

# *Cyrano*

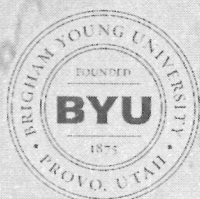
Young Company  
Theatre for Young Audiences

BY Jo Roets

ADAPTED FROM Edmond Rostand

February 20—  
March 2, 2002

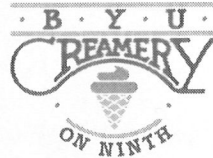
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DIRECTOR David Morgan  
COMPOSER Kathy Newton

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## TRUE BEAUTY

David Morgan, Director

A familiar adage claims that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. So beauty, often described as a virtue, is extremely subjective. A matter of taste. Opinion.

One of the intriguing aspects of *Cyrano* is his obsession with what he perceives as his own ugliness, though he illuminates the true beauty of his soul through his writing.

In this production we emphasize the possibility that *Cyrano* is more attractive than he believes himself to be. *Cyrano* is per-

ceived as ugly because his attitude impresses that belief on those around him. Here we do not portray *Cyrano* as ugly—the only evidence of that possibility is hinted at by *Cyrano* himself.

Beauty is indeed subjective—it is a treasure for all of us to discover and admire. *Cyrano*'s flaw is ultimately blindness. May this production help us all overcome our blindness and recognize the true beauty in those around us.

## EDMOND ROSTAND

Edmond Rostand was born on April 1, 1868, in Marseilles, France, on a street called Rue Montaux. Today the street is known as Rue Edmond-Rostand. As a young boy Rostand built a puppet theatre in his home and designed sets and costumes for his puppet productions. In his secondary school, the Marseilles Lycée, Rostand was an excellent student, especially in his studies of literature, and was honored with the title of "school poet." He began publishing his poems in a small Marseilles magazine called *Mireille*. After his secondary education, Rostand was convinced by his father to attend law school, so that he would have a practical career. He continued writing poetry and essays during his law studies, because writing was his passion, and he even won a literary competition conducted by the Marseilles Academy.

In 1890 Rostand married Rosemonde Gérard and published *Les*

*Musardises*, a collection of poetry that was not received well by the public. Although Rostand had moderate success with the plays he wrote, his crowning glory was *Cyrano de Bergerac* in 1897.

Rostand was inspired to write *Cyrano de Bergerac* one summer while visiting the French resort town of Luchon. He met a young man there named Amédée, who was broken-hearted about losing the woman he loved. For several days Rostand spoke with Amédée, teaching him how to be a romantic suitor: scholarly, intelligent, and poetic. Sometime later Rostand met the young woman whom Amédée loved and she joyously told Rostand how marvelous Amédée had become.

Rostand was extremely pleased because he knew that Amédée wasn't really so marvelous; he was just reflecting the ideals Rostand had taught him. The idea for *Cyrano de Bergerac* was born.



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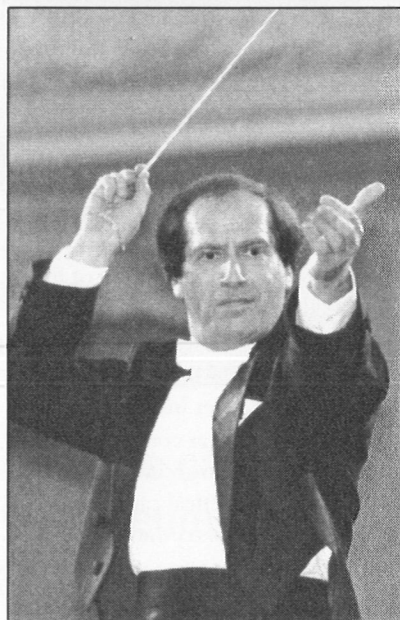
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## SAVINIEN CYRANO DE BERGERAC

Savinien Cyrano de Bergerac, the model for Rostand's romantic hero, was a real man with a large nose who was born on March 6, 1619, in Paris, France. Cyrano lived during the age of musketeers, but was not a musketeer himself, although he enjoyed dueling with swords and with words. As a young man Cyrano enlisted as a cadet with the Noble Guards of Captain Carbon de Casteljaloux. In 1640, after being wounded in the battle at Mouzon, Cyrano joined the regiment of the Counts, and participated in the siege of Arras, just as in Rostand's play. The Count of Canvoye, who was in Cyrano's regiment, asked Cyrano to help him write letters to his new wife, who wrote three

times a day. The Count was not a gifted writer, and so Cyrano wrote love poems for the Count to send to his wife, just as Rostand's Cyrano writes love letters for Christian to send to Roxane.

After being wounded again, Cyrano returned to civilian life, where he lived in the intellectual circles of Paris, and wrote plays, letters, maxims, and even scientific studies. The public turned against Cyrano when they thought that one of the lines in his tragedy *La Mort d'Agrippine* was sacrilegious. Not long after, and perhaps not accidentally, a beam fell from a roof and hit Cyrano on the head, eventually causing his death.

## ROSTAND'S CYRANO DE BERGERAC

Rostand was intrigued and inspired by the life of Savinien Cyrano de Bergerac. Rostand's character has many of the same experiences as the real Cyrano, but he is more importantly the embodiment of idealism. He hides his self-consciousness behind elegant, bold poetry and belligerent dueling. He longs to prove himself admirable in everything he does and wants the whole world to be beautiful, romantic, honorable, and loyal.

Cyrano defends his honor by dueling and protects Christian's honor by helping him to appear brilliant to Roxane, the woman he loves. Cyrano also loves Roxane but from afar, because she symbolizes the tragic fate of unrequited love.

Realizing Roxane's love for Christian, Cyrano embarks on a noble plan to unite the lovers. This love of romantic idealism is Cyrano's *panache*.

No one thought the first production of *Cyrano de Bergerac* would be successful. Rostand had to use his own money to pay for the costumes. The famous actor Constant Coquelin who played Cyrano was certain that the play would fail.

On December 28, 1897, *Cyrano de Bergerac* was performed for the first time. An hour after the final curtain the audience was still applauding. Instead of being a dismal failure, *Cyrano de Bergerac* became one of the most celebrated plays ever to come out of France.

## ROETS'S CYRANO

Roets adapted Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*, a five-act play with many characters, into *Cyrano*, a one-act play with several characters portrayed by only three actors. The simplification of the complex story of Cyrano de Bergerac allows young audiences to focus on the three main characters, and the love triangle in which they find themselves. The actors who

portray Roxane and Christian also take on a number of smaller roles and participate in the narration of the story. The actor who plays Cyrano has only that role.

Audiences watching *Cyrano* are required to use their imaginations for many of the play's effects, creating a truly interactive and involved theatrical experience.



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## 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY FRANCE

In the time of Cyrano de Bergerac, the king of France was Louis XIV. Louis XIV was fearful that members of the French aristocracy would plot to take over his throne, and so he decided to control the nobility by bringing them to live with him at his court. Louis's palace at Versailles became a symbol of glory and elegance. The nobles who lived near the palace were required to follow strict rules of etiquette. For example, if a lady was invited to Versailles, she was expected to arrive in full court dress at six in the evening and stay until eight the next morning. During that time she would attend a comedy, dance at a ball, eat two suppers, and play at cards. She was not allowed to sleep at all, and if she sat down at the card game, she would never be invited back.

The nobles had to maintain extensive, elegant wardrobes, and have plenty of money to spend on their luxurious lives at court. Nobles would compete for the chance to help the king dress in the morning, or prepare for bed at night. Louis never bathed. Instead, he dabbed his face with cotton soaked in scented alcohol and dipped his fingers in a bowl. He was also covered with scented powder several times a day. Washing in water was thought to be dangerous to one's health. Because the nobles spent so much time waiting on the king, they didn't have any chance to plot against him. Louis XIV set the standard for elegant fashion and absolute monarchy that was copied all over Europe.

## JO ROETS

Jo Roets was trained at the Toneelacademie of Maastricht in Belgium. Since 1989 he has been professionally involved as an actor, director, and scenarist in theatre for young audiences. He has been nominated many times for Belgian theatrical awards, including the Signaal Prize and the Hans Snoek Prize.

Roets is one of two artistic directors for the Blauw Vier (Blue Four), a unique and imaginative children's theatre in Antwerp, Belgium.

Belgium, Roets's homeland, is a small country that is bordered by Germany, the Netherlands, and France. Throughout history, many battles have been fought in Belgium because the surrounding countries were always struggling for more power. Napoleon, the

famous French military general, was finally defeated in Belgium at the battle of Waterloo.

Because so many battles have been fought in Belgium and all over Europe, much European art and literature involves war. For example, *Cyrano de Bergerac* takes place in France during the Thirty Years War, when France is fighting Spain.

Two of the main characters, Cyrano and Christian, are soldiers fighting for France. Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* inspired Roets, and he adapted and condensed the play into his *Cyrano*, a simpler, shorter production, which allows young audiences to come to know and love the legend of the romantic hero Cyrano.

Dramaturgical Information Compiled by Jamie Bart

Amia, A.Ja. Edmond Rostand. Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1978.

Arden Theatre Company. 2000-2001 Season. 11 Apr. 2001. Seattle Children's Theatre. 9 Jan. 2002. [www.arden-theatre.org](http://www.arden-theatre.org)

Globalstage. Go Badstage: Cyrano. Globalstage: The Magic of Theatre, the Beauty of Rewind. 5 Jan. 2002. Globalstage Productions. 9 Jan. 2002. [www.globalstage.net](http://www.globalstage.net)

Kipar, Nida. L'Âge d'Or of Kirk's Lambs. 27 Sept. 2001. Baroque Living History Society. 3 Jan. 2002. [www.kipar.org](http://www.kipar.org)

Siblings, Alb. Blauw Vier. 5 Jan. 2002. Blauw Vier Theatre. 10 Jan. 2002. [www.blauwiertheatre.nl](http://www.blauwiertheatre.nl)

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## MEET THE COMPANY

PETER BIGGS (Christian/de Guiche/le Bret/etc.), Ipswich, England, is pursuing an MA in theatre. Recent credits include Shakespeare in *March Tale*, Anthony in *Lady in Waiting*, Charlie in the short film *Gwen Parker & Associates*, and the notary in *The School for Wives*.

JAMIE E. BURT (dramaturg), Salt Lake City, Utah, is a graduate student in theatre for young audiences. Professionally she has worked for CBS Radio and the Fox Kids Network. She is interested in child actor advocacy and plans to return to Los Angeles to work with young actors.

ERIN MAE CHAMBERS (Roxane), Lake Oswego, Oregon, is an acting major. Recent credits include Irina in *The Three Sisters*, Dina in *The Philadelphia Story*, Helen Keller in *The Miracle Worker*, Mary in *The Children's Hour*, and Killaine in *The Clearing*.

MICHELLE RUPP GIBBS (co-costume designer), La Crecenta, California, will graduate in April in theatre studies. She was stage manager for *Rashomon* and *Hancock County* and designed makeup for *The Three Sisters* and *The Magic Flute*.

BENJAMIN HESS (asst. stage manager/dresser), Orlando, Florida, is a linguistics major. Recent credits include Henry VIII in *Lady in Waiting*, Prospero in the Black Swan Company's *The Tempest*, and Robert Preston in *The Clearing*.

CAMERON HOPKIN (Cyrano), Orem, Utah, is majoring in acting. Recent credits include Sandy in *The Philadelphia Story*, Coatan in Tuacahn's production of *Utah!*, and *Touched by an Angel*.

ANDREA KYRIOPOULOS (co-costume designer), Mt. Sterling, Utah, is majoring in costume, hair, and makeup design. She designed hair and makeup for *The School for Scandal*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *An Ideal Husband*, and *She Loves Me*. She designed costumes for *The Clearing* and ARTE's *Twelfth Night*.

MELISSA LEILANI LARSON (stage manager), Provo, Utah, is an MA student in theatre. Her award-winning play *Lady in Waiting* was produced by BYU-Provo last year and will be produced by BYU-Hawaii in June. She has written, directed, and produced several short films. She'll stage manage *Great Expectations*.

CORY LORENZEN (scenic designer), Los Angeles, California, is majoring in scenic design. He was a model maker for Walt Disney Imagineering and Universal Studios Hollywood, designing theme park rides, including Jurassic Park: the Ride, The Grinch, and Tomorrowland Disneyland.

NATHAN E. MITCHELL (Cyrano), Springfield, Oregon, is majoring in acting. Credits include *Richard III*, *The Clearing*, *I Never Sang for My Father*, and *The Diviners*.

DAVID MORGAN (director) is an associate professor of theatre. His directing credits include *Into the Woods*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *A Man for All Seasons*, and *Richard III*.

KATHY NEWTON (composer), an accomplished pianist with an MM from BYU, has taught music theory at BYU, UVSC, and SLCC. She composed music for *Elijah's Heart*, *A Taste of Sunrise*, *Woman in the Wind*, and Weber State University's children's abuse prevention cd "Stop and Go." Her hymn "I've Set My Path to Serve Thee" received second place in a LDS church-wide competition.

ALISHA PADDOCK (assistant director/dresser), Fullerton, California, is a directing major. She directed *Assassins* and *I Am Jane* and has acted in *The Trial of God*, *The Glass Menagerie*, and *Les Misérables*. She also helped design *Sweeney Todd* and *Electra* and was the stage manager for *Sy's Girl*.

DIANE LYNN RANE (Roxane) from Encinitas, California, has a double major in psychology and theatre studies. Credits include roles in *The Tempest*, *Hamlet*, and *The Diary of Adam and Eve*.

BENJAMIN AARON SANSOM (Christian/de Guiche/le Bret/etc.), Hilbert, Wisconsin, is majoring in theatre education. Recent roles include Enrique in *The School for Wives*, Sir Charles Sturman in *The Clearing*, and Lord Mayor of London in *Richard III*.

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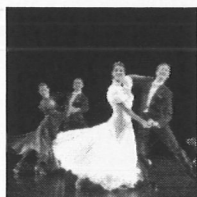
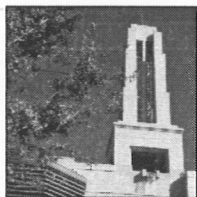
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Composer/Conductor.....Kathy Newton  
Dialect Coach.....Shelley T. Graham  
Dramaturg.....Jamie Burt  
Scenic Designer.....Cory Lorenzen  
Costume Designer.....Andrea Kyriopolous, Michelle Gibbs  
Lighting Designer.....Jeremy Selim  
Makeup & Hair Design.....Andrea Kyriopolous, Michelle Gibbs  
Assistant to the Director.....Alisha Paddock  
Production Stage Manager.....Melissa Leilani Larson

## PRODUCING STAFF

Artistic Director.....Bob Nelson  
Division of Arts Production Director.....Jon Holloman  
Young Company Liaison.....Amy Jensen  
Production Manager.....Russell D. Richins  
Stage Management Advisor.....Loraine Edwards  
Facility Stage Manager.....Jeremy Selim  
Costume Shop Manager.....Deanne DeWitt  
Costume Supervisor.....Carolyn Smith  
Wardrobe Maintenance.....Brent Sjodin, Ann Poulson  
Cutter/Draper.....Carolyn Smith  
1st Hand.....Jen Jenkins  
Stitchers.....Kori Cramer, Andrea Kyriopolous,  
Michelle Gibbs, Jen Jenkins  
Resident Technical Director.....Doug Ellis  
Special Projects Coordinator.....Frank G. Weight  
Scenic Artist.....Kathleen Bently,  
Richard Gordon-Smith  
Scenic Studio Crew.....Drew Soderborg, Gentry Thompson,  
Aaron DeJesus, Ron Lindsay, Cameron Hopkin,  
Steve Kjar, Brian Furuya, Jaelan Petrie, J.D. Sutton,  
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Properties Advisor.....Loraine Edwards  
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Specialty Props Craftsman.....Jason Yancey  
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