and/or rhythm – take less or more time with each action
Use more or less energy or weight
Expand or contract size: bigger or smaller
Only do a percentage of the full action
Repeat an action
Distort an action
Use the whole body or only a segment (the hand, head, eyes, feet, etc.)

Most importantly, invite yourself to enjoy the task.

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3. Creative piece – around 3 – 4 minutes

Use any of the following four **Stimuli** for a short creative piece.

It can be in any style: with text or not, telling a story, sharing an idea or it can be more abstract. Do think about the impact of your work though. What do you want to convey? It can be in the space you performed your texts in or could be somewhere else. It can have music or not.

Stimulus 1:

Through a short act of performance express / explore something you've encountered / experienced over the last couple of years.

Remember it's important that when exploring material personal to us that we are mindful of the choices. We have freedom regarding what we explore in creating original work of our own making and, hence, should be mindful of our own needs, boundaries and the impact of the work on others and ourselves.

Stimulus 2:

Read the following short extract of text from and use it as the basis for your piece:

Acquainted with the Night

by Robert Frost

I have been one acquainted with the night.
I have walked out in rain—and back in rain.
I have outwalked the furthest city light.

I have looked down the saddest city lane.
I have passed by the watchman on his beat
And dropped my eyes, unwilling to explain.

I have stood still and stopped the sound of feet
When far away an interrupted cry
Came over houses from another street,

But not to call me back or say good-bye;
And further still at an unearthly height,
One luminary clock against the sky

Proclaimed the time was neither wrong nor right.
I have been one acquainted with the night.

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Stimulus 3:

Use the following music as a starting point - **you don't have to dance**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZL1V06Er1E>

Stimulus 4:

Use the following image as a stimulus:



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Submitting your self-tape

- Record your material and then watch back. Notice if you need to change where you move so that you are in the frame when you want to be.
- Have a break then do it again. We recommend that you bear in mind that it is important not to overthink this – we recommend you commit to recording each element a maximum of 3 times.
- When you are happy, submit your file using the link we have provided via e-mail.
- **Upload the 3 submissions in one file only:**
 1. Your speeches and 'About Yourself' statement
 2. Your Physical Piece
 3. Your Creative Piece
- Please ensure that your name is included in the file name
- Please do ensure that you submit the correct version

If you have any problems with the upload, please contact admissions@rada.ac.uk as soon as possible.