Notes on Monologues Packet:

There are eight monologues in this packet: two monologues each for the characters of ORGON, TARTUFFE, ELMIRE and DORINE.

Men should choose one of the four monologues from ORGON or TARTUFFE to prepare.

Women should choose one of the four monologues from ELMIRE or DORINE to prepare.

In making your selection, please consider which monologue will highlight you and your skills best. You do not need to see your selection as a decision about a particular character you are interested in playing. However, when you perform the monologue, you should take care to present and portray the character who is speaking. (And to do that fully, you need to read the script.)

Recommended preparation:
1. Read the entire script.
2. Read the character descriptions document posted on the callboard or listed on http://theatreuaf.org/auditions
3. Choose a monologue to present from this packet.
4. Read the monologue carefully. Note where it appears in the course of the play.
5. Look up any words or terms you don’t understand so that you are clear what they mean.
6. Read the monologue aloud many times, trying it out various ways: different volumes, different speeds, different emphases to see what works best.
7. Get as off book as you can. I’m not going to require everyone to have these monologues fully memorized, but the less often you have to refer to the paper, the better your performance will be.

Feel free to contact me if you have questions about the material or about the auditions. My office phone number is (907) 474-5253 and my email is becook25@alaska.edu. You can also look me up on Facebook (Brian EG Cook) and friend me or just send me a message there.

See you at auditions!

Brian Cook
Director
Tartuffe – Character Descriptions

Men
ORGON, Elmire's husband
Former soldier who fought for the King during recent political wars. Somewhat pompous, but also pious and forthright. He’s deeply deluded by Tartuffe, though he is not a fool.

DAMIS, Orgon's son, Elmire's stepson
Hot-headed, impetuous, but determined to set things right. He defends his sister’s honor at his own expense.

VALERE, in love with Mariane
Naïve in love, and possibly so in life as well. His spats with Mariane are legendary.

CLEANTE, Orgon's brother-in-law
Pompous, long-winded, do-gooder. Seeks to solve the problems of the household by talking everything through at length.

TARTUFFE, a hypocrite
Genuinely charming, though thoroughly a rogue. His public face of sanctity covers a deep desire to get what he feels he’s always been denied.

Women
MADAME PERNELLE, Orgon's mother
The old battle-ax mother-in-law type. Busybody, constantly unimpressed. She’s Maggie Smith (McGonagal from Harry Potter, the Dowager Countess from Downton Abbey) but not as fun.

ELMIRE, Orgon's wife
Nearly as smart as Dorine. Flattered by the attention of men (how else did she catch the much-older Orgon?), but at the same time pragmatic and loyal.

MARIANE, Orgon's daughter, Elmire's stepdaughter, in love with Valere
Naïve like her lover, Valere, with whom she’s desperately in love. She’s headstrong but totally unable to go against her father’s wishes.

DORINE, Mariane's lady's-maid
Saucy, smart-as-a-whip servant. She’s probably the smartest person in the whole show, and it’s a good thing she’s on the family’s side.

Either (some of these may be double-cast and/or played by cross-dressed actors)
FLIPOTE, Mme. Pernelle's maid
M. LOYAL, a bailiff
LAURENT, Tartuffe’s lackey
A POLICE OFFICER
ORGON. (from page 23)
Oh, had you seen Tartuffe as I first knew him,
Your heart, like mine, would have surrendered to him.
He used to come into our church each day
And humbly kneel nearby, and start to pray.
He'd draw the eyes of everybody there
By the deep fervor of his heartfelt prayer;
He'd sigh and weep, and sometimes with a sound
Of rapture he would bend and kiss the ground;
And when I rose to go, he'd run before
To offer me holy-water at the door.
His serving-man, no less devout than he,
Informed me of his master's poverty;
I gave him gifts, but in his humbleness
He'd beg me every time to give him less.
"Oh, that's too much," he'd cry, "too much by twice!
I don't deserve it. The half, Sir, would suffice."
And when I wouldn't take it back, he'd share
Half of it with the poor, right then and there.
At length, Heaven prompted me to take him in
To dwell with us, and free our souls from sin.
He guides our lives, and to protect my honor
Stays by my wife, and keeps an eye upon her;
He tells me whom she sees, and all she does,
And seems more jealous than I ever was!
And how austere he is! Why, he can detect
A mortal sin where you would least suspect;
In smallest trifles, he's extremely strict
Last week, his conscience was severely pricked
Because, while praying, he had caught a flea
And killed it, so he felt, too wrathfully.

ORGON. (from page 87)
Yes, strange events which these two eyes beheld.
The man's ingratitude is unparalleled.
I save a wretched pauper from starvation.
House him, and treat him like a blood relation,
Shower him every day with my largesse,
Give him my daughter, and all that I possess;
And meanwhile the unconscionable knave
Tries to induce my wife to misbehave;
And not content with such extreme rascality,
Now threatens me with my own liberality,
And aims, by taking base advantage of
The gifts I gave him out of Christian love,
To drive me from my house, a ruined man,
And make me end a pauper, as he began.
TARTUFFE. (from page 57-8)
I may be pious, but I'm human too:
With your celestial charms before his eyes,
A man has not the power to be wise.
I know such words sound strangely, coming from me,
But I'm no angel nor was meant to be,
And if you blame my passion, you must needs
Reproach as well the charms on which it feeds.
Your loveliness I had no sooner seen
Than you became my soul's unrivalled queen;
Before your seraph glance, divinely sweet,
My heart's defenses crumbled in defeat,
And nothing fasting, prayer, or tears might do
Could stay my spirit from adoring you
My eyes, my sighs have told you in the past
What now my lips make bold to say at last
And if, in your great goodness, you will deign
To look upon your slave, and ease his pain.
If, in compassion for my soul's distress,
You'll stoop to comfort my unworthiness,
I'll raise to you, in thanks for that sweet manna,
An endless hymn, an infinite hosanna.
With me, of course, there need be no anxiety,
No fear of scandal or of notoriety.
These young court gallants whom all the ladies fancy,
Are vain in speech, in action rash and chancy;
When they succeed in love, the world soon knows it;
No favor's granted them but they disclose it
And by the looseness of their tongues profane
The very altar where their hearts have lain.
Men of my sort, however, love discreetly,
And one may trust our reticence completely.
My keen concern for my good name insures
The absolute security of yours;
In short, I offer you, my dear Elmire,
Love without scandal, pleasure without fear.

TARTUFFE. (from pages 61-2)
Yes, Brother, I'm a wicked man, I fear:
A wretched sinner, all depraved and twisted,
The greatest villain that has ever existed.
My life's one heap of crimes which grows each minute;
There's naught but foulness and corruption in it;
And I perceive that Heaven, outraged by me,
Has chosen this occasion to mortify me.
Charge me with any deed you wish to name;
I'll not defend myself, but take the blame.
Believe what you are told, and drive Tartuffe
Like some base criminal from beneath your roof;
Yes, drive me hence, and with a parting curse:
I shan't protest, for I deserve far worse.
[...]
Ah, Brother, let him speak: you're being unjust.
Believe his story; the boy deserves your trust.
Why, after all, should you have faith in me?
How can you know what I might do, or be?
Is it on my good actions that you base
Your favor? Do you trust my pious face?
Ah, no, don't be deceived by hollow shows;
I'm far, alas, from being what men suppose;
Though the world takes me for a man of worth,
I'm truly the most worthless man on earth.
Yes, my dear son, speak out now: call me the chief
Of sinners, a wretch, a murderer, a thief;
Load me with all the names men most abhor;
I'll not complain; I've earned them all, and more;
I'll kneel here while you pour them on my head.
As a just punishment for the life I've led.
ELMIRE. (from page 72)
I am amazed, and don’t know what to say;
Your blindness simply takes my breath away.
You are indeed bewitched, to take no warning
From our account of what occurred this morning.
[…] When men make overtures, must we reply
With righteous anger and a battle-cry?
Must we turn back their amorous advances
With sharp reproaches and with fiery glances?
Myself, I find such offers merely amusing.
And make no scenes and fusses in refusing;
My taste is for good-natured rectitude,
And I dislike the savage sort of prude
Who guards her virtue with her teeth and claws,
And tears men's eyes out for the slightest cause:
The Lord preserve me from such honor as that,
Which bites and scratches like an alley-cat!
I've found that a polite and cool rebuff
Discourages a lover quite enough.

ELMIRE. (from page 76)
Ah, Sir, if that refusal made you smart
It's little that you know of woman's heart
Or what that heart is trying to convey
When it resists in such a feeble way!
Always, at first, our modesty prevents
The frank avowal of tender sentiments;
However high the passion which inflames us,
Still to confess its power somehow shames us.
Thus we reluct, at first, yet in a tone
Which tells you that our heart is overthrown,
That what our lips deny, our pulse confesses,
And that, in time, all noes will turn to yesses.
I fear my words are all too frank and free,
And a poor proof of woman's modesty;
But since I'm started, tell me, if you will--
Would I have tried to make Damis be still,
Would I have listened, calm and unoffended,
Until your lengthy offer of love was ended,
And been so very mild in my reaction,
Had your sweet words not given me satisfaction?
And when I tried to force you to undo
The marriage-plans my husband has in view,
What did my urgent pleading signify
If not that I admired you, and that I
Deplored the thought that someone else might own
Part of a heart I wished for mine alone?
DORINE. (from pages 17-18)
Yes, but her son is even worse deceived;
His folly must be seen to be believed.
In the late troubles, he played an able part
And served his king with wise and loyal heart,
But he's quite lost his senses since he fell
Beneath Tartuffe's infatuating spell.
He calls him brother, and loves him as his life,
Preferring him to mother, child, or wife.
In him and him alone will he confide;
He's made him his confessor and his guide;
He pets and pampers him with love more tender
Than any pretty mistress could engender,
Gives him the place of honor when they dine,
Delights to see him gorging like a swine,
Stuffs him with dainties till his guts distend,
And when he belches, cries "God bless you, friend!"
In short, he's mad; he worships him; he dotes;
His deeds he marvels at, his words he quotes,
Thinking each act a miracle, each word
Oracular as those that Moses heard.
Tartuffe, much pleased to find so easy a victim,
Has in a hundred ways beguiled and tricked him,
Milked him of money,
And with his permission
Established here a sort of Inquisition.
Even Laurent, his lackey, dares to give
Us arrogant advice on how to live;
He sermonizes us in thundering tones
And confiscates our ribbons and colognes.
Last week he tore a kerchief into pieces
Because he found it pressed in a Life of Jesus:
He said it was a sin to juxtapose
Unholy vanities and holy prose.

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DORINE. (from page 33)
Yes, so he tells us; and, Sir, it seems to me
Such pride goes very ill with piety.
A man whose spirit spurns this dungy earth
Ought not to brag of lands and noble birth;
Such worldly arrogance will hardly square
With meek devotion and the life of prayer.
... But this approach, I see, has drawn a blank;
Let's speak, then, of his person, not his rank.
Doesn't it seem to you a trifle grim
To give a girl like her to a man like him?
When two are so ill-suited, can't you see
What the sad consequence is bound to be?
A young girl's virtue is imperiled, Sir,
When such a marriage is imposed on her;
For if one's bridegroom isn't to one's taste,
It's hardly an inducement to be chaste,
And many a man with horns upon his brow
Has made his wife the thing that she is now.
It's hard to be a faithful wife, in short
To certain husbands of a certain sort,
And he who gives his daughter to a man she hates
Must answer for her sins at Heaven's gates.
Think, Sir, before you play so risky a role.