



The Guide to Musical Theatre

CYRANO

A Musical in 2 Acts, 5 Scenes. Book and lyrics by Anthony Burgess. Based on the play *Cyrano de Bergerac* by Edmond Rostand, as translated by Anthony Burgess;
Music by Michael J. Lewis. Directed by Michael Kidd. Costumes by Desmond Heeley. Settings by John Jensen. Lighting by Gilbert V. Hemsley, Jr. Musical direction by Thomas Pierson. Orchestrations by Philip J. Lang. Sound by Abe Jacob. Incidental music Arranged by Clay Fullum. Dueling scenes staged by Patrick Crean, Erik Fredricksen. Produced by Richard Gregson and APJAC International.



Opened 13 May 1973 at the Palace Theatre, New York and closed 23 June 1973 after 49 performances.

SYNOPSIS

Act I

The scene opens with a crowd is gathering in a Parisian street for a new play from Montfleury's production company. Rageuneau and Christian enter looking for the beautiful Roxana who finally arrives with her guardian, Comte de Guiche, nephew of Cardinal Richelieu. It appears that De Guiche is completely smitten with Roxana, but is already wed, so he proposes to marry her to a certain Viscount, Monseigneur de Valvert. This way, he can have access to her whenever he wishes. Rageuneau and Christian exit when they see Roxana and De Guiche looking at them.

The play begins with Montfleury's narration, which is interrupted suddenly by Cyrano brandishing a sword. He demands that the play be stopped because it insults his, and everyone else's, intelligence. Cyrano makes such a big scene that Montfleury and his actors finally leave. De Guiche has words with Cyrano and chastises his manners. Cyrano calls him a philistine. It seems that Cyrano strives for a higher understanding and has no time for trivialities. De Guiche presses him further and Cyrano finally asks him what it is he and everyone else is looking at - his enormous nose? He isn't offended by this and has no problem telling them just how big his nose is.

De Valvert accuses Cyrano of being a crude and arrogant, and slaps him in the face with his gloves. Cyrano asks if De Valvert would mind if two had a little sword fight. Cyrano also says that he would like to compose a poem while the fight is happening and kill De Valvert on the last line. De Valvert accepts the challenge, Cyrano starts to recite his poem, and a sword fight begins. Finally, when he feels the poem is finished, Cyrano goes in and kills De Valvert. De Valvert's body is carried away and the crowd disperses.

Roxana has watched the entire proceedings from her balcony and thanks Cyrano for killing De Valvert. Her guardian, De Guiche, wanted her to marry him; however, she had no desire to do so. She retires to her room, leaving Cyrano and his friend, Le Bret, to talk. Le Bret tells Cyrano that he must be careful with his behaviour because Cardinal Richelieu will eventually get him. Cyrano only wants do whatever he wants - whenever he wants. This doesn't seem unreasonable, does it? He also confesses to Le Bret that he loves his own cousin, Roxana. Le Bret tells him that he should tell Roxana of his love; however, Cyrano thinks this is ridiculous because his appearance is so revolting that Roxana would never love him. His nose is just too big. No woman would ever love him.

Roxana's governess, Duenna, enters and delivers a message to Cyrano saying that Roxana needs to see him very much - in private. Cyrano is shocked and happy about this, and with Le Bret's coaching arranges a time and place - tomorrow after morning mass. Duenna leaves and Le Bret tells Cyrano that tomorrow he must tell her he loves her. Yes, he will do it! Rageuneau then enters in terrible condition and falls to the floor. It appears that a hundred men were chasing him just because he wrote a poem that offended them. He can't go home. Cyrano tells him that he should carry on his life as usual. Cyrano will help him out and fight the one hundred men at the Port de Nesle - alone. With Roxana in love with him, there is nothing he can't do.

At seven o'clock the next morning at Ragueneau Bakery, Ragueneau re-enacts his imagined version of Cyrano's encounter with the one hundred men at the Porte de Nesle. The workers there are not too amused as they watch their boss simulate a fight and create a new poem. A wounded Cyrano enters, but he is more concerned about his appearance than he is to attending to the wound on his head - he is about to meet Roxana for their scheduled encounter. As Cyrano nervously scrolls a letter to Roxana in case he can't face her, bakery apprentices enter to tell of the mad fighting that occurred at the Porte de Nesle. Eight men were killed, and ninety-two ran off screaming like cats. Cyrano obviously did his work.

Roxana does come to meet her cousin, Cyrano, and the two recall a time gone by when they were children spending summers together playing in Bergerac. Roxana attend to Cyrano's wounded head and tells him of the real reason for her visit. It appears that she is in love with someone whom she has never met. She has only seen him at the theatre. He is a soldier just like Cyrano, and in fact, is in his regiment. His name is Baron Christian de Neuville and she is afraid for him. He is new in the guards, but is not a Gascon. She fears that he will be picked on. She knows that everyone is afraid of Cyrano, and after what she saw him do last night fighting in the street, she knows that he can protect Christian. She asks Cyrano to promise to be Christian's friend and make certain that he, Christian, writes to her. Cyrano agrees and Roxana leaves.

This is hardly the meeting that Cyrano had in mind; however, before he gets too distraught, Le Bret and all the other cadets enter to celebrate Cyrano's victory over the one hundred men at the port. The fight apparently was tremendous. Everyone wants to meet Cyrano. De Guiche enters and tells Cyrano that even Cardinal Richelieu would like Cyrano to join his retinue. Cyrano turns down all interviews and even sends word to Cardinal Richelieu that he "does not join retinues." He is indeed too proud. De Guiche leaves insulted and ready for revenge. This was a chance for Cyrano, but he didn't take it. Le Bret reminds Cyrano that all he does is make enemies. Yes, Cyrano loves hatred! He wants everything to be on his own terms. Le Bret tells Cyrano that he may enjoy being bitter and proud; however, the real reason he is upset is that Roxana doesn't love him. With that, Roxana's secret love, Baron Christian de Neuville, enters and is questioned by the other cadets who learn that he comes from the north. The soldiers trick him into mocking Cyrano's nose as Cyrano tells the story of his fight with one hundred men the night before. At first, Cyrano is angry that Christian would dare to insult him; however, after learning his identity lets him continue with his insults. Cyrano finally tells everyone to leave - they all do though they are rather confused. He sits and talks with Christian and tells him who he is and that Roxana is his cousin. Christian is overjoyed to hear this and apologises for insulting Cyrano. Cyrano informs Christian that Roxana is expecting a letter from him - tonight. This terrifies Christian since he is, in fact, terrible when it comes to words. Cyrano volunteers to write the letters for Christian and romance Roxana on his behalf. Grateful, Christian embraces Cyrano and the two go off to begin their newfound collaboration.

Act II

Cyrano and Christian stand outside Roxana's house as Cyrano coaches Christian in a song he will sing to her. Tonight is the first time she hears his voice. Christian sings the song; unfortunately Duenna hears it instead. Cyrano tells Christian to go off and wait for his signal. Roxana comes down and talks to Cyrano telling him how marvellous Christian's writings are. In fact, she has memorised them all. Just as Cyrano is ready to go and get Christian, Duenna enters with news that De Guiche has arrived. Cyrano informs her that with the help of his uncle, Cardinal Richelieu, he has had his wife put away. Before anything else can happen, Roxana needs to get rid of him. Cyrano leaves for a short time.

De Guiche talks with Roxana, and tells her that he has been promoted to colonel of the Gascons and is off to battle to fight the Spaniards. Upon hearing the news, Roxana is distraught thinking of the possibility that

Christian could be injured in battle. She reminds De Guiche that he wants revenge on Cyrano for snubbing him not that long ago and convinces him that the ultimate revenge would be to leave Cyrano's company behind while the rest go off to battle. Cyrano loves danger and would be devastated at not being able to go. De Guiche loves the idea, and is convinced that Roxana must really love him to dream up a scheme like that. De Guiche further plans that he won't go off to battle, but rather will hide in an nearby abbey and visit Roxana, masked, later that night. She tells him that he must go and fight and be her hero. He leaves. Roxana tells Duenna to say nothing because Cyrano will be most upset if he finds that she kept him and his regiment from going to war; however, Christian's safety is far more important to her. Duenna agrees. Cyrano re-appears and Roxana leaves him telling him to have Christian wait for her when he returns.

Cyrano calls Christian out, and he says that he is ready to speak his own words to Roxana. Cyrano informs him that he is wasting his time; nevertheless, he is determined. Roxana appears and speaks to Christian who makes a complete fool of himself being unable to find the right words to use when talking with Roxana. Roxana leaves on the verge of tears. Cyrano promises to coach Christian through his next meeting. Christian calls Roxana to her balcony and even though she doesn't want to see him is instantly charmed by his new words which Cyrano whispers into his ear. She isn't quite convinced since Christian still sounds a bit awkward. Cyrano briskly takes Christian's hat and places it on his own head and proceeds to speak with Roxana in Christian's voice. Roxana is more and more swept away by Cyrano's words of love. She wants him to come nearer, but he stays away finding it better being a "disembodied spirit." Roxana feels like she is reborn with this newfound love.

Christian gets carried away and asks to go up the balcony for a kiss. He climbs up and takes Roxana in his arms. Cyrano pretends he has been walking by and notices Roxana and Christian. Roxana comes down to see Cyrano. Just then a priest enters with a letter for Roxana from De Guiche. The letter tells Roxana that De Guiche will be along in a while to meet her. The priest is there so the two of them can get married and have at least one night of passion together before he goes off to battle.

Roxana, acting on an impulse, tells the priest that the letter in fact is an instruction from the Cardinal for him to marry Roxana and Christian. So that the priest will not question it any further, she also tells him that the abbey will receive one hundred and twenty pieces of gold for his services. Roxana hears De Guiche coming and rushes Christian and the priest in the house after begging Cyrano to keep him distracted. The wedding should only take four minutes.

A masked De Guiche enters and is kept distracted by a disguised Cyrano who rattles off a lengthy nonsense poem - acting like a madman. The two men eventually reveal themselves to each other as the wedding party emerges from the house. A duped De Guiche informs Christian, the groom, that his regiment is leaving for battle tonight. Roxana is most upset; however, there is nothing she can do but ask that Cyrano watch over her husband. He does promise to do all he can. The only thing he can assure her of is that he will make certain that Christian writes her every day.

Out on the battlefield, some time later, the cadets are bemoaning the fact that life in war is not all they thought it would be. The only one who seems excited by it all is Cyrano who is constantly out risking his life by mailing letters to Roxana from Christian. Everyone else is tired and hungry. Cyrano tries to reason with them - hard work is a way to redemption. They have no interest in hearing his words of wisdom - they just want to eat.

Christian enters informing that De Guiche is on his way. De Guiche arrives and asks the men to prepare to lay down their lives for their country. Apparently, they are going to be attacked by the Spanish in a quarter of an hour - his spy has told him so. They will be grossly outnumbered. Cyrano tells De Guiche that at last he has his revenge for De Guiche manipulated this attack. However, De Guiche on the other hand sees this as just a normal day's work for Cyrano who supposedly loves fighting when the odds are against him.

Christian then asks Cyrano to show him the next letter he plans to send Roxana. On the paper, Christian notices a little circle that Cyrano confesses is a tear. He says that he's is upset that he will never see Roxana again if the war continues the way it is. Christian takes the letter from him realising that this entire thing is getting out of hand.

A coach is heard approaching and pulls into the camp. It's Roxana. She has come to be with her husband and

is determined to stay no matter how horrible things get. The cadets scramble to make her comfortable, and she tells them that she would like some pastry and wine. However, where are they going to get them? All the delicacies are in her carriage, and her driver, Ragueneau, the baker has prepared them.

Cyrano pulls Christian aside and tells him not to be surprised if Roxana talks of their letters. It appears that in fact Cyrano did write her more often than he told Christian - actually twice a day. He risked his life by crossing enemy lines to make certain these letters got to her - even though they have been blockaded for the past month. When Christian does talk with Roxana, he asks her why she risked her life coming to see him? It's because she wants his forgiveness for loving him for his beauty alone. She now realises that love is more than just physical beauty. Based on his letters, she would love him even if he were ugly.

Christian sends her off to talk with his friends since she is the last woman's smile that they will probably see. He talks with Cyrano and tells him that Roxana not in love with him, but with his soul - and Cyrano is his soul. Christian begs Cyrano to tell Roxana everything and let her choose between the two of them. The battle begins and Christian goes off to fight as Cyrano talks with Roxana and learns the truth about her love. Yes, she would love Christian even if he were hideous. As the battle gets more intense, Roxana is escorted away before Cyrano can tell her the truth. Christian is injured and is carried back to die. As he dies, Cyrano tells him that Roxana loves him, Christian, and always has. Even though this really isn't the truth, for Cyrano it is the noble thing to do. Cyrano then goes to avenge Christian's death (and his own) just as De Guiche announces that the reinforcements have arrived.

The scene shifts to a convent where nuns are caring for Roxana. It is fourteen years since Christian's death, and Roxana is still pining away for him. De Guiche comes to see her and tries to pick up her spirits. It seems that Cyrano still visits Roxana weekly and acts as her gazette. Le Bret also comes to visit and tells Roxana that Cyrano is not well, he just continues to sit alone writing satires, which make him more enemies. De Guiche is determined to not let Cyrano be pitied. He believes that Cyrano has chosen his own destiny and is living life as he wants.

As Roxana escorts De Guiche out, Ragueneau enters and informs Le Bret that Cyrano has been terribly beaten and is barely alive. They go out by a back exit to find him. Roxana returns and makes certain that the nuns set a chair for her weekly visit with Cyrano. He arrives a few minutes late. It's strange because he has never been late before. Cyrano gives her the week's news. He seems weak and out of sorts; however, Cyrano tells her it is simply an old war injury. He does ask if he could read Christian's last letter. It seemed she promised him that one day he could. Full of passion, he reads the letter to her - even with out the aid of proper lighting. There she realises that Cyrano was her true love all the time - even though he says he wasn't.

Le Bret and Ragueneau return to find Cyrano barely alive. It appears that an angry peasant clobbered him. Roxana begs him to live because she loves him, and she cannot lose him again. However, he tells her it is too late. As the moon begins to glow, he sees God approaching him. People may have hurt him along the way and laughed at him, but they can never take his spirit and all he stood for away from him.

"One thing unstained -- by death, by doom unfingered. See it there -- a white plume Over the battle -- a diamond in the ash Of the ultimate combustion -- my panache."

CAST (in order of appearance)

- Candle Lighters
- Doorman
- Foodselle
- Marquis in Yellow
- Musketeer
- Cavalryman
- Pickpocket
- Citizen
- Citizen's Brother
- The Marquis in Red
- The Marquis in Beige
- Ragueneau, a baker and poet
- Christian de Neuville
- Madame Aubry
- Ladies of the French Academy (4)
- Urimedonte
- Le Bret, Captain of the Gascons
- Roxana
- Roxana's Duenna
- Count de Guiche, Guardian of Roxana
- Viscount de Valvert
- Actors
- Actresses
- Jodelet, a farceur
- Montfleury, a romantic tragedian
- Cyrano de Bergerac
- Lise, Ragueneau's wife
- Boys after Pies
- Bakery Staff
- Gascon Cadets and Soldiers
- Theophraste Renaudot
- Cyrano's Pages
- Capucine Monk
- Sister Marguerite
- Sister Marthe
- Sister Claire
- Nuns

SCENES AND SETTINGS:

The action takes place in Paris and environs in 1640, and in 1654.

Act 1

Scene 1: A theatre, Paris, 1640.

Scene 2: Ragueneau's bakery, Paris.

Act 2

Scene 1: The balcony of Roxana's house, Paris.

Scene 2: A battle camp near Arras.

Scene 3: A convent, Paris, 14 years later.

MUSICAL NUMBERS:

ACT 1

1. Cyrano's Nose (Nose Song) - Cyrano de Bergerac
2. La France, La France - Company
3. Tell Her - Le Bret, Cyrano de Bergerac
4. From Now Till Forever - Cyrano de Bergerac, Company
5. Bergerac - Cyrano de Bergerac, Roxana
6. Pocapedious - Cadets
7. No, Thank You - Cyrano de Bergerac
8. From Now Till Forever (reprise) - Cyrano de Bergerac, Christian de Neuville

ACT 2

9. Roxana - Christian de Neuville, Company
10. It's She and It's Me - Christian de Neuville
11. You Have Made Me Love - Roxana

12. Thither, Thother, Thide of the - Cyrano de Bergerac
13. Pocapedious (reprise) - Cadets
14. Paris Cuisine - Cyrano de Bergerac, Le Bret, Cadets
15. Love Is Not Love - Roxana
16. Autumn Carol - Roxana, Nuns
17. I Never Loved You - Cyrano de Bergerac

INSTRUMENTATION:

Orchestrations by Philip J Lang

Reed I (piccolo/flute/alto flute), Reed II (flute, clarinet, bass clarinet), Reed III (oboe/cor anglais), Reed IV (clarinet/bass clarinet/bassoon), 2 horns db. flugelhorns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, guitar, 2 keyboards, 3 percussion, harp, 4 violins, 2 violas, 2 cellos, double bass