

Auditions for *The Misanthrope* (trans. Constance Congdon), directed by Dan Smith

For the first round of *Misanthrope* auditions, please choose one of the monologues below. It is not necessary to memorize this monologue. (If you prefer, you may present a comedic or dramatic classical monologue. If you choose your own material it should be memorized.)

Acaste and Oronte are male characters. Eliante and Celimene are women. Feel free to choose the piece that speaks to you most, regardless of the gender of the character. A tip about the verse: do not emphasize the rhymes. It should not sound like Dr. Seuss.

1) Acaste is speaking to Clitandre, a rival for Célimène's affection. His objective might be to vanquish Clitandre. This monologue is from Act III, scene 1.

ACASTE

Good lord! Look at me! I can say with pride,
Of course, I'm nothing less than satisfied.
I'm young. I'm rich. I own property.
My family's bloodline is of real nobility.
The King is pleased with me, and before long,
I'll get some royal post that comes along.
And when the subject's courage, people tell
How on the field of honor, I excel.
And, even more, it's said that I compete
With a steady hand and nimble feet.
I am handsome. My teeth are sound and white.
I've been told my laugh is a delight.
My figure's good, my waist is fairly small,
It's said my graceful walk is watched by all.
Am I well-dressed? Observe. I rest my case.
As to the fairer sex, I'll say with grace,
I'm successful. So, forgive my pride—
With all this, a man is satisfied.

2) Oronte is trying to make friends with Alceste. Alceste has just rebuffed him, but he doesn't quite understand that. (Act I, scene 2)

ORONTE

By god! Was there ever a man more prudent?
And I, my friend, am your eternal student.
We'll take time to form friendship's gentle bond,
Meanwhile, whatever you need I'll wave my wand.
I have a certain credit with the king,
I have his ear, and that's worth everything.
You still have my allegiance, you will find.
And since you have a most superior mind,
I'll launch this ship of trust we've just saluted
With this sonnet I just executed.
Is it good? As poetry, is it fit?
I want to know if I should publish it.

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3) Eliante speaks during the salon/party scene (II.2), where Célimène has been making fun of people who aren't there. Alceste and Celimene are having an argument, and Eliante's monologue could be intended to mediate between them. Eliante has romantic feeling for Alceste, but also thinks that he and her cousin Célimène are a good couple.

ELIANTE

But I thought lovers acted otherwise
And rarely found a thing to criticize.
Don't lovers always praise the ones they choose?
"Discernment" is the first thing that they lose.
They're blind to things they normally would blame,
And if "discerned" they use another name.
If she's pale, she's as white as jasmine.
If she's swarthy, she's kissed by the sun.
If she's skinny, she is lithe and graceful.
If she's fat, she's a healthy one.
If she's a slattern, she's a negligent beauty.
If she's a giant, with goddesses she'll run.
If she's a dwarf, she's a petite marvel.
If she's haughty, she's a phenomenon.
The deceiver's clever, and the fool is virtuous,
The chatterbox is such a lot of fun.
The mute one's deep, the shy one's choosy.
Thus, lovers can be in love with anyone.

4) Célimène knows that Arsinoé has just arrived. This monologue echoes her "spoken portraits" from II.1, but ends with her turning on a dime to be polite to Arsinoé. She is speaking to Acaste and Clitandre, two of her suitors.

CÉLIMÈNE

She's just as worldly as either one of you!
To hook a man is all she wants to do.
But having no luck, she's always jealous,
And so about morality she's zealous.
Other people's charms must be a sin
Because her own are gone, to her chagrin.
And since her aged looks can't be the rage,
She rails against the blindness of this age.
Because no man will come into her arms,
She makes a crime of other people's charms.
In point of fact, of course, she's very lonely.
But upon Alceste she's focused, only.
She thinks that I have stolen him from her.
It's a delusion she will not abjure.
Her jealous spite is unleashed everywhere
Against me. It's so stupid. I don't care.
I wish that I could make her go away,
Take her foolishness and--- (*seeing ARSINOÉ*) Arsinoé!