



[HELEN MUSA](#) AUGUST 18, 2021

Loneliness of the long-distance monologue



Natasha Vickery performs Portia to an empty theatre. Photo: Jordan Best.

MONOLOGUES are all the rage in Australia's theatre and nowhere more so than in Canberra and Queanbeyan.

Elevated from a kind of maiden-auntly status because of covid, the monologue is offering opportunities to young up-and-coming talents.

One such is 15-year-old Jade Breen from Isaacs, who's just been selected for the World Monologue Games Regional Finals.

Breen is everywhere of late. I've personally seen her on stage at Canberra Youth Theatre's reading of Rebecca Duke's play "Space Oddity", in the company's "Little Girls Alone In The Woods" and, during work experience at the theatre, joining comedian Josh Bray on stage.

She's also playing the plum role of Alfred in "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead" at Canberra Rep.

Through Alfred, an insignificant actor, Stoppard highlights powerlessness and lowliness, and Breen's been having fun exercising her skills in melodrama and circus – she's been with Warehouse Circus for the past eight years, but is taking a break because of injury.

"Auditioning for NIDA and the Victorian College of the Arts is my dream, or else to work in the theatre in Sydney," she says and since her school, Daramalan College, has a good track record in getting its graduates into the top drama institutes, she's in with a chance.

She saw the monologue competition advertised on Facebook last year and since not much was happening during covid, she decided to enter. Second time around, she made it to the finals with a monologue showing a girl struggling with an eating disorder.

That's not her, she is quick to point out, although many of her close friends grapple with the problem, and she praises the monologue form for allowing her to get into new shoes.



Jade Breen... selected for the World Monologue Games Regional Finals.

"For me as an actor in a monologue, you're getting into the headspace of a character, into the inner workings of the mind," she says.

"That's what I love, getting really into the character. But it's not just about eating disorders, it's about the insecurities of being a teenage girl and growing up into a

young woman – that was what was more important, giving a voice to teenage girls in general.”

It was fairly easy to submit a monologue in basic video form and now, in preparation for the regional finals, she is required to re-record her initial monologue.

The World Monologue Games is a global acting competition and virtual showcase set up last year by Sydney playwright Pete Malicki, who wanted a lockdown-friendly platform for performers and this year there are performers from 51 countries in the finals, performing in different languages.

Meanwhile across the border at the Queanbeyan Performing Arts Centre – The Q – director and Shakespeare tragic Jordan Best is busy looking at entries in her newest digital monologue project “Q the Bard”.

Actors aged 12-25 have been invited to submit video submissions of five-minute monologues and duologues and the winners will become Q Young Ambassadors for 2022, with a swag of benefits.

Hatched during the depths of 2020, it’s a follow-up to last year’s lockdown initiative, “Stripped”, where from August to September, seven local actors performed short monologues on an empty stage, taken from works by playwrights as diverse as Shakespeare and Larry Kramer, and videoed for broadcast by Craig Alexander.

“I’ve always loved Shakespeare, but it’s often seen as elite and inaccessible,” Best says.

“People think you have to be an expert, but I think it’s just rip-snorting, good theatre.”

My understanding is that the monologue gives actors understandable insights into characters.

Best explains that while monologues are extracts from theatre works, in soliloquies, made famous by Shakespeare, the actor is talking directly to the audience – either is fine for “Q the Bard”.

To enter “Q the Bard”, send a video (phone is fine) by We Transfer to Jordan.Best@qprc.nsw.gov.au by August 31. Winners will be announced on September 6.

The regional finals of the World Monologue Games will be livestreamed at monologues.com.au from August to October, and the global finals, October-November.