

Cyrano and Roxanne

*A Retelling of Edmond Rostand's Play,
"Cyrano de Bergerac"*

**By
Janice Rider**

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- 2 -

DEDICATION

To my oldest son, Nathan, who requested that we perform a version of "Cyrano." As Cyrano he played the part with panache and sensitivity. Also to Amelia Sharp, who played the role of Roxanne. Amelia's gentle, winning ways made her a lovely heroine.

STORY OF THE PLAY

In this retelling of Edmond Rostand's play, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, Roxanne is smitten by the superficial charms of a handsome young soldier, Christian, who is new to Paris. When she tells her three friends of her "love" for this dashing fellow, they are eager to give advice on the budding romance. Roxanne is oblivious to the love Cyrano feels for her. While they have been close friends since childhood, she has never considered him in a romantic way. Cyrano and his rival Christian form a strange alliance in order to win Roxanne's heart. Even as their guard unit fights the Spanish attacks, Cyrano tries to protect Christian and write his love letters for him. But who is the real man of Roxanne's dreams, and will her hasty decision to marry provide a happy ending? A touching story. The addition of female characters as Roxanne's friends and easy staging make this play ideal for schools to perform.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

This show was performed by the Drama Club at St. David's United Church on May 10, 2009, in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. The play was directed and managed by Janice Rider. Costumes were graciously prepared by Karen McKeown and Charlene Lazaruk.

The cast for the original production was as follows: NARRATOR: Adam Checkwitch; CHRYSTELE: Lauren Garnett; DANIELLE: Aleida Whidden; BRIGITTE: Claire Sharp; ROXANNE: Amelia Sharp; CYRANO: Nathan Rider; MONTFLEURY: Matthew Rider; VALVERT: Cameron Bardwell; LE BRET: Corey Weber; LIGNIERE: John Whidden; BAKER: Twila Whidden; COUNT DE GUICHE: Nicholas Panos; CADETS: Zaakary Kwan, Christopher Checkwitch, and Adam Checkwitch; CHRISTIAN: Taylor Hornford.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Flexible cast. With doubling approx. 8 m, 4-5 w, 1 child.

CHRYSTELE: A friend of Roxanne's. She is silly, shallow, and full of romantic notions about love that have little basis in reality. She dresses fashionably and extravagantly. Her hair is perpetually neat and attractive.

DANIELLE: A friend of Roxanne's. She is somewhat of a tomboy, and would like to live a life of adventure. She wishes that women had the same freedoms as men. She dresses more casually.

BRIGITTE: A friend of Roxanne's who is extremely serious. She is a realist who takes nothing for granted and is, in no way, given to flights of fancy. She dresses fashionably, but not extravagantly.

ROXANNE: A beautiful young woman who is known for her compassion, but has some rather unrealistic notions about love and romance. Like Chrystelee, she dresses well, with attention to detail, but she wears her hair loose and flowing.

CYRANO DE BERGERAC: Intelligent, bold, daring, funny, and athletic. He is all that a man should be except for the fact that he has an enormous nose, one that is impossible to ignore.

MONTFLEURY: A poor actor who over-dramatizes his roles.

VISCOUNT DE VALVERT: Villain of the play; a handsome man who has an eye on Roxanne.

LE BRET: A close friend of Cyrano's, a confidante who can be counted on to provide support and a listening ear.

LIGNIERE: A poet.

BAKER: She's amazed at Cyrano's nose.

COUNT DE GUICHE: A powerful man with a great deal of influence. He is a mentor and father-figure to Valvert.

CARBON: A cadet of Cyrano's.

PIERRE: A cadet of Cyrano's.

CHRISTIAN DE NEUVILLETTE: A wealthy, handsome man who becomes the recipient of Roxanne's affections. He is not a particularly intelligent person.

ASSASSINS: Optional. Five masked assassins.

YOUNG BOY: A young messenger. (Only 2 lines)

Please see next page for doubling suggestions; see end of script for name pronunciation guide.

DOUBLING POSSIBLE: The BAKER may be played by any of Roxanne's three girlfriends. LIGNIERE may be played by any male except Cyrano, Valvert or Le Bret. Some of the ASSASSIANS may be played by the Count, Carbon, Pierre, and Christian.

SETTING

Paris during the 1600s.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

- Scene 1:** Outside a Parisian theatre
- Scene 2:** Outside a bakery, the next day
- Scene 3:** The barracks
- Scene 4:** Roxanne's house
- Scene 5:** Valvert's house
- Scene 6:** The barracks
- Scene 7:** The balcony
- Scene 8:** Danielle's house
- Scene 9:** Siege of Arras

ACT II

- Scene 1:** After Arras; back with Roxanne
- Scene 2:** Cyrano's house, months later
- Scene 3:** The convent
- Scene 4:** Outside the convent

See additional production notes at the end of the script.

ACT I

SCENE 1 - OUTSIDE A PARISIAN THEATRE

(AT RISE: The setting is Paris during the 1600s. As the lights come up, CHRYSTELE darts out onto the stage from SR, beautifully dressed in period clothing, with her hair gorgeously arranged. She moves to CS and clasps her hands in front of her. She proceeds to take a deep, dramatic inhalation of air with eyes closed. When she opens her eyes, she begins to address her audience.)

CHRYSTELE: Ah, Paris! Who would want to be anywhere else? In this city, fashion flourishes, swords flash and clash, theatre thrives, and romance runs rampant! And the men! *(Points out at members of the audience.)* Just look at them! Swashbuckling heroes pining for love!

(Three more well-dressed young women rush out onto the stage from SR laughing and flushed with excitement. They rush over to CHRYSTELE before halting. The young women are BRIGITTE, DANIELLE, and ROXANNE.)

CHRYSTELE: *(Cont'd.)* What a wonderful evening! What a glorious night!

DANIELLE: Yes, Chryste, the play was an excellent one. The only thing that could have made it better was Montfleury's absence. He always over-dramatizes his characters.

(DANIELLE throws her arms wide, puffs out her cheeks, and stomps around with legs wide to imitate Montfleury. Her FRIENDS laugh.)

CHRYSTELE: Danielle, the evening wasn't wonderful because of the play! I hardly even bothered looking at the stage! The audience made the evening wonderful! Didn't you see all those handsome young men?

BRIGITTE: You were watching the men in the audience? Why even bother paying to attend if you are just going to sit there and admire gentlemen for the course of two hours?

CHRYSTELE: Brigitte, was the play really that long? It didn't seem to me as if it was! It passed by in a blur. And, as for paying to watch the men, it was not a waste of money at all! Why, eventually I'm going to need a husband to entertain me, and look after me, so I make the most out of occasions like this. I try to catch the eye of eligible males!

DANIELLE: *(Laughs.)* Oh, Chryste, you are incorrigible!

CHRYSTELE: Well, I wasn't the only one with eyes somewhere other than on the stage. *(Raises her eyebrows in a meaningful way and smiles knowingly.)*

DANIELLE: What do you mean?

CHRYSTELE: Ask Roxanne for an answer. Perhaps she can give you one.

ROXANNE: All right, you three are my best friends, and Chryste has guessed my secret anyway. I was admiring that young fellow, the tall one with the fair hair, the fine clothes, and the debonair air. He is new in town, but we have occasionally seen one another, and he speaks eloquently with his eyes, even if his lips are silent. I sense that romance awaits us both.

CHRYSTELE: Ah, yes, I was envious of the persistency with which he gazed on you, Roxanne. I wish that he had spent some time admiring me, too.

ROXANNE: We don't just admire one another, Chryste. We are sifting one another's souls with our gazes. Unfortunately, he is too shy to speak to me just yet, and, as a lady, it would be wrong for me to speak to him first, so I must bide my time until he broaches the subject of his love.

DANIELLE: Why is it that the gentlemen must always be the ones to initiate everything? Why must the women always play coy in order to be considered lady-like? It infuriates me!

CHRYSTELE: If you had your way, Danielle, you'd be able to wear pants, use a sword, and climb trees!

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