



Golden Voices Writing Guide  
2021-2022



**DTC Invites You to Join in the**

**Golden Voices Project**

**“Tell Us a Story About  
The Radio and You”**



## Tell Us a Story About the Radio and You...

One of the most influential commodities of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the radio. From its scientific beginnings as an experiment in transmitting electromagnetic energy to its status as a centerpiece in the family household for information and entertainment, the radio has played a pivotal role in connecting human beings, their ideas, their creativity, and their worlds.

The radio itself has taken many physical forms; “crystal sets” of wires and clips, “tube” radios in varnished wooden cabinets, small transistor pocket radios, and large boomboxes are just a few of the examples of how this invention has been adapted and utilized through the years. Yet whatever form the radio takes in your mind, most likely all of us has a vivid memory connected to the radio.

DTC’s production of *Million Dollar Quartet* shares the story of the evening in 1956 when four remarkable musicians united at a small music studio and played the music that made each of them famous. Their relationships with one another, the producer at the studio, industry executives, and the fans these four artists reached over the airwaves highlight the central role radio played in their lives and the lives of millions of Americans during the early age of rock and roll.

When you take a trip down memory lane and think about a memorable moment of you and radio, what do you think of? How old were you? Were you at home, in the car, at a game, at a friend’s house, at work, on the beach, or somewhere else? What else does this memory call up in your mind? What people, what music or news or sounds, what surroundings, what feelings, what thoughts, what sensations come to mind?

Perhaps you listened to Elvis Presley and Johnny Cash in the early days of their careers. Or maybe you heard the Fireside Chats of President Roosevelt or reports from the wartime front. Perhaps you had a favorite radio comedy, mystery, or soap opera that you tuned in to each week. Your story does not have to be earth-shattering to matter. Your story might be a song you heard at a school dance, or while sitting in a car talking to your best friend one evening after a movie. Your story might be the music that played over the loudspeaker at the public pool as you learned to dive for the first time or padded over to the snack bar. Your story may be a conglomeration of morning shows you heard during your rush-hour commute to your first job, or the sound of play-by-play coming from the baseball broadcaster you grew up listening to. It might be the first time you heard a song by your favorite artist, or the last time you heard a song by your favorite artist. It might be trying to roller skate with a 25-pound boombox on your shoulder!

What is your story? Or possibly, what are your stories? Tell us a story about the radio and you.



## DTC's Golden Voices: A Quick View

**DTC's Golden Voices** is an initiative of the theatre's Department of Education & Community Engagement. An offshoot of DTC's celebrated Senior Playwriting program, Golden Voices is a program that fosters the creativity of older adults in writing for the theatre. Older adults do not have to belong to a senior group or center; individuals are welcome to write and submit their work on their own!

**Writers should submit a one-page "monologue-style" memory of no more than 500 words.** This memory should be written in first-person (I-language). Accounts that represent the truth of the writer and the writer's world and/or life experience are preferred over fiction; however, truth may instead be an inspiration for the work, and "names (or other details) may be changed to protect the innocent." Emailed submissions are preferred. Submissions may be included in the body of the email or attached in a Word or PDF document. The deadline to submit your writing is **November 17, 2021.** **Email submissions to [education@delawaretheatre.org](mailto:education@delawaretheatre.org).**

DTC will collect all submissions and respond to each writer. All submissions will be gathered into a single PDF document shared on our website and/or social media account until June 30, 2022. Because of the nature of online sharing and our goal of maintaining a respectful online presence, our only rule regarding the content of writer's contributions is that it not be degrading or defamatory to individuals or groups. DTC reserves the right to edit or remove content it deems inappropriate for sharing through our online presence, and/or to offer guidance to those accessing the document regarding the material's appropriateness for children. All writers will be credited by name along with their creative content. DTC will maintain a printed copy of the complete PDF containing all entries for archival purposes.

DTC will further cull selections from entries to create a theatrical reading celebrating the Golden Voices works. This theatrical reading will feature the talents of professional actors in bringing to life through voice, face, and gesture the words on the page, and will be a public performance (live and/or webinar-based), recorded, and posted online for sharing beyond the walls of the theatre.

DTC will provide...

- this writing guide with suggestions and a sample work
- feedback from a DTC theatre artist about each writer's work
- an authentic audience for each writer's work through publication via online posting, printed PDF, and/or performance

There is no fee for participation, and no financial compensation to writers from DTC for the use of these works as part of the Golden Voices program.

*Golden Voices, a facet of the DTC Senior Playwriting Program, is made possible in part by funding from the Delaware Division of the Arts, a state agency, in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts. The Division promotes Delaware arts events on [www.DelawareScene.com](http://www.DelawareScene.com).*



## Timeline for Golden Voices

**October 18-November 16, 2021—Get the word out! Start writing!**

**November 17, 2021—Writings are due!** Email your work to [education@delawaretheatre.org](mailto:education@delawaretheatre.org). You can send your work directly in the text of the email, or attach a Word or PDF document. Please be sure to include the following on your written submission

1. Your name
2. The city, town, county, or region about which you are writing, and the state (and/or country, if your memory takes place outside the United States).
3. Your email address (for DTC to contact you only—this will not be published)
4. Your phone number (for DTC to contact you only—this will not be published)
5. A title (if desired)
6. Your monologue-style memory writing! (500 words or less preferred)

**November 18-December 18, 2021—DTC reads and responds to writers.** It may take us a couple weeks to get to you. Don't worry—we will respond! We may engage you in the revision process, which allows you to rewrite/refine your work as desired.

**January 12, 2022—PDF document of writings completed** and published by DTC online.

**January 19, 2022—Golden Voices Performance/Sharing of Selected Works.** This performance will be recorded (whether live or on Zoom) and shared online.

## Sample Golden Voices Entry:

Writer: Christine Jackson  
Location: Naperville, Illinois  
Email: cj2244113@...  
Phone: 302-555-1234  
Title: Dancing Beside Fear

I was 9 years old when my father came home from the war. He left in 1943 and we knew very little about where he was, but later I learned he was in Italy for a good portion of the war. After he left, my mother and my younger brother and I moved in with my grandparents in Naperville, and every night, I remember hearing the news of the war on the radio. It was WMAQ out of Chicago. I remember hearing John MacVane's voice and all the sounds of aircraft in the background as he reported. My grandmother would say to my grandfather, "Little pitchers have big ears." She wanted to protect us from hearing the sound of battles. My grandfather would turn the volume down, but I still heard the noise and worried about my dad. One night after an especially worrisome newscast, I could not go to sleep because I was so scared. My mother came into the bedroom and I burst into tears and told her I was scared for my dad. She hugged me and told me not to be afraid. Then she took me by the hand and marched me downstairs where the radio was quiet. Everyone else was in bed. But Mama turned the radio on, and it was playing Benny Goodman's "Let's Dance." And she began dancing with me in the kitchen and spinning me around. The two of us were laughing so hard. On one spin, I crashed into a kitchen chair and knocked it over. My grandmother came downstairs to see what all the commotion was. Once she realized no one was breaking into the house, she made some hot cocoa for the three of us. That was a night I'll never forget. When my father came home in 1945, I had come home from school and there he was in the kitchen. He picked me up and swung me around and I knocked over that same chair. I have always loved dancing, but dancing with my parents in the kitchen is one of my happiest memories. Let's dance, indeed.



## Helpful Hints for Writing Your Monologue

### What is a monologue?

A monologue is a piece of theatrical writing in which one person talks without interruption for an extended time. It is a one-person speech, given by one character, and can last less than a minute or go on (as in the case of a comedian's repertoire) for over an hour!

### Who is the character who is speaking?

In a play, characters who interact and have dialogue together sometimes interrupt the flow or rhythm of the back-and-forth conversation to speak by themselves for that extended period of time. That speech is a monologue, and the character speaking those words is usually illuminated throughout the course of the play by their words, actions, and relationships with other characters. For our Golden Voices challenge, the character whose words you write will represent YOU. This is your memory monologue, written from your point-of-view. This might be the "you" as you were when you were a child or a teenager. This might be the "you" from now, looking back at yourself. In any case, consider the way you think or thought, spoke, and behaved, and try to bring out what it is about yourself and this memory that makes it important to you.

### What do you mean "important" to me?

What makes a monologue theatrical is that the character who is speaking has an intention for telling their point-of-view; the character is talking TO someone for a specific purpose of telling a story or sharing a perspective with that listener.

That someone, that listener, could be any of the following:

1. The real audience in the theatre
2. Another imagined character in the world of the speaker
3. The speaker himself or herself
4. God/the universe

As you write, remember that you are writing not for your own private journal, but for the purpose of sharing your memory with others through your monologue. Your purpose for sharing will reflect what is significant to you about that memory.

As you prepare to write, think about these questions to get you started:

1. What strikes you as important about this memory? In other words, why was this moment or this event significant enough that it stayed in your brain over the years?

2. What aspect of yourself is revealed in this memory? For example, is this your fun or mischievous side? Is this a youthful fancy? Does this memory make you recall feelings, events, or people that have meaning to you?
3. What feelings, knowledge, or understanding would you like the real audience to get after hearing or reading your monologue?

### **How detailed do you want me to be?**

We are asking for monologues to be 500 words or less. Within those 500 words, the more specific you can be, the better. Look at the difference between these two sets of statements:

***Set A:*** The music was great. We stayed on the beach, ate dinner, and listened to the songs on the radio for hours. It was nighttime before we went home. That was a fun time I'll never forget.

***Set B:*** Wolfman Jack kept serving up the hits, and we stayed on the beach listening to "Surfin' USA" and "Heard It Through the Grapevine" and other favorites, eating cold fried chicken, and watching the stars slowly come out in the sky. I haven't seen Marla and Benny for years, but when I hear The Beach Boys and Marvin Gaye, I still smile as I think of that night with my two best high school friends.

Both sets describe an evening on the beach when the speaker listened to music as night fell. Yet Set B gives more specific details: names of songs, the name of the DJ, who the "we" is that Set A merely references with a pronoun.

Theatre, by its nature, is transitory, and exists only in the eyes and ears of an audience for the time it takes for the show to unfold on stage. In order for it to be memorable, the language, action, and/or imagery seen or heard must engage an audience member's imagination so that s/he metaphorically enters the world of the play. Your monologue can make the audience's imaginations take flight, too, through the use of specific information or details. Through these details, you not only provide a rich visual or aural tapestry that appeals to an audience, but you may also draw forth similar memories, feelings, or experiences from the audience's mind, engaging them and helping them find commonality with you and your writing. Details help!

### **Should I write in chronological order?**

Just like plays and novels, a good monologue has a clear beginning, middle, and end. Even if you are writing the monologue as an adult reflection on a youthful experience, once into the description of that experience, begin at the beginning and work toward the logical end of that experience or memory. Some people like using a stream-of-consciousness approach, and this can work, too. However, a story that helps us trace a character's journey chronologically from Point A to Point B will often keep an audience's attention longer, for it builds a sense of suspense that makes us wonder, "What will happen next?" For your first and early drafts, though, what is most important is getting your ideas on paper. You can play around with structure and sequence in your revisions.

Think back to why this memory is significant, or what it is that you want an audience to know, feel, or understand after hearing it. Then tell the story, and see where it takes you.

### **What about those revisions?**

Writers often say that writing is more about rewriting and revising than anything else. First and early drafts are about getting some raw material on paper. It is totally okay; in fact, it is a sign of a good writer; to go back and edit your work and make changes, additions, or deletions. As part of our Golden Voices work, DTC's Education Team will respond to each submission with questions or feedback to help guide your rewrites. You remain the creator and playwright. But like all craftspersons, writers will refine and polish their work until it meets their standards for completion.

### **What was the deadline again?**

Wednesday, November 17<sup>th</sup>! Email your submission to [education@delawaretheatre.org](mailto:education@delawaretheatre.org). You can put your work directly in the body of the email, or attach a PDF or Word document.

### **Do I have to live in Delaware to participate?**

No! We'd love to hear from older adults from all over! During last year's online interactions, our community grew through viewing our Zoom-based performances and participating in online classes. We are thrilled to engage patrons from across the country and around the world!

### **How old do I have to be to participate?**

Golden Voices is part of our initiative to engage older adults in the creation and appreciation of theatre. If you self-identify as an older adult, you are welcome to be a part of Golden Voices!

### **What if I have other questions?**

We welcome your questions and conversation! Call or email Johanna Schloss, DTC's Director of Education & Community Engagement, at 302-594-1104 ext. 204 or [johannaschloss@delawaretheatre.org](mailto:johannaschloss@delawaretheatre.org).