FAVOURITE SHAKESPEARE MONOLOGUES AND DUOLOGUES
OF PROFESSIONAL ACTORS
#esufestivalofspeaking

Oliver Hume

The monologue I like the best from any Shakespeare play is Launce's speech from Two Gentlemen of Verona Act 2, Scene 3.

I think Crab, my dog, be the sourest-natured
dog that lives: my mother weeping, my father
wailing, my sister crying, our maid howling, our cat
wringing her hands, and all our house in a great
perplexity, yet did not this cruel-hearted cur shed
one tear: he is a stone, a very pebble stone, and
has no more pity in him than a dog: why, my grandam,
having no eyes, look you, wept herself blind at my
parting.
Nay, I'll show you the manner of it.

This shoe is my father: no, this left shoe is my father:
no, no, this left shoe is my mother: nay, that
cannot be so neither: yes, it is so, it is so, it
hath the worser sole. This shoe, with the hole in
it, is my mother, and this my father; a vengeance
on't! there 'tis: now, sit, this staff is my
sister, for, look you, she is as white as a lily and
as small as a wand: this hat is Nan, our maid: I
am the dog: no, the dog is himself, and I am the
dog--Oh! the dog is me, and I am myself; ay, so,
so. Now come I to my father; Father, your blessing:
now should not the shoe speak a word for weeping:
now should I kiss my father; well, he weeps on. Now
come I to my mother: O, that she could speak now like a wood woman! Well, I kiss her; why, there 'tis; here's my mother's breath up and down. Now come I to my sister; mark the moan she makes. Now the dog all this while sheds not a tear nor speaks a word; but see how I lay the dust with my tears.

I like it because it's quite a hard speech to do well.

It involves a visual element which is hard to work out and it only really works as a comedy piece if the character is completely unaware that he's getting everything wrong. I first heard it done in a Welsh accent and to me it's always hilarious if it's done that way.