

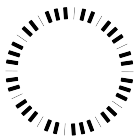
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CONCORD
THEATRICALS

CYRANO DE BERGERAC

by Edmond Rostand

freely adapted by Martin Crimp

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

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CYRANO DE BERGERAC in this adaptation was first performed at the Playhouse Theatre, London on 27 November 2019. Director Jamie Lloyd, Designer Soutra Gilmour, Sound and Composition by Ben and Max Ringham, Lighting Design by Jon Clark, Casting Director Stuart Burt, Fight Director Kate Waters, Production Stage Manager Vicky Eames, Costume and Set Design by Soutra Gilmour. The cast was as follows:

ROXANE	Anita-Joy Uwajeh
CYRANO	James McAvoy
LIGNIÈRE	Nima Taleghani
CHRISTIAN	Eben Figueiredo
MADAME RAGUENEAU	Michele Austin
LE BRET	Adam Best
DE GUICHE	Tom Edden
VALVERT	Nari Blair-Mangat
MONTFLEURY	Adrian Der Gregorian
THEATRE OWNER	Seun Shote
USHER	Chris Fung
ANNOYING PERSON	Kiruna Stamell
FENCING REFEREE	Philip Cairns
MARIE-LOUISE (STUDENT)	Kiruna Stamell
ARMANDE (STUDENT)/PRIEST	Sam Black
DENISE (STUDENT) / MEDIC	Carla Harrison-Hodge
ENSEMBLE	Vaneeka Dadhria, Mika Johnson, Brinsley Terence

PRODUCERS

Ambassador Theatre Group Productions, Gavin Kalin Productions, Glass Half Full Productions, and Wessex Grove in association with Rupert Gavon and Mallory Factor.

PRODUCTION COMPANY

The Jamie Lloyd Company

The production transferred to the Brooklyn Academy of Music on 5th April 2022, with the following new members of the company: Jon Furlong, Tazmyn-May Gebbett, Joseph Langdon, Sophie Merzell, and Evelyn Miller as Roxane.

CHARACTERS

ROXANE
CYRANO
LIGNIÈRE
CHRISTIAN
MADAME RAGUENEAU
LE BRET
DE GUICHE
ALASTAIR
VALVERT
MONTFLEURY
THEATRE OWNER
USHER
ANNOYING PERSON
FENCING REFEREE
AUDIENCE MEMBERS AND PEOPLE WHO SHOUT FROM THE AUDITORIUM
WOMAN SENT BY ROXANE
MARIE-LOUISE (STUDENT)
ARMANDE (STUDENT)
DENISE (STUDENT)
GROUP OF SOLDIERS
PRIEST

SETTING

Act One: A Theatre
Act Two: Madame Ragueneau's Café-Bar – Bookshop – Cake Shop
Act Three: Roxane's House
Act Four: A Firebase outside Arras
Act Five: Madame Ragueneau's Café-Bar – Bookshop – Cake Shop

AUTHOR'S NOTES

A slash (/) shows the point of interruption in overlapping dialogue.

A long dash (—) introduces lines to be attributed to audience members, soldiers etc., according to the forces available for a given production.

PRONUNCIATION

Cyrano (Si-ra-no) stressed on first and sometimes also last syllable.

Christian (Crist-yan) stressed on final syllable – rhymes with 'man' etc.

Lignière (Lee-nyere) stressed on final syllable – rhymes with 'where' etc.

Ragueneau (Rag-no) two equal stresses. Rhymes with 'go' etc.

De Guiche (d' geesh) rhymes with 'leash' etc.

ACT ONE

In The Theatre

(Onstage activity as the audience comes in. Perhaps stagehands are completing a rostrum or some other installation for Montfleury's play – or working on a lighting-rig which will later fly up.)

(While this happens, a number of characters drift on, watch and comment, some holding drinks. Later we will identify these as fans of the actor Montfleury – or enemies – critics – and general hangers-on.)

(House lights come down as LIGNIÈRE propels CHRISTIAN onto the stage.)

LIGNIÈRE. So this is our famous theatre –
CHRISTIAN. Amazing.
LIGNIÈRE. And at the moment as you can see we appear to
be playing the part
of people waiting for a play to start.
So in the meantime – meet Christian.
Christian's like your alpha-male-type ultra military man
but pretty cool, and will be joining our friend Cyrano's
elite cadets.
— Congratulations.
LIGNIÈRE. Plus he is new to Paris so let's
not be too cruel, please – I'd like us all to welcome him.
— Good-looking boy.
LIGNIÈRE. Hands off. Christian is exclusively into women.
— Too bad.
CHRISTIAN. One woman, actually.
— Even worse.
— Bit provincial.
— Got your tongue round the language?
— Speak much verse?
CHRISTIAN. Look, I might not come from Paris
but I work out and I'm pretty fit
and verse or no verse I'd like to point out right now
I don't take any shit.
— Bravo! The man's got attitude.
LIGNIÈRE. The man has indeed got attitude

cut him some slack give him some latitude
do not attack him with platitudinous crap
or he will fight back see what he'll do to us
this is a man you cannot embarrass
even a man this new to Paris
is a man you may not disparage
look at the man and the way he carries
himself he will not be abandoned in Paris.
The Parisian isn't superior
just everyone else is inferior
sure it's not bad as a theory: Ah –
just never mention Algeria.

CHRISTIAN. Wow.

LIGNIÈRE. You into words? Do much poetry?

CHRISTIAN. I'm not much of a confident speaker actually.

— Who's the "one woman", sweetheart?

CHRISTIAN. I'm not sure – I'm –

— Not sure?

LIGNIÈRE. Someone get me a glass of wine?

— How can you be not sure?

LIGNIÈRE Give him a break.

He's seen her but he doesn't know her name.

(*To CHRISTIAN.*) Okay – take
a good look round the auditorium
and point her out –

(*Wine served to CHRISTIAN and LIGNIÈRE.*)

– thank you – my moratorium
on alcohol is fortunately over – hey –
Christian – cin-cin!

(*They clink glasses and scan the auditorium.*)

Right – let's begin
with the back row... hmm – d'you see her? –
there's quite a few hot women, but we must still be a
bit early.

CHRISTIAN. Who're those weird guys?

LIGNIÈRE. That's the Académie Française –

they check out all the plays

and kind of sit

in judgement over grammar

– no foreign words – that kind of shit –
ignore them.

CHRISTIAN. That attractive girl up there...

LIGNIÈRE. Is actually a man How's it going, Alastair?
ALASTAIR I'm good thanks!
LIGNIÈRE. Straight – just likes to cross-dress.
CHRISTIAN. Cross what?
LIGNIÈRE. Quite an important artist – special guest.
CHRISTIAN. You mean he...?
LIGNIÈRE. Like a persona – kind of cool –
gender-fluidity? – man – woman – no fixed rule?
CHRISTIAN. Fluidity?
— Keep up, sweetheart – where've you BEEN?
LIGNIÈRE. He comes from a little village. Don't be too mean.
They haven't quite made it into the seventeenth century.
CHRISTIAN. Yea I'm medieval man, essentially.
— Try and remember: *gender-fluid*.
LIGNIÈRE. The boy's not stupid – he can do it.
CHRISTIAN. Oh god – is that a whole row of students?
LIGNIÈRE. Sure –
from the University –
what're you looking so frightened for?
CHRISTIAN. Just this intellectual thing is so scary –
I'm just a soldier – I mean what if SHE
turns out to be an intellectual too?
What is this deal with language?
I won't know what to do.
— Poor baby.
LIGNIÈRE. If you were a student you'd soon find out
they spend most of their free time
fucking each other's brains out –
Hey! Leila!
RAGUENEAU. Lignière!
LIGNIÈRE. Leila! Get your ass over here!
(MADAME RAGUENEAU has appeared. They hug.)
Leila – Christian. Christian – Leila.
RAGUENEAU. Good-looking boy.
LIGNIÈRE. Leila is my saviour
she has rescued me from failure
shown me the direction of Arcadia
given me her protection and I say to her
you have given me the writer's toolkit
and / delivered me from –
RAGUENEAU. (Smiles.) Ease up, Lignière –
cut out the saviour bullshit.
(To CHRISTIAN.) I simply teach.
I try to reach

– Christian – out into the community
and I encourage all kinds of spoken word –
theatre – poetry –
plus have an interest in literature and cookery.

LIGNIÈRE.

Genius in fact.

RAGUENEAU.

Please don't exaggerate –
this young man was my pupil – I simply facilitate –
and when it comes to a real talent like Lignière
beg him please to avoid politics and take care.
You meddle in that satirical political shit –
end up like Cyrano – then you pay for it.

CHRISTIAN.

Cyrano?

RAGUENEAU.

You haven't heard?
Cyrano is like all time crazy genius of the spoken word.
Where is he?

—

Not in the house.

RAGUENEAU.

Okay –

but Montfleury is acting in the play?

—

Sure.

RAGUENEAU.

And Cyrano has told him no no no
no Montfleury on stage. Personal veto.

—

That's right. For the whole season.

RAGUENEAU.

Then it's clear
to me Cyrano is going to appear.

CHRISTIAN.

So this... Cyrano –

LIGNIÈRE.

Le Bret! Le Bret!

Le Bret is his closest colleague.

LE BRET.

What?

LIGNIÈRE.

Tell him about Cyrano.

LE BRET.

Ha!

Madman. Soldier. Writer. Blunt. Bizarre.
Masterful swordsman. Courageous. Honest.
Wild and outspoken. Angry idealist.
What d'you reckon, Leila? – am I close?

RAGUENEAU.

Kind of. (*To CHRISTIAN.*) Mister le Bret
is leaving out the nose.

CHRISTIAN.

The what?

LIGNIÈRE.

Oh oh oh oh – don't even go there.

RAGUENEAU.

But his nose is what defines him, Lignière.
(*To CHRISTIAN.*) Young man, the enormity
of his nose is a deformity
which those who've never seen it
can hardly imagine. Don't laugh, please, I mean it.
They say when he came through his mother's vagina
the nose poked out first as a painful reminder

of all the agony to come. Poor girl nearly died of shock and needed to be anaesthetised. When you first see it you say to yourself NO! – that is a party-trick – take it off, Cyrano – you expect him to reach up and somehow unscrew it. But the damage is done: he can never undo it.

CHRISTIAN.
RAGUENEAU.

She's joking.
Don't believe what I said?
It's god's truth.

LIGNIÈRE.

Yea and refer to it and you're dead.

(A disturbance high up in the audience. Some of the men on stage look up.)

— She's quite something – look at that –
hot – but refined –
— Fancy your chances?
— Do you?
— Wouldn't mind.

CHRISTIAN.

(Follows their gaze.) Lignière. That's her.

LIGNIÈRE.

The lady?

CHRISTIAN.

Yes.

LIGNIÈRE.

Where?

CHRISTIAN.

At the back.

LIGNIÈRE.

Keep calm, man – don't stare.

(He takes a look.)

Okay... that is Madeleine – Madeleine Robin – icon of totally transcendent beauty – aka Roxane.

CHRISTIAN.

And?

LIGNIÈRE.

And she's a student – into poetry –

CHRISTIAN.

Shit.

LIGNIÈRE.

– super-bright girl – got into the University –

CHRISTIAN.

Fuck.

LIGNIÈRE.

– despite being a woman.

She's totally cool, man – plus she is Cyrano's cousin.

CHRISTIAN.

There's a man – who's that?

LIGNIÈRE.

Now that is de Guiche –

he's like a member of Cardinal Richelieu's

very own thought-police –

impressive soldier – married man –

to Richelieu's own niece –

and violent opponent of free-speech.

Class –

but check out that hand of his touching her ass.

(Restraining CHRISTIAN.) – hey, hey, hey –

Now de Guiche is forcing her to marry

the other guy –
 that one there –
 the name's Valvert –
 steady – steady – try not to stare –
 and the reason is his long-term plan
 is that once she's safely married he can
 make "conjugal visits". She hates him. But the fact
 is she's a woman – he's got the power
 and she's trapped.

I've written about this shit –
 anonymously, so I'm chilled –
 but if the fucker knew who wrote it he would
 have me killed.

So that's your lady.

CHRISTIAN.

(*Of DE GUICHE.*) Bastard.

LIGNIÈRE.

What can we do?

Keep out of it, my friend, or he will kill you too.

Christian! Christian!

CHRISTIAN.

What?

LIGNIÈRE.

She's giving you the eye.

She is a goddess! (*Pause.*) Sorry man – I –

CHRISTIAN.

Lignière?

LIGNIÈRE.

I'm out of here – that Guiche guy scares me –

I think

I need some air and get myself a drink.

CHRISTIAN.

Lignière – please –

(*But LIGNIÈRE goes, as LE BRET returns.*)

(*At the same time DE GUICHE leaves ROXANE and starts to make his way down to the stage with VALVERT.*)

RAGUENEAU. Well? Did you find him?

LE BRET. Been round the whole theatre – no – no sign of him.

RAGUENEAU. Cyrano's here. I'd take a bet on it.

— (*Shouts.*) We want the play – come on – get on with it!

RAGUENEAU. Mister de Guiche – an unexpected delight.

DE GUICHE. Madame Ragueneau – not baking in
 your charming little bookshop then tonight?

RAGUENEAU. Decided to come out and watch a play.

DE GUICHE. Well well – you don't say –
 if you could just move a little out of the way –
 come on Valvert – we'll sit on stage –
 apparently this so-called play was all the rage
 in London about forty years ago –
 what is the play called, Madame Ragueneau?

RAGUENEAU. Hamlet.
DE GUICHE. Hamlet. How very quaint. Some tragedy –
 and the whole thing translated into modern French
 and performed by the excellent Montfleury.
VALVERT. Talented man.
DE GUICHE. Yes and much less of a ham
 than they say.

(An USHER has appeared.)

USHER. Sir?
DE GUICHE. Well what the fuck is it?
USHER. Excuse me sir – can I see your ticket?
DE GUICHE. Ticket? Ticket? D’you know who I am?
 — *(Shouts.)* Come on! – start the play! –
 it should’ve begun!
DE GUICHE. I don’t buy tickets – I’m the theatre’s guest.
VALVERT. Outrageous.
 — *(Shouts.)* Start the play!
DE GUICHE. I actually invest
 in this theatre. D’you know who my uncle is?
 Richelieu. Who is here tonight. You’re taking the piss.
USHER. Just you do need a ticket.
 — *(Shouts.)* Start the play and stop talking!
VALVERT. *(Waving the USHER away.)* That’s it, my sweet –
 off you go – back to your little tip-up seat.

(As the USHER withdraws, the onstage audience settles, the lights change – and MONTFLEURY appears.)

(Silence.)

MONTFLEURY. Amlet
 by Guillaume Shakespeare
 in a nouvelle version
 by myself.

(Lights change again to tight focus on the actor’s face.)

(Silence.)

“Oh what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
 Is it not monstrous that this player here –”

(He produces, perhaps, a glove-puppet.)

“ – but in a fiction, in a dream of passion
 could force his soul so to his own conceit
 that like a piece of well-cooked tender turkey-meat

hot juices leak from these two apertures
that we call eyes? What's Ecuba to him
or he to Ophelia? Who is this mobled queen
that he should weep for her?

What would he do / had he – ?”

CYRANO. (*Unseen.*) I'd get off stage now if I were you.
— Be quiet.
— Shut up.
— Mobled queen?
— Mobled queen is good.
— Go for it, Montfleury!

(**MONTFLEURY** *recovers his composure and resumes.*)

MONTFLEURY. “What's Ecuba to him
or he to Ophelia? Who is this mobled queen
that he should weep for her? What would he do
had he my motive and my cue
for passion? To be or not to be – ”

CYRANO. (*Unseen.*) I said get off that stage now, Montfleury –

MONTFLEURY. “ – to be a puppet on the puppet-stage of history –
perchance to dream – what do I mean? –

I mean to dream of how
that nymph, the fair Ophelia – ”

CYRANO. I said stop now!

(**CYRANO** *invades the stage. Catcalls etc.*)

I have forbidden you to act here,
Montfleury. Now disappear.

MONTFLEURY. These gentlemen are my sponsors.

CYRANO. Oh?

MONTFLEURY. They've asked me for my Amlet and I refuse to go.

CYRANO. Uh-hu – these gentlemen – is that so?

— (*Chant.*) Montfleury! Montfleury! Montfleury!

(**CYRANO** *scrutinises MONTFLEURY's supporters. Pause.*)

CYRANO. Mobled queen.

— We like it.

— Mobled queen is good.

CYRANO. The play is over – it is over – is that understood?

LE BRET. Cyrano, please, you don't have the right / to –

CYRANO. The play is over and I would be very happy to fight to
make my point. Well?

— We may not understand it
but we like his acting and we want Amlet.

(A chant begins from MONTFLEURY's fans:)

— AM-LET! AM-LET! AM-LET! AM-LET!

(CYRANO draws his sword – this may be enough – or maybe he holds it to MONTFLEURY's throat.)

(The chanting dies down. Silence.)

CYRANO. This is a bad actor. He's wrecked
my evening and he's massacred the text.

(Catcalls.)

And if any one of you believes that “not to be”
the case you are welcome to defend him in a duel –
with me.

Any takers? No one? Come on. Don't be shy.
There must be one of you out there who wants to die.

(Pause.)

LE BRET. *(Sotto.)* Cyrano...

CYRANO. I'm counting to three
and on the third stroke you will vanish, Montfleury.

MONTFLEURY. Excuse me?

CYRANO. One.

— Bullshit.

— Vanish? How?

CYRANO. Two.

MONTFLEURY. You're so full of crap.

CYRANO. Oh am I now?

— Come on, Cyrano – do it!

— This I must see.

— He's bluffing.

— It's just Gascon bullshit.

CYRANO. Three.

(MONTFLEURY disappears.)

(Wild applause and catcalls from the crowd.)

(The theatre OWNER steps forward and shakes CYRANO's hand.)

OWNER. Good evening, Monsieur de Bergerac.
Congratulations. Your novelty act
adds lustre to my theatre. But Montfleury
is good box-office – well, as you can see –
and I'm just curious why you're so anti.

CYRANO. I dislike arrogance. “His” Hamlet –

credit to the writer damn it! –
 plus there could be nothing worse than
 his garbled dipshit incoherent version.

OWNER. Dislike arrogance. Hmm.

(... He savours the irony of this...)

You've no other reason
 for banning him from my theatre then
 for an entire season?

CYRANO. Arrogance is enough.

OWNER. Arrogance is enough. Indeed.

Arrogance can be destructive – agreed, agreed.
 But Montfleury, Monsieur de Bergerac,
 brings in the punters. You've stopped the show.
 Now I must pay them back.

CYRANO. Sure. Here's your money. Take it.

You'll find it more than meets
 the shortfall from your lost box-office receipts.

OWNER. Well – if what he says is right
 I ought to get him here to cancel every night.

(Laughter. The OWNER starts counting the money.)

LE BRET. *(Sotto.)* Cyrano – stop this – you're going to make it worse.

OWNER. *(Genuine shock.)* But this is far too much money.

CYRANO. Take it.

— That's quite some gesture.

— Must be several thousand.

(CYRANO shrugs. An annoying person butts in.)

ANNOYING PERSON. But the real question is: how will a

little man like you survive? Who will protect you?
 Montfleury's got high-up friends. He will expect them
 to exact revenge. Like Hamlet. You should check out
 the politics before you stick your neck out.

CYRANO. My neck?

ANNOYING PERSON. Yes.

(Pause.)

CYRANO. So why are you looking at my nose?

ANNOYING PERSON. I'm not.

CYRANO. Draws attention does it?

ANNOYING
PERSON.

No way.

CYRANO.

Too big? Is it grotesque? Just say.

ANNOYING
PERSON.

I'm not.

CYRANO.

Not looking?

ANNOYING
PERSON.

No.

CYRANO.

Why's that?

ANNOYING
PERSON.

Just not.

CYRANO.

Too long? Is it too thin? too fat?
Come on. Not looking?

ANNOYING
PERSON.

No!

CYRANO.

Then tell me why.

Is it obscene? Is it too shocking?

ANNOYING
PERSON.

I ...

CYRANO.

Yes?

ANNOYING
PERSON.

I'd say it's absolutely normal –

CYRANO.

Normal?

ANNOYING
PERSON.

Yes. If anything... quite small.

CYRANO.

Quite small? What? I take that as a personal
insult. Small?

ANNOYING
PERSON.

Yes.

But my nose is HUGE –
it's huge, my friend – this 'I'm not looking' subterfuge
is crass. My nose is out – it's out and proud –
it's out there – it's full-volume – loud –
it blasts the world – thrusts and attacks –
my nose is permanently – yes? yes? –
hear it? – set to max –
and at the same time is the sign
of probity – wit – magnificence – sure I'm
a little crazy, but this organ represents
courage – courtesy to others –

genuine independence –
things you will never have. You're full of shit:
you cannot grow my nose, nor can you diminish it.

DE GUICHE.

This is pathetic – what courtesy? –
the man's totally obsessed
by his own self-image.

VALVERT. Yes, we are not impressed.
 CYRANO. Oh?
 DE GUICHE. Give him both barrels, Valvert.
 CYRANO. (*On the alert.*) Valvert?
 DE GUICHE. Valvert's a great wit. Come on, man – don't spare
 the pompous bastard – he sees he's
 gone too far – tear him to pieces.

(*VALVERT – who's not too keen on the job he's been given – nevertheless steps up to CYRANO, and appraises him, before speaking.*)

VALVERT. You claim that your nose – sir –
 puts us on the wrong side
 But I say your nose – sir –
 is a bit on the long side.

(*Sparse applause from DE GUICHE's team.*)

(*Pause.*)

CYRANO. Is that it?
 DE GUICHE. Both barrels, Valvert.
 VALVERT. That was both barrels.
 CYRANO. Yes, be fair
 to the poor man. He has tried –
 but his intelligence is limited and his wit,
 as we can all see, somewhat circumscribed.
 But look he's just a poor little rich boy arsehole
 brought up in mummy and daddy's family castle –
 VALVERT. Excuse me?
 CYRANO. – where only the housekeeper and cooks
 took any interest in things like books.
 Yes, you'd think it would be easy to insult me
 given the nature of my deformity
 but it takes some literary imagination, actually –
 no no don't run away –
 stay here, Valvert, stay a while –
 while I take you through some possible variants
 of the insult style.
 Blunt, for example – blunt goes
 “Why not take a chopper and chop off your nose” –
 then there's tactful: tactful's more like “Oh yes – I see –
 but doesn't it interfere with one's ability
 to drink one's tea?”
 Or if style points you in a sexual direction
 you might like to refer, Valvert, to my nasal erection
 or if that's too tasteless how about carrot? –

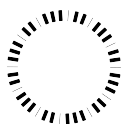
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