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Dramatic Publishing

CYRANO

A New Version in English Verse

by

BARRY KORNHAUSER

Adapted from

Cyrano de Bergerac

by

Edmond Rostand



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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(CYRANO)

ISBN 1-58342-163-7

For
my children
Max, Sam, Ariel
my wife
Carol Anne
my mother
Florence
with love lots larger than Cyrano's nose

Also for
Gayle Sergel
Char Borman
Kim Bennett
and especially
Michael D. Mitchell

“C'est à vous que je le dédie.”

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“*Cyrano* was commissioned and produced by the
Fulton Opera House in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.”

Cyrano was first performed at the Fulton Opera House in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, September 21-October 1, 2000.

Cyrano de Bergerac KIM BENNETT
Roxane MELISSA CHALSMA
Christian de Neuville TRENT DAWSON
Comte de Guiche KEVIN WALDRON
Le Bret MARK MINEART
Ragueneau GEORGE HOSMER
Bellerose/Musketeer/Capuchin/Spaniard JON SHAVER
Montfleury/Apprentice 3/Mother Marguerite ROBERT BROCK
Duenna/Sister Claire TERRI MASTROBUONO
Vicomte de Valvert/Apprentice 2/Cadet 7 ALVIN KEITH
Cut-Purse/Apprentice 1/Sentry BRIAN MARTIN
Orange Girl/Lise/Sister Marthe DANA P. DIMON
Musician 1/Page 1/Cadet 5/Nun SPIFF WEIGAND
Musician 2/Page 2/Cadet 6/Nun MICHAEL DROLET
Cadet 1/Spaniard JASON ADAMO
Cadet 2/Spaniard MICHAEL JOHN CASEY
Cadet 3 NICHOLAS LONGOBARDI
Cadet 4 JOE THOMPSON

Other Assorted Citizens/Spaniards/Voice of Jodelet
JONATHAN GROFF, ERIC & STEPHEN DIEHL

Director MICHAEL D. MITCHELL
Costume Designer BETH DUNKELBERGER
Scenic Designer ROBERT KLINGELHOEFER
Lighting Designer BILL SIMMONS
Original Music & Sound Design RON BARNETT
Stage Manager DANIEL G. WALCZYK
Fight Choreographer JANE RIDLEY
Hair/Makeup Consultant HEATHER MACDONALD JOHNSON
Casting JUDY HENDERSON C.S.A., New York City

CYRANO

A Play in Two Acts

CHARACTERS

(See casting notes in back of book for doubling, tripling suggestions.)

CYRANO DE BERGERAC
ROXANE
CHRISTIAN DE NEUVILLETTE
RAGUENEAU
COMTE DE GUICHE
LE BRET
DUENNA
VICOMTE DE VALVERT
CADETS (7)
BELLEROSE
ORANGE GIRL
CUT-PURSE
MONTFLEURY
APPRENTICES (3)
LISE
MAN OF LETTERS
MUSICIANS (2)
MUSKETEERS (2)
PAGES (2)
CAPUCHIN
SENTRY
MOTHER MARGUERITE
SISTER CLAIRE
SISTER MARTHE
NUNS
SPANIARDS
VOICE OF JODELET

A Few Cyranoes on Casting

There are a number of casting combinations that can be devised for *Cyrano*. Here is a scheme based on The Shakespeare Theatre production. A minimum of 21 actors is required, but the cast can readily be enlarged.

- Actor 1 (m): Cyrano de Bergerac
- Actor 2 (f): Roxane
- Actor 3 (m): Christian de Neuville
- Actor 4 (m): Ragueneau
- Actor 5 (m): Comte de Guiche
- Actor 6 (m): Le Bret
- Actor 7 (m): Bellerose/Apprentice 3/Capuchin Monk/Spaniard
- Actor 8 (m): Montfleury/Voice of Jodelet/Apprentice 2/Spaniard
- Actor 9 (f): Duenna/Mother Marguerite
- Actor 10 (m): Vicomte de Valvert/Man of Letters/Spaniard
- Actor 11 (m): Cut-Purse/Apprentice 1/Sentry
- Actor 12 (m): Musketeer 1/Spaniard
- Actor 13 (m): Musketeer 2/Cadet 7
- Actor 14 (f): Orange Girl/Sister Marthe
- Actor 15 (f): Lisa/Sister Claire
- Actor 16 (f): Musician 1/Page 1/Cadet 5/Sister 1
with Musical Instrument
- Actor 17 (m): Musician 2/Page 2/Cadet 6/Sister 2
with Musical Instrument
- Actor 18 (m): Cadet 1
- Actor 19 (m): Cadet 2
- Actor 20 (m): Cadet 3
- Actor 21 (m): Cadet 4

Because the world depicted on stage in *Cyrano* is not intended to be a fully realistic one, the play allows some flexibility in casting regarding the gender of the actors. There are roles that can be played by either sex without altering a word of text. Examples include the Musicians of Scene 1, the Apprentices in Scene 2, and the Pages from Scene 3. Any or all of the Nuns in the final scene can be played in drag, and directors may choose to have female actors portray some of the Cadets of Gascony. Such changes may help to better balance the company by gender if so desired, and still permit the doubling of roles, thereby not enlarging cast size.

A Word on the Design

As the play's poetry is intended to convey a stage world both romantic and idealized—outside the realm of everyday reality—a highly stylized design will serve the same end. At least one major set piece or prop in every scene should be preposterously large, a visual reiteration of Cyrano's perception of his nose. Also encouraged is the incorporation of words wherever they can be placed. Even the preferably raked stage floor itself can become a canvas for Cyrano's last missive to Roxane—preferably in its original French.* Throughout the script, stage directions refer to other such possibilities.

Similarly, aspects of costuming can help inform the world of the play. Deliberately exaggerated period styles and cuts, and even the appliqué of French words on various articles of the characters' clothing are options to consider.

As for sound design, underscoring is called for throughout the play, sometimes provided by characters playing period instruments. There are also several songs. Two are sung by the Cadets, and another, a remembered childhood melody, by Cyrano and Roxane. Whereas these certainly can be created anew for each production, there is a lovely score created for the original staging by composer Ron Barnett. Interested parties can reach Mr. Barnett via e-mail at: Chreode@juno.com or c/o Fulton Opera House, P.O. Box 1865 Lancaster PA 17608.

*Roxane, adieu, je vais mourir!
C'est pour ce soir, je crois, ma bien-aimée!
J'ai l'ame lourde encor d'amour inexprimée,
Et je meurs! jamais plus, jamais mes yeux grisés,
Mes regards dont c'était les frémissantes fetes:
J'en revois un petit qui vous est familier
Ne baiseront au vol les gestes que vous faites:
Pour toucher votre front, et je voudrais crier.
Et je crie: Adieu! Ma chère, ma chérie,
Mon trésor...Mon amour!
Mon coeur ne vous quitta jamais une seconde,
Et je suis et serai jusque dans l'autre monde
Celui qui vous aima sans mesure, celui...

Pronunciation Guide

Below is a guide to the pronunciation of some of the French names of people, places, titles and phrases used in this adaptation. (The list is not inclusive.) For the most part, French names have been Anglicized. The only exceptions are for those names that are too familiar to American ears in their original language (such as the “Porte Saint Denis”—“*Den-ee*”—which is a Paris landmark, and “Corneille”—“*Corn-nay*,” the landmark author) and those that would just sound too “gauche” if Anglicized (for example: “Jodelet” which should be pronounced “*Jo-duh-lay*,” not “jo-duh-LET”). The following are listed in alphabetical order.

Bellerose = *Bell-uh-rose*
Bourgogne = *Bor-gog-nya*
Ca peu = *sah pyu*
Comte de Guiche = *Comt duh Geesh*
Corneille = *Corn-nay*
Denis = *Den-ee*
de trop = *duh tro*
épée = *eh-pay*
Gascon = *Gaz-cone*
Gascony = *Gas-cone-ee*
Jodelet = *Jo-duh-lay*
Le Bret = *Luh Bret*
Lise = *Lees*
Madeleine = *Mad-ah-lane*
mal de mer = *mowl-duh-mare*
Montfleury = *Mont-flur-ee*
Neuvillelette = *Nu-vuh-LET or Nu-vuh-YET*
(Company’s choice)
Ragueneau = *Rag-guh-no*
sous = *soo*
Vicomte de Valvert = *Vee-comt duh Val-ver(t)*

About the Poetry (or “A Verse-Case Scenario”)

There were a number of reasons for writing this adaptation of *Cyrano de Bergerac* in verse. Firstly, the choice was intended to honor Rostand’s original, a work written in iambic hexameter Alexandrines, the style of the great classical French dramatists. Secondly, the use of rhyme serves to acknowledge, perhaps even bolster, the critical nature of poetry itself in the story of the play. The lives of the characters are driven and transformed by words, and it seemed only appropriate to emphasize their very presence in the text. Thirdly, the play is not a realistic one. It portrays a world both romantic and somewhat idealized. The verse helps elevate the piece beyond everyday reality. Finally, this use of language offers opportunities to capture a bit of the true spirit of Rostand, with its rich humor all too often neglected in many adaptations. Rostand’s own word play was delightful, and his masterwork, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, is as funny as it is moving.

That said, a note of caution about the performers’ reading of this poetry might be in order. With language there is always a constant battle between the music of the words and their meaning. It should be the goal of director and actors to make the text read as naturalistically as possible, speaking the lines with the quality of ordinary speech, so that the rhyming all but disappears, leaving only a suggestion of it in the audiences’ ears

Act I

Scene i: A Performance at the Hotel de Bourgogne.

(The curtain opens revealing the Hall of the Hotel de Bourgogne in 1640 Paris. Upstage center is a proscenium arch, framing a small stage concealed for now behind an ornate curtain, perhaps decorated with an array of huge fleurs de lis. Two unlit chandeliers hang low, and a row of unlit footlights transverse the downstage floor of this “replica” theater. A bench sits on a diagonal at each side of this stage – the cheap seats. As the actual theater’s main drape completes its rise, four cadets enter from the back of the house, two per aisle. Simultaneously, Bellerose, carrying a lantern, makes a panicky entrance through the central slit in the small stage’s curtain. He is followed by two of his company’s musicians whose playing becomes a part of the grander orchestration underscoring this opening.)

BELLEROSE *(to an imagined curtain-puller high in the wings)*: No, not yet! You’re early! *(And to the actual audience and the approaching cadets)* Go away!
The play doesn’t start until two.

CADET 1 *(reaching the stage, along with the others)*: Well then, while we are waiting,
we will just have to find something to do.

BELLEROSE: Tranquil and refined,
if you do not mind,
sirs.

CADET 3 (*holding up a deck*): I have cards!

CADET 4 (*shaking a clenched hand
as if rolling dice*): Here are dice!

BELLEROSE: Please!

CADET 2 (*to 1*): Some sword *play* would be nice
in prelude to the drama.

*(Cadets 1 and 2 draw their swords
and pose to begin fencing.)*

BELLEROSE: Dear gentlemen, I am a-
fraid not. House rules, you see. No fights.

CADET 1: Bellerose...

BELLEROSE: Yes?

CADET 1: Go light your lights.

(Cadets 1 and 2 playfully threaten him with their foils.)

BELLEROSE: Very well then. But I'll first collect your
admission fee.

CADET 2: Not a sou; we get in free.

BELLEROSE: Really? And why, pray tell, might that be?

CADET 1: Why!? Because we are the Cadets...

ALL FOUR CADETS: ...of Gascony!

(Cadets 1 and 2 poke Bellerose lightly in the belly with their swords.)

BELLEROSE: “Point” taken!

(He falls back into the waiting arms of the other two Cadets who lift him under his arms and carry him upstage, his legs flailing the air.)

MUSICIAN 1 (*tuning his instrument*): How’s that?

MUSICIAN 2: Still notably flat.

(1 grudgingly resumes his tuning as Bellerose begins lighting the chandeliers and the footlights, a business that can occupy much of his upcoming time. Cadets 3 and 4 sit on a bench and begin playing cards. 1 and 2 practice dueling. Others begin entering. From a wing comes the Cut-Purse. And again down the aisle of the house, Christian and Ragueneau, the latter carrying a period container of baked goods, the former casting his eyes all about the auditorium. Down the opposite aisle comes the Orange Girl, hawking her wares to the audience. [Throughout the scene, all of these characters must stay busy. Much of their business is suggested, but more can be created. For example, the musicians continue to tune their instruments, a cadet juggles the Orange Girl’s fruits, etc.]

ORANGE GIRL (*moving down the aisle*): Oranges!

Freshly squeezed lemonade!
For long-time subscribers, prunes pureed!

BELLEROSE (*to the Cut-Purse, interrupting his work of illuminating the theater*): Monsieur, your pay, please.
Fifteen sous.

CUT-PURSE: Yes, of course. A moment or two.

(*He slinks away.*)

ORANGE GIRL: I have homemade macaroons to sell!

RAGUENEAU: Might I have instead a muscatel?
(*She nods and prepares one for him as he continues to Christian.*) Well, this is it –
the famed Hotel de Bourgogne!
You don't know Paris, my boy, if you don't know this stage -
which, at two, will present the debut of "La Clorise"
by Balthasar Baro –

BELLEROSE: - who is all the rage
just now. You'll find his play
as sharp (*rubbing his previously poked stomach*) as an épée.
Baro is a true poet, not a faker
like this pretentious prosaic baker
at your side.
(*Ragueneau begins to protest.*) Good to see you,
Ragueneau. (*Ragueneau is appeased, until*) I missed my lunch.

ORANGE GIRL: Right here, people;
quench your thirst with delicious Empire Punch!

RAGUENEAU (*handing over the container to Bellerose*): Voila; my usual culinary pittance.
Sufficient, I do trust, to gain the admittance
of both this fine boy and myself.

BELLEROSE: It's good that my heart is soft, sir,
because your rolls are hard.

(He taps one against Ragueneau's forehead.)

CADET 1 *(thrusting his foil lightly on 2's chest)*: Ah, a hit!

CADET 2: I admit.

(They resume.)

RAGUENEAU: Then you accept?

BELLEROSE: I do. Though not for you, you old baker cum bard,
but for this charming newcomer.

Who is he, a fresh apprentice?

(Pulling Christian aside) A word, mon cher, to the wise
about your cheeky master. This breadmaker's songs
are like his yeast – they only serve to get a rise.

RAGUENEAU: Some director! You've no ear for poetry;
less an eye for bonhomie, my foolish Bellerose.
This new arrival to our fair city is the *Baron* de Neuville –

BELLEROSE: who has come for a dose
of culture! Bravo, *Baron*. ...Baron?

(But Christian's attentions have wandered again.

To Ragueneau) Has he heard anything I said?

RAGUENEAU: I would guess not a single word, monsieur,
for you have sorely misread
this open book. Although Christian and I are only newly met,
I can tell you he hungers neither for your art nor my Crêpe Suzette.
Why, don't you see, his attentions lie not on the stage,
but on "dramas" more pertinent to young men his age.

BELLEROSE: Alas, another youth succumbs to temptations
(*indicating large breasts with his hands*)...weighty,
the hunt and pursuit of the fabled Parisian lady.
Well, there are none like –

ORANGE GIRL (*offering one to Christian*): Madeleine?

(*He declines politely.*)

RAGUENEAU (*nudging him*): Christian! Regard.

CHRISTIAN: Sir? Oh, sorry. (*To Bellerose*) No, monsieur.
I've come with the Guard,
to join the ranks of the *Gascon* Cadets.

BELLEROSE: Then, Baron, you have my deepest regrets.
The Cadets have been known –
(*He turns to point at the dueling Cadets just in time to catch
the Cut-Purse nimbly stealing the purse of one of them.
Neither Christian or Ragueneau have noticed. He smiles.*)
- to suffer losses...in those ranks.
But time for the show.
(*Indicating the container*) As always, Ragueneau, my thanks.

RAGUENEAU: Bon appetit.

BELLEROSE: Please, take a seat.

CUT-PURSE (*counting coins out of the
Cadet's purse*): Bellerose! Your fifteen sous.

BELLEROSE: Make that thirty for you.
(*Gesturing toward the duelists*) I know the Gascon bank
from which you newly withdrew.

(Bellerose is reluctantly paid.)

ORANGE GIRL: Sweet raspberry syrup!

BELLEROSE *(completing his candle lighting,
calling)*: Raise the chandelier up!
(Nothing.) Jodelet?!

VOICE OF JODELET: You want fast work,
pay a fair wage! “Heads” on stage!

(The first chandelier begins to rise into playing position.)

CHRISTIAN: Dear Ragueneau, I don’t see her anywhere!
You said all of Paris’ Precieux would be here.

RAGUENEAU: Of course, my boy; it is, after all,
a Baro premiere.
But you say you saw her just once in passing.
Are you sure to recognize her?

CHRISTIAN: You would need not ask that question if,
like me, you had gazed into her eyes, sir.
They have stayed in mine
since our glances met that fateful day that I arrived.
And now, my friend and guide, with you here by my side,
I shall not be deprived
of the chance to learn who she is,
for I’m told you know everyone – be they from town or court.
All come into your bake shop –

RAGUENEAU: - where I “cook-up” my wicked songs
about them, making such sport
of all their lives.

CHRISTIAN: Which is why you must “sing out” her name
when she appears!

RAGUENEAU: And I will do so loud and clear, my boy,
so allay all of your fears.
If –

CHRISTIAN: *When!* –

RAGUENEAU: she arrives, you will not think any less of me.
I shall make her as familiar as a favorite recipe.

CHRISTIAN: Praise heaven above,
I was directed to your patisserie, kind sir.

(He embraces Ragueneau vigorously.)

RAGUENEAU: Enough of that. Eyes back to earth,
dear boy, or however shall we find her.

*(They both look about the audience. As they do so,
Bellerose notices a new arrival and rushes to collect
his admission fee.)*

BELLEROSE: Welcome, sir, you can pay right here.

MUSKETEER 1: I don't pay. I'm a Musketeer.

BELLEROSE: But –

MUSKETEER 1 *(spotting the Orange Girl)*:
Besides, I've only come to collect a “souvenir.”

ORANGE GIRL: May I serve you, sir?

MUSKETEER 1: Avec plaisir.
Just give me a moment, won't you, to examine your "wares."

(He studies her tray. Of course, her chest happens to be in the way.)

BELLEROSE *(to self)*: Ah well, don't care for our plays?
Then try our concessionaires.
(Returning to Christian and Ragueneau who are still perusing the crowd) Just so long as they do fill the seats,
and hence the lines on my balance sheets.
Yes, we have quite the audience today.

RAGUENEAU: The whole Academy, *(pointing)* even Corneille!

BELLEROSE *(to Christian)*: Well, the play features,
of course, the great Montfleury.

RAGUENEAU: A casting decision that does tempt destiny.
Just do not be surprised, Bellerose,
that if he opens, you forthwith close.

BELLEROSE: Such utter drivel. Says who?

RAGUENEAU: Only my good friend - *Cyrano de Bergerac!*

(The musical underscoring comes to a screeching halt at the mention of the name. So do all other sounds and actions, at least momentarily.)

BELLEROSE: What?

RAGUENEAU: Yes, if Montfleury dares take the stage,
Cyrano vows to give him the sack.

LE BRET (*entering the back of the house*): And *that* is the
spectacle I'm here to enjoy.

RAGUENEAU (*to Christian*): Your commander.

BELLEROSE (*whispering*): One of the Gascon hoi polloi,
I'm afraid, not to mention a grump.
So polish that boot. (*Christian wipes it
on the back of his pants leg.*) And watch your rump.

(*He swats Christian's behind.*)

RAGUENEAU: Bellerose, don't even start.

BELLEROSE: Oh, Ragueneau, have –

CADET 3 (*revealing a card triumphantly*): A heart!

CUT-PURSE (*clutching the Orange Girl*): A kiss?

CADET 1 (*again jabbing 2 with his foil*): A hit!

(*The Orange Girl tries to slap the
Cut-Purse. He ducks out of the way.*)

CUT-PURSE: A miss!

(*She steps on his foot.*)

CADET 2 (*responding to the jab*): You twit.

CUT-PURSE: My toe!

ORANGE GIRL: De trop! [*“Not wanted”*]