

Suggestions for Elizabethan, Jacobean and other early drama

Note: All women's parts in the Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre were played by teenage boys and, even given modern approaches to character, such parts are within the capabilities of teenage girls and boys now. The modern theatre also employs cross-gender casting, and this is acceptable for exams.

There are excellent sources for choice in the numerous books of audition pieces now available: the best of which are from A and C Black Ltd. *Classical Audition Speeches for Men* and *Classical Audition Speeches for Women* have now been joined by a range of books of audition speeches for 6-16 year olds and for actors 16plus. For the purposes of exams see also *Alternative Shakespeare Auditions for Women* Full catalogue from www.acblack.com see also the excellent material produced by Dramatic Lines, especially *Shakespeare: the rewrites* and their books of monologues and duologues. Dramatic Lines. Po Box 201, Twickenham, England TW2 5RQ.

Elizabethan and Jacobean solo speeches or soliloquies:

For girls there are splendid speeches for:

Puck (Act II sc 2) Helena (same) in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Viola (Act II sc 2) in *Twelfth Night*

Phoebe (Act III sc 5) in *As You Like It*

Juliet throughout *Romeo and Juliet*

Look also at:

Isabella (Act IV sc 2) in Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*

Levidulcia (Act IV sc 5) in Tourneur's *The Atheist's Tragedy* and Zenocrate (Part 1. Act V Sc 2) in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great*

For Scenes for two girls there is wonderful material in:

Puck and the Fairy (Act II sc 1) in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Viola and Olivia (Act I sc 5 line 169 onwards) in *Twelfth Night*

Celia and Rosalind (e.g. Act III sc 2) and throughout *As You Like It*

Mistress Page and Mistress Ford throughout *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

Juno and Venus in Marlowe's *Dido Queen of Carthage* (Act III Sc 2)

Juliet and the Nurse (Act II sc 5) in *Romeo and Juliet*

Emilia and Desdemona (Act I(V sc 3) in *Othello*.

For Drama 1640 - 1860

There is good material for two girls in:

Alithea and Lucy (Act IV sc 1) in *The Country Wife* by Wycherley

Mrs Sullen and Dorinda (Act II sc 1 and Act III sc 1) in *The Beaux Strategem* by George Farquhar

Mrs Slightly and Mrs Witwold (Act IV sc 2) in *The Wives Excuse* by Thomas Southerne

Eily and Ann in *The Colleen Bawn* by Boucicault

Solo Speeches include:

Mrs Witwold (Act II sc 3) in *The Wives Excuse*

Mrs Marwood (Act III sc 7) in Congreve's *The Way of the World*

Mrs Pinchwife (Act IV sc 4) in *The Country Wife*

There is also a great deal of suitable material in Dryden's *Amphitryon* and throughout the plays of Moliere. See for example *School for Wives* and solo speeches by Agnes (eg Act II sc 5) or *Tartuffe* where there are several good pieces by Dorine and Mdme Pernelle.

For Narrative Poetry suitable for group performance:

Start by looking at the traditional *Border Ballads* such as *Sir Patrick Spens* then look at such poems as W.W. Gibson's *Flannan Isle* or Walter Delamare's *The Listeners*, not to mention T.S.Eliot's *Old Possums Book of Practical Cats!*

We wish you well in your searches.