

AUDITION PIECES

Othello

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Auditions: Monday 29th January. **Recalls** (if needed): Wednesday 31st January.

If you have put down three or more characters on your form, please select a maximum of two characters to read in the auditions, and we will extrapolate from there.

Some characters have more than one audition piece – please come prepared to read all of them. Depending on numbers, we may select what we ask people to read.

Characters in brackets indicate that a scene will not be counted as an audition for that character, but is a read-in.

If you are auditioning for Lodovico or Montano, please use Gratiano's audition piece.

NB some scenes have been edited from the script for the purpose of the audition.

1. Gratiano, Duke of Venice, Brabantia, Othello, (Iago – does not speak)

The Duke in his council chamber prepares for war. His trusted general Othello arrives with the surprise addition of Brabantia, who accuses him of having bewitched her daughter. Othello, with commanding poise and masterful storytelling, defends himself.

GRATIANO

The Ottomites, reverend and gracious,
Steering with due course towards the isle of Rhodes,
Have there injointed with an after fleet.

DUKE OF VENICE

How many, as you guess?

GRATIANO

Of thirty sail: and now they do restem
Their backward course, bearing with frank appearance
Their purposes toward Cyprus. Signior Montano,
Your trusty and most valiant servitor,
With his free duty recommends you thus,
And prays you to relieve him.

DUKE OF VENICE

'Tis certain, then, for Cyprus.

GRATIANO

Here comes Brabantia and the valiant Moor.

Enter BRABANTIA, OTHELLO, IAGO

DUKE OF VENICE

Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you
Against the general enemy Ottoman.
[To BRABANTIA] I did not see you; welcome, gentle madam.

BRABANTIA

Good your grace, pardon me; for my particular grief
Is of so flood-gate and o'erbearing nature
That it engulfs and swallows other sorrows.

DUKE OF VENICE

Why, what's the matter?

BRABANTIA

My daughter! O, my daughter!

DUKE OF VENICE

Dead?

BRABANTIA

Ay, to me;

She is abused, stol'n from me, and corrupted
By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks;
For nature so preposterously to err,
Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,
Sans witchcraft could not.

DUKE OF VENICE

Whoe'er he be that in this foul proceeding
Hath thus beguiled your daughter of herself
And you of her, the bloody book of law
You shall yourself read in the bitter letter
After your own sense, yea, though our proper son
Stood in your action.

BRABANTIA

Humbly I thank your grace.
Here is the man, this Moor, whom now, it seems,
Your special mandate for the state-affairs
Hath hither brought.

DUKE OF VENICE

[*To OTHELLO*] What, in your own part, can you say to this?

BRABANTIA

Nothing, but this is so.

OTHELLO

Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,
That I have ta'en away this woman's daughter,
It is most true; true, I have married her:
The very head and front of my offending
Hath this extent, no more.
Her mother loved me; oft invited me;
Still question'd me the story of my life,
Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,
Of moving accidents by flood and field
Of hair-breadth scapes i' the imminent deadly breach,
Of being taken by the insolent foe
And sold to slavery, of my redemption thence.
I spoke of antres vast and deserts idle,
Rough quarries, rocks and hills whose heads touch heaven
And of the Cannibals that each other eat,
The Anthropophagi and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders. This to hear
Would Desdemona seriously incline
And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,
I should but teach him how to tell my story.
And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake:
She loved me for the dangers I had pass'd,
And I loved her that she did pity them.

DUKE OF VENICE

I think this tale would win my daughter too.

2. Desdemona

At a loss to understand her husband's jealous and violent behaviour.

DESDEMONA

O God, Iago,
What shall I do to win my lord again?
Good friend, go to him; for, by this light of heaven,
I know not how I lost him.
If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love,
Either in discourse of thought or actual deed,
Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense,
Delighted them in any other form;
Or that I do not yet, and ever did,
And ever will--though he do shake me off
To beggarly divorcement--love him dearly,
Comfort forswear me! I cannot say 'whore:'
It does abhor me now I speak the word;
To do the act that might the addition earn
Not the world's mass of vanity could make me.

3. Othello and Desdemona

The relationship crumbling: Desdemona pleading on behalf of the disgraced Cassio, Othello increasingly convinced of her unfaithfulness. The missing handkerchief is final damning 'proof'.

DESDEMONA

I have sent to bid Cassio come speak with you.

OTHELLO

I have a salt and sorry rheum offends me;
Lend me thy handkerchief.

DESDEMONA

Here, my lord.

OTHELLO

That which I gave you.

DESDEMONA

I have it not about me.

OTHELLO

Not?

DESDEMONA

No, indeed, my lord.

OTHELLO

That is a fault. That handkerchief
Did an Egyptian to my mother give;
She was a charmer, and could almost read
The thoughts of people: she told her, while she kept it,
'Twould make her amiable and subdue my father
Entirely to her love, but if she lost it
Or made gift of it, my father's eye
Should hold her loathed and his spirits should hunt
After new fancies.

DESDEMONA

Is't possible?

OTHELLO

'Tis true: there's magic in the web of it:
A sibyl, that had number'd in the world
The sun to course two hundred compasses,

In her prophetic fury sew'd the work;
The worms were hallow'd that did breed the silk;
And it was dyed in mummy which the skilful
Conserved of maidens' hearts.

DESEMONA

Then would to God that I had never seen't!

OTHELLO

Ha! wherefore?

DESEMONA

Why do you speak so startingly and rash?

OTHELLO

Is't lost? is't gone? speak, is it out o' the way?

DESEMONA

Heaven bless us!

OTHELLO

Say you?

DESEMONA

It is not lost; but what an if it were?

OTHELLO

How!

DESEMONA

I say, it is not lost.

OTHELLO

Fetch't, let me see't.

DESEMONA

Why, so I can, sir, but I will not now.

This is a trick to put me from my suit:

Pray you, let Cassio be received again.

OTHELLO

Fetch me the handkerchief: my mind misgives.

DESEMONA

Come, come;

You'll never meet a more sufficient man.

OTHELLO

The handkerchief!

DESEMONA

I pray, talk me of Cassio--

OTHELLO

The handkerchief!

DESEMONA

A man that all his time

Hath founded his good fortunes on your love,

Shared dangers with you,--

OTHELLO

The handkerchief!

DESEMONA

In sooth, you are to blame.

OTHELLO

Away!

4. Emilia (and Desdemona)

With different attitudes to men and marriage.

DESDEMONA

Dost thou in conscience think,--tell me, Emilia,--
That there be women do abuse their husbands
In such gross kind?

EMILIA

There be some such, no question.

DESDEMONA

Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?

EMILIA

Why, would not you?

DESDEMONA

No, by this heavenly light!

EMILIA

Nor I neither by this heavenly light;
I might do't as well i' the dark.

DESDEMONA

Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?

EMILIA

The world's a huge thing: it is a great price
For a small vice.

DESDEMONA

In troth, I think thou wouldst not.

EMILIA

In troth, I think I should; and undo't when I had done. Marry, I would not do such a thing for a joint-ring, nor for measures of lawn, nor for gowns, petticoats, nor caps, nor any petty exhibition; but for the whole world,--why, who would not make her husband a cuckold to make him a monarch? I should venture purgatory for't.

DESDEMONA

Beshrew me, if I would do such a wrong
For the whole world.

EMILIA

Why the wrong is but a wrong i' the world: and having the world for your labour, tis a wrong in your own world, and you might quickly make it right.
But I do think it is their husbands' faults
If wives do fall: say that they slack their duties,
And pour our treasures into foreign laps,
Or else break out in peevish jealousies,
Throwing restraint upon us; or say they strike us,
Why, we have galls, and though we have some grace,
Yet have we some revenge. Let husbands know
Their wives have sense like them: they see and smell
And have their palates both for sweet and sour,
As husbands have.
Then let them use us well: else let them know,
The ills we do, their ills instruct us so.

5. Iago and Roderigo

Counselling from 'Honest Iago'.

RODERIGO

Iago--

IAGO

What say'st thou, noble heart?

RODERIGO

What will I do, thinkest thou?

IAGO

Why, go to bed, and sleep.

RODERIGO

I will incontinently drown myself.

IAGO

If thou dost, I shall never love thee after. Why, thou silly gentleman!

RODERIGO

What should I do? I confess it is my shame to be so fond; but it is not in my virtue to amend it.

IAGO

Virtue! a fig! 'tis in ourselves that we are thus or thus. Our bodies are our gardens, to the which our wills are gardeners: so that if we will plant nettles, or sow lettuce, set hyssop and weed up thyme, why, the power and corrigible authority of this lies in our wills. We have reason to cool our raging motions, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts, whereof I take this that you call love to be a sect or scion.

RODERIGO

It cannot be.

IAGO

It is merely a lust of the blood and a permission of the will. Come, be a man. Drown thyself! Drown cats and blind puppies. I have professed me thy friend: put money in thy purse; follow thou the wars. It cannot be that Desdemona should long continue her love to the Moor, nor he his to her--put but money in thy purse. These Moors are changeable in their wills--fill thy purse with money--the food that to him now is as luscious as locusts, shall be shortly as bitter as coloquintida. She must change for youth: when she is sated with his body, she will find the error of her choice: therefore put money in thy purse. If thou wilt needs damn thyself, do it a more delicate way than drowning.

RODERIGO

Wilt thou be fast to my hopes, if I depend on the issue?

IAGO

Thou art sure of me. I have told thee often, and I re-tell thee again and again, I hate the Moor. Let us be conjunctive in our revenge against him: if thou canst cuckold him, thou dost thyself a pleasure, me a sport.

RODERIGO

Where shall we meet i' the morning?

IAGO

At my lodging.

RODERIGO

I'll be with thee betimes.

IAGO

Go to; farewell. Do you hear, Roderigo?

RODERIGO

What say you?

IAGO

No more of drowning, do you hear?

RODERIGO

I am changed.

IAGO

Go to; farewell. Put money enough in your purse.

RODERIGO

I'll go sell all my land.

6. Cassio and Bianca (Desdemona)

Cassio charms two women differently.

DESDEMONA

How now, good Cassio! what's the news with you?

CASSIO

Madam, my former suit: I do beseech you
That by your virtuous means I may again
Exist, and be a member of his love
Whom I with all the office of my heart
Entirely honour: I would not be delay'd.

DESDEMONA

I will go seek him. Walk you hereabout:
If I do find him fit, I'll move your suit
And seek to effect it to my uttermost.

CASSIO

I humbly thank your ladyship.

Exit DESDEMONA

Enter BIANCA

BIANCA

Save you, friend Cassio!

CASSIO

How is it with you, my most fair Bianca?
I' faith, sweet love, I was coming to your house.

BIANCA

And I was going to your lodging, Cassio.
What, keep a week away?

CASSIO

Pardon me, Bianca:
I have this while with leaden thoughts been press'd:
But I shall, in a more continue time,
Strike off this score of absence. Sweet Bianca,
[Giving her DESDEMONA's handkerchief]
Take me this work out.

BIANCA

This is some token from a newer friend:
To the felt absence now I feel a cause:
Is't come to this? Well, well.

CASSIO

Go to, woman!
Throw your vile guesses in the devil's teeth,
From whence you have them. You are jealous now
That this is from some mistress, some remembrance:
No, in good troth, Bianca.

BIANCA

Why, whose is it?

CASSIO

I know not, sweet: I found it in my chamber.
I like the work well: I'd have it copied:
Take it, and do't; and leave me for this time.

BIANCA

Leave you! wherefore?

CASSIO

I do attend here on the general;
And think it no addition, nor my wish,
To have him see me woman'd.

BIANCA

Why, I pray you?

CASSIO

Not that I love you not.

BIANCA

But that you do not love me.
I pray you, bring me on the way a little.

CASSIO

'Tis but a little way that I can bring you;
For I attend here: but I'll see you soon.

BIANCA

'Tis very good; I must be circumstanced.

7. Iago

Making the audience complicit.

And what's he then that says I play the villain?
When this advice is free I give and honest,
Probal to thinking and indeed the course
To win the Moor again? For 'tis most easy
The inclining Desdemona to subdue
In any honest suit: she's framed as fruitful
As the free elements. How am I then a villain
To counsel Cassio to this parallel course,
Directly to his good? Divinity of hell!
When devils will the blackest sins put on,
They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,
As I do now: for whiles this honest fool
Plies Desdemona to repair his fortunes
And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,
I'll pour this pestilence into his ear,
That she repeals him for her body's lust;
And by how much she strives to do him good,
She shall undo her credit with the Moor.
So will I turn her virtue into pitch,
And out of her own goodness make the net
That shall enmesh them all.