TRINITY REP

presents

Cyrano de Bergerac

By Edmond Rostand

Directed by Amanda Dehnert

PROJECT DISCOVERY STUDY GUIDE

TRINITY REPERTORY COMPANY
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THEATER AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE AND DISCUSSION

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY AND GO OVER WITH YOUR CLASSES BEFORE THE SHOW

TEACHERS:
Speaking to your students about theater etiquette is ESSENTIAL. Students should be aware that this is a LIVE performance and that they should not talk during the show. **If you do nothing else to prepare your students to see the play, please take some time to talk to them about theater etiquette** in an effort to help the students better appreciate their experience. It will enhance their enjoyment of the show and allow other audience members to enjoy the experience. The questions below can help guide the discussions. Thank you for your help and enjoy the show!!

ETIQUETTE:
- What is the **role of the audience in a live performance**? What is its role in a film? Why can't you chew gum or eat popcorn at a live theater performance? Why can't you talk? What can happen in live theater that cannot happen in cinema?
- **Reiterate that students may not chew gum, eat, or talk during the performance. If there is a disturbance, they will be asked to leave and the class will not be invited back to the theater. Students may not leave the theater during intermission.**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS BEFORE SEEING THE SHOW AT TRINITY REP:
- What are the **differences between the cinema and live theatre**? (Two dimensional vs. three dimensional; larger than life on the screen vs. life-size; live vs. recorded, etc.) Discuss the nature of film as mass-produced, versus the one-time only nature of live performances. Talk about original art works versus posters. Which do they feel is more valuable? Why?
- **Observation #1** – When you get into the theater, look around. What do you see? Observe the lighting instruments around the room and on the ceiling. Look at the set. Does it look realistic or abstract? Try to guess how the set will be used during the show.
- **Observation #2** -- Discuss the elements that go into producing a live performance: the lights, set, props, costumes, and stage direction. All the people involved in the "behind the scenes" elements of the theater are working backstage as the play unfolds before the students' eyes. Tell them to be aware of this as they watch the show. Observe the lighting cues. How do special effects work? How do the actors change costumes so fast?
- **Actors in a live performance are very attuned to the audience and are interested in the students' reactions to the play.** Ask the students to write letters to the actors about the characters they played and to ask questions of the actors. **Send these letters to:** Trinity Repertory Company, c/o Tyler Dobrowsky, 201 Washington St., Providence, RI 02903 **or email to:** education@trinityrep.com.

*** Please remember to bring bag lunches to the longer plays! ***

USING THIS STUDY GUIDE IN YOUR CLASSROOM

A Letter from Acting Education Director Tyler Dobrowsky

Welcome to Trinity Repertory and the 39th season of Project Discovery! The Education Staff at Trinity had a lot of fun preparing this study guide, and hope that the activities included will help you to incorporate the play into your academic studies. It is also structured to help you to introduce performance into your classroom through a process developed in partnership with the Brown University Arts and Literacy Project, and with teacher Deanna Camputaro of Central Falls High School.

The elements of the process include:

- Community Building in Your Classroom (Applied Learning New Standards: A1; A2; A5)
- Inspiration and Background on the Artist (English Language Arts New Standards: E1; E2; E3; E5; E6; Applied Learning New Standards: A2; A3; A5)
- Entering and Comprehending Text (English Language Arts Standards: E1; E2; E3; E5)
- Creating Text for Performance (English Language Arts Standards: E1; E2; E3; E5)
- Performing in Your Class (Applied Learning Standards: A1; A2; A3; A4; A5)
- Reflecting on Your Performance (E2; E3; A1; A2; A5)

We've also included a unit on design, as well as character descriptions and a plot synopsis. Please refer, as well, to the Audience Etiquette section on page 3, particularly for students who have never attended a live theater performance. **If you do no other preparatory work with your students, we strongly encourage you to spend some time talking to your students about appropriate behavior in the theater.**

We hope that this guide will be a useful classroom tool for you and your students. We are extremely interested in your feedback about the plays and study guides, as well as any ideas that you may have that can help us to better serve the teachers and students who come to Trinity. We hope that you will feel free to call us anytime at (401) 521-1100, ext. 255, or e-mail us at education@trinityrep.com. For further information on upcoming productions and other Educational Programs please visit our website at www.trinityrep.com.

Enjoy the show!

Tyler Dobrowsky
Artistic Associate of Education

Unit One: Resource Pages

An Introduction to *Cyrano de Bergerac*

In this epic tale of love and loss, Cyrano de Bergerac is a hero, a poet and a friend – but considers himself terrifically ugly, thanks to his gargantuan nose. Unable to confess his love to his heart's desire, the lovely and beautiful Roxane, Cyrano teaches his handsome (but dim-witted) rival, Christian, to woo in his place. One of the greatest stories of unrequited love of all time, Cyrano de Bergerac features sword-play and word-play, adventure and romance.

The Characters

Cyrano de Bergerac: A poet and swordsman; cursed with a ridiculously long nose that keeps him from revealing his love for his cousin, Roxane.

Roxane: Cyrano's cousin, a beautiful and intelligent woman who has a strong love for poetry and wit.

Baron Christian de Neuvillette: A handsome but simple young nobleman who lacks wit and intelligence.

Comte de Guiche: A powerful, married nobleman in love with Roxane and not fond of Cyrano. Deceitful and always angry, he wants Cyrano killed.

Ragueneau: Cyrano's friend, a pastry chef with a deep love for poetry, he gives away his pastries in return for poems.

Le Bret: Cyrano's friend and closest confidant, as well as a fellow soldier and guardsman. Le Bret worries that Cyrano's principles will ruin his career, and possibly get him killed.

Ligniere: Christian's friend, a satirist and drunkard with many powerful enemies.

The Duenna: Roxane's companion and chaperone, who tries to keep Roxane out of trouble.

Vicomte de Valvert: An insolent young nobleman lauded by de Guiche as a possible husband for Roxane, a scheme that would give de Guiche access to Roxane.

Montfleury: A fat, untalented actor whom Cyrano bans from the stage.

Carbon de Castel-Jaloux: Cyrano's friend and the captain of his company. He is a strong-willed and successful leader.

Lise: Ragueneau's sharp-tongued wife. She does not approve of her husband's patronage of the local poets. An altogether unhappy woman, she leaves Ragueneau for a musketeer after Act II.

Capuchin: A modest and well-meaning monk.

Cardinal Richelieu : Not a character, but a historical figure referenced in the play as de Guiche's uncle. Perhaps the most powerful man in France, he is a skilled political manipulator whose authority rivals and probably exceeds that of the king.
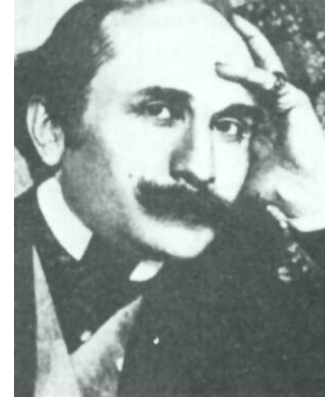
The Playwright: Edmond Rostand

Edmond Eugène Alexis Rostand was born April 1, 1868 in Marseille, France, and died of pneumonia on December 2, 1918. A poet and dramatist, perhaps best known for his play *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1897), Rostand's writings are filled with wit, adventure and romance, and provided a pleasant contrast to the naturalist dramas which were in vogue at the time. Born into a wealthy family -- his father was an economist and poet who belonged to the Marseille Academy and the Institute de France -- Rostand studied literature, history, and philosophy at the Collège Stanislas in Paris. Despite receiving his degree in law, Rostand quit his studies upon the publication of his first collection of poems, *Les Musardises,* which he gave to his future wife, Rosemonde Gérard.

Selected works:
- *Le Gant Rouge*, 1888 – The Red Glove
- *Les Musardises*, 1890 – The Idlers
- *Les Romanesque,* 1894 – The Romantics
- *La Princess Lointaine,* 1895 – The Faraway Princess
- *La Samartaine*, 1897 – The Woman of Samaria
- *Cyrano de Bergerac,* 1897
- *L'Aiglon,* 1900 – The Eaglet
- *Chantecler*, 1910
- *La dernière nuit de Don Juan,* 1921 – The Last Night of Don Juan
- *Le Cantique de L'aile,* 1922
- *Le Vol de La Marseillaise.* 1922

His first real success came in 1894, when his play *Les Romanesques* (or *The Romantics)* was produced for Comédie Française. Based on *Romeo and Juliet,* the light, comic story follows two lovers who believe they are being kept apart by their warring families. The play was a hit with French audiences, and would later become the inspiration for the musical *The Fantasticks.* The following year, the famous French actress Sarah Bernhardt would play the lead character in Rostand's *The Faraway Princess,* and also starred in his 1897 production of *The Woman of Samaria*. *Cyrano de Bergerac,* Rostand's greatest success, was performed in 1897. The play was written at the behest of the great French actor Benoît-Constant Coquelin (often referred to as Coquelin the Elder), who demanded a play with a role suited to his impressive acting ability.

In 1901, Rostand became the youngest member ever to be elected to join the Academie Française, one of five intellectual societies of the Institut de Française that focused on matters pertaining to the French language. After his play *Chantecler* was produced in 1910, Rostand retired to a chateau built at Cambo in the Pyrenees where he would later die of pneumonia in 1918.

An Obituary of the Poet by Willis Steell

This obituary was originally published in Theatre Magazine, Vol. 29, No. 1. Willis Steell. New York: Theatre Magazine Company, 1919. p. 12.

When Edmond Rostand, the distinguished dramatic poet who died of pneumonia on December 2nd (1918), quitted Paris after his first world-renowned success, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, he gave out not the true reason for his exile to a magnificent estate in the Pyrenees, conditions of his health, but said explicitly that he was leaving the Capital of Art in order to get out of the reach of important interviewers, lionizers, *et al.*

In other words he took a leaf from the book of the English Tennyson and intended to cultivate his talents in seclusion. There is all the difference of nationality, however, in the way the Englishman carried out his scheme of a cloistered life and the way the Frenchman did. At Cambo, if one ever got so far, there was always a welcome from Rostand who seemed, indeed, to be glad of an excuse to break his literary rule and become a delightful host. Americans who traveled thither were never turned away and often when they went to see Rostand as a mere passing traveler they ended by the poet's warm invitation by becoming for as long as they could stay the poet's guests.

Eccentric as the great French poet must have been, for everybody in Paris thus describes him, his eccentricity was purely Gallic. He wearied of his own society quickly and like a later Montaigne he went up to his ivory tower not to compose anything but himself -- in slumber. A real French hermit is an inconceivable human and Rostand was not a hermit in any foreign sense.
He loved the sound of cities and only delicate health took him out of it. Because of his predilection for crowds, his *dramatis personae* became the longest in modern times. The very *basse cour* had to be a thickly settled domain to attract him. Thus he filled a scene with cock and hen, pheasant and all the denizens of the farm yard when he set about the play which in the opinion of his countrymen gives him the surest claim to immortality: *Chanticler*.

The poet began his *magnum opus* shortly after he had arrived at Cambo and made the acquaintance of his feathered friends. But he was seven years writing it and re-writing it and long before it reached a public, many of the circumstances attending its composition and production had won for him the reputation which he did not justly merit, that of an unreasonable eccentric. By its unwritten history, if by nothing else, the piece won him fame and money. The very rumor of it blew for the author a glorious bubble of reputation.

Younger than Balzac when he died, Rostand in his life and habit of work seemed the antithesis of the famous novelist. Work killed the one and rest the other, unless the seeds of disease were in the poet as he always said and probably believed. Born in Marseilles, he displayed little of the meridional Frenchman in his career but indeed his career is without precedent in the literature of France. Almost from the beginning his talents were recognized and at twenty-nine when he produced *Cyrano de Bergerac* his fortune was made.

That play came as a reaction. Pieces in verse are not uncommon in France where they are accorded a respectful hearing but no reward, and the dramatists when Rostand began as an author were frankly matter of fact and mercenary. Who would have dreamed that a five act drama in verse with a hero whom only *littérateurs* remembered, composed by a writer literally unknown (except to a

circle of high brows and Sarah Bernhardt) would shove him at the age of twenty-nine into the close circle of the Immortals? But *Cyrano de Bergerac* is more than a poetic arrangement of a drama. It is drama understandable and to be understood at once by the public. He had not written one or two failures, including *La Samaritaine*, without learning the playwright's trade. He had learned it thoroughly and meant to avoid by immense technique the pitfall of the study drama. *Cyrano* is delightful reading but it is meant for the stage.

Only a few years had passed since his first essay had failed at the Cluny. It must have been a complete failure for no enterprising manager in the encouragement of later triumphs has dared to put on *Le Gant Rouge* with a hope to score by these. Only a few years, as lives go, even in high literature, passed before the success of *L'Aiglon* dotted the "I" and crossed the "T" of *Cyrano*. Then came a long rest, a quiet study of barn yard life which produced *Chanticler*. The victory of the much-heralded piece surprised even Rostand idolaters; the French pronounce it the high mark of their intellectual history. It has never had an adequate representation in an English version although several excellent translations exist. Whether or not with an English speaking company comparable to that which Rostand himself demanded for his play in France, it would win from us the same applause as at home may be doubted. For *Chanticler* is a sort of French idiom, not to be easily acquired by other races.

Will the Real Cyrano Please Stand Up?

Savinien Cyrano de Bergerac (March 6, 1619 – July 28, 1655) was a French dramatist born in Paris, who is now best remembered for the many works of fiction which have been woven around his life story. Cyrano was born into an old Parisian family and spent much of his childhood in Saint-Forget (now Yvelines). He went to school in Paris and spent his adult life there when he was not on campaign. He was not, therefore, a Gascon, but many of his fellow-soldiers would have been. The myth of his Gascon origins may even have been cultivated by him during his lifetime, since the swash-buckling manners of the Gascon soldiers were much admired in his day.

Cyrano de Bergerac was not a hugely talented writer, but the Rostand line about his works being stolen by Molière probably have some basis in fact. His most prominent work is now published under the title 'Otherworlds' and is a collection of stories describing his fictional journeys to the Moon and Sun. The methods of space travel he describes are inventive and often ingenious, detailing ideas often broadly original and sometimes rooted in science. Cyrano rests alongside such minds as Kepler and Jules Verne under the genre of 'scientific travel fiction. In his time, de Bergerac was a popular poet; however, his abilities were much exaggerated by Rostand in his dramatic work. Cyrano was an expert in the art of dueling, but whether from a touchy disposition or because of the many gibes to which he was subject on account of his appearance is uncertain. The real Cyrano did not have an exceptionally big nose, but that has become the prominent feature in all fictional versions of his life.
No Roxane has been discovered in his life, but he did fight at the Battle of Arras, where the historical Baron of Neuvillette, who was in fact married to Cyrano's cousin, died.

Cyrano was a free thinker who insisted on a use of reason that was not common until the following century, and he would have been very much at home in the Enlightenment. This, of course, did not fit well in a period in which the Church and the State were supreme, and when even the laws of art were the rules of Aristotle.

He died in Sannois at the age of 36 after a plank of wood accidentally fell upon his head.

A Brief History of *Cyrano:* Past Productions, Adaptations and Steve Martin

Cyrano was first published in France by Charpentier et Fasquelle in 1898, and first translated into English by Howard Thayer Kingsbury for Lamson, Wolfe, and Co. the same year. The play was also immediately taken by composer Victor Herbert and turned into a comic opera. Since its publication many musicians and directors have attempted to transform this lyrical piece into a musical: Walter Damrosch at the Metropolitan in 1913, the Shuberts in 1932, and recently in 1993 Koen and Ad Van Dijk's *Cyrano* at the Neil Simon Theater on Broadway. The most well received musical adaptation seems to be Anthony Burgess' adaptation (with music by Michael J. Lewis) which played at the Guthrie Theater in 1973 to rave reviews, but failed to transfer successfully to the Broadway stage.

In 1950, it was brought to movie screens in the United States by United Artists Studio, with Jose Ferrer starring in the title role, and winning an Academy Award for Best Actor. In 1990, a French version was directed by Jean-Paul Rappmeau and starring Gerard Depardieu who was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actor. The NY Times stated, "Mr. Depardieu's must be the definitive Cyrano, the Cyrano that will make all other actors hesitate before they take on the role."

A modern interpretation of *Cyrano de Bergerac, Roxane*, was produced by Columbia Pictures in 1987. This film, loosely based on Rostand's play, was written by and starred comedian Steve Martin as a modern Cyrano. The success of this film was due in part to its loyalty to the central themes of love, loyalty, sacrifice, and independence, which were at the heart of Rostand's original classic. The hero, again with a very large nose, woos the woman he loves for another, more "handsome" man.

Edmond Rostand's mix of humor, romance, and heroic action in *Cyrano de Bergerac* has captured audience imagination for almost 100 years. Its ageless themes continue to have resonance for audiences of many generations.

Translations

Cyrano de Bergerac was originally written in Rostand's native language (French), and has been translated over the years by numerous scholars and poets. Some of the most famous translations include: Bryan Hooker's easily accessible translation, Christopher Fry's iambic pentameter, the slightly more elevated language of Gladys Thomas' translation, and a superlative translation by Lowell Blair.

Although each text tells the same story of love, loss and regret, the rhyme, rhythm, meter, and overall wording of the play is drastically different. Translators have a lot to think about; they have to strike a balance between meaning, keeping the same intended rhyme scheme, rhythm, and meter, while also keeping the reader (or audience) interested. Each author is going to value one of these components more than the others, hence the varied translations. The only way to get the author's true intent, emotion, rhyme, rhythm, and meter is to read his original text.

Activity

On the following page you will find four versions of the first stanza of Cyrano's speech to Valvert and the crowd at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in Act One.

1. Break the students into four groups, and assign them each one of the four stanzas.
2. Have students read their translation as group and answer the following questions:
   - Does the language feel elevated to you? Accessible? Modern?
   - What is your initial opinion of Cyrano? Is he pompous? Intelligent? Witty? A Smart-ass?
   - What does his language or choice of words tell you about the character?
   - How does the rhythm work to emphasize these character traits?
3. Ask each group to give a dramatic reading of their stanza. Each person much have at least one line of the stanza.
   - Did the groups perform a similar or a different characterization of Cyrano each time?
   - What were some of the similarities of their characterizations? Some of the differences?
4. Hand out a copy of all four translations to each of the students.
5. Have them read each translation to themselves. Give them a few minutes to study and compare each text.
   - Look at the rhyme, rhythm and meter of each of the translations. What similarities and differences are there?
   - Does one translation seem to be more fluid or poetic than the others?
   - Does one translation create a better mental image in your head?
   - Does one translation seem more easily accessible to a student?
   - Which translation to you prefer and why?

Reflection

Were you surprised at how different each translation was? Which translation did you particularly like and why? What are some things a poet and author must keep in mind when translating a piece of work?

Four Translations

Cyrano
[*Closing his eyes a moment*].
Wait! Let me pick my rhymes…There, let's begin.
[*He fights in time with the words*.]
I swiftly toss away my hat,
And then, more slowly, I untie
My trailing cloak to follow that.
Then from the scabbard on my thigh
I draw my sword and raise it high –
And now the blade begins to flit
And flash like swallows in the sky,
And at the Coda's end I hit![1]

Cyrano
 (*Closing his eyes for a moment*)
Wait, I'm thinking of how to begin….There, I have it.
(His actions match his words throughout the ballade.)
I take off my hat and discard it,
I slowly abandon my cloak,
I draw my sword out of its scabbard,
Preparing to put it to use.
For the moment, I stand here before you,
Elegant, calm, and serene,
But I warn you, my impudent scoundrel,
When I end the refrain, I draw blood.
(*They begin fencing*.)[2]

Cyrano
(shutting his eyes for a second):
Wait while I choose my rhymes…I have them now!
(He suits the action to each word):
I gaily doff my beaver low,
And, freeing hand and heel,
My heavy mantle off I throw,
And I draw my polished steel;
Graceful as Phoebus, round I wheel,
Alert as Scaramouch,
A word in your ear, Sir Spark, I steal—
At the envoi's end, I touch!
(They engage):[3]

CYRANO
(Closes his eyes for an instant.)
Stop…Let me choose my rimes…Now!
        Here we go—
    (He suites the action to the word, throughout the follwing:)
Lightly I toss my hat away,
  Languidly over my arm let fall
The cloak that covers my bright array –
  Then out swords, and to work withal!
  A Launcelot, in his Lady's hall…
A Spartacus, at the Hippodrome!...
  I dally awhile with you, dear jackal,
Then, as I end the refrain, thrust home!
(The swords cross-the fight is on.)[4]

[1] Fry, Christopher, trans. *Cyrano de Bergerac.* By Edmond Rostand. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1998.
[2] Blair, Lowell, trans. *Cyrano de Bergerac.* By Edmond Rostand. New American Library, a division of Penguin Putnam, Inc: New York, 1972.

[3] Thomas, Gladys and Mary F. Guillemard, trans. *Cyrano de Bergerac.* By Edmond Rostand.
[4] Hooker, Bryan, trans. *Cyrano de Bergerac.* By Edmond Rostand. Bantam Dell: A Division of Random House: New York, 2004.

An Interview with the Director: Amanda Dehnert

Amanda Dehnert is the Acting Artistic Director at Trinity Rep; she had been Associate Artistic Director since 1999. This season she has directed *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* and *A Christmas Carol.* Past productions include *Henry IV, West Side Story; Songs of Innocence, Songs of Experience; A Moon for the Misbegotten; Annie*; *The Skin of Our Teeth; Peter Pan or the Boy Who Would Not Grow Up; Noises Off; Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?; The New England Sonata; My Fair Lady; Othello; Saint Joan; We Won't Pay! We Won't Pay!;* and *A Christmas Carol* (1997). She composed new music and lyrics for Trinity Rep's Boston production of *A Christmas Carol* and was the musical director for *The Merry Wives of Windsor.* She also has directed *Julius Caesar, A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Richard III* for the Trinity Summer Shakespeare Project. She has served as musical director for *My Fair Lady; A Christmas Carol* (since 1998); *The Threepenny Opera; As You Like It; The Music Man;* and *The Cider House Rules, Part 1&2;* and as co-musical director for *Master Class*. A graduate of the Trinity Rep Conservatory, Ms. Dehnert is proud to serve on the faculty of the Brown/Trinity Rep Consortium. In 2001, she received a Gielgud Fellowship (SDFC) and an Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding Director (*My Fair Lady* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*).

The following interview was conducted on April 3, 2006 by Stephanie Chlebus, Education Assistant.

SC: Amanda, thank you for coming.

AD: You're welcome.

SC: You tend to do a lot of work on shows with large casts: *The Mystery of Edwin Drood, A Christmas Carol*, you did *Annie* - do you prefer working with larger casts or smaller casts, or is it just kinda the way things fall out?

AD: It's just kinda the way things fall out; there are definitely different challenges. I mean usually a smaller cast is a different kind of play – though not always. When I did *St. Joan* I did it with only six actors. So that was kinda a small group to do a big epic play with. I think it's more that I really like - I do like the challenges that you face when you're doing these kind of epic shows or spectacle shows, the stuff where a lot of different stuff happens.

SC: You have almost more to think about it if you have a lot of people in the show?

AD: Yeah although even with *Cyrano*… you know, it should be done with about thirty-five people and we're doing it with fourteen - so it's a challenge. *(Laughs).* Yeah, I would put it more that shows that cover long stretches of time (like *Cyrano* does), or really take us to a whole different kind of world - things like that tend to be the bigger plays, and they tend to, you know, allow you to use more people….

SC: So what are the benefits of working with a resident company?

AD: Oh goodness. Um, well we've really, we've done a lot of plays together and so we share a common experience. That's the way I think of it now. I think I had a different answer a couple of years ago. But the ones I'm going to do this play with I have pretty much done plays with before. And we can refer to work that we've done, understand things in the same way usually a little faster – it usually lets us speed things up a little. And um, it takes some of the pressure off me to need to – I don't need to create everything by myself – I trust them enough to create…..

SC: It lets you start at a new level where you pick up where you left off: in trust; and you can trust them to try things, and they can trust you - and no one's kind of nervous.

AD: Yes exactly. When I've done shows with people - large numbers of people who I've never worked with (*West Side Story* is probably the most recent example), it's really different. Everyone's much quieter for a couple of weeks, because they are wanting to do a good job and wanting to do whatever I ask them to do, and so it takes them longer to get them to understand that I want them to tell me what they think too. And with a resident company there is no waiting period - they just tell me what they think right away.

SC: Different directors have different procedures. Some directors say, "Okay I want this, this, this, this, and this," and they don't want any feedback, and they have to learn that. And so with a resident company they already know what your directing style is: which is collaborative. "Let me know how you feel."

AD: And so it still means I say, "I want this, this and this," and they say, "Oh what about this?" or "How about if we do it this way?" And I say, "Oh okay – cool." …It's a tricky thing because ultimately the director's the only one who is watching the play, and they're all doing the play - so really ultimately the director does have the final say on things. And it's not - I don't mean that in a control issue sort of way; I think of this as the difference between 'what' and 'how'. I mean what it is, what happens in this moment, or what this event is, or what's going on here, isn't really up for debate. You know, that's not something that you arrive at. Sometimes if you're stuck you can solve the puzzle together, but it's a thing. *How* you do it is what the rehearsal process is really about, and that *how* is something that with a resident company you can discover in lots of different ways.

SC: The set design by Eugene Lee that was for *The Mystery of Edwin Drood, A Christmas Carol*, and *Hamlet,* is it going to be the same for *Cyrano*, or is it going to be changed?

AD: No, it's actually different, and this is a good sort of - this is the constant lesson about the theater: that you can't ever just make a rule and apply it for very long. Eugene and I were both really concerned about how to create a space that was as focused and …(I could say intimate and accessible, but really it's just focused), and that theater that we designed together is very big and sprawling, and it was definitely what I had in mind for Cyrano a year ago…. But as I've gone through this year and done some pretty big and sprawling things, I'm feeling within myself, "I have the desire to do something a little more focused," and Eugene actually agreed with me. And so we're making a small space on the stage of the bigger space (it's kinda hard to describe) – but we're just trying to make it smaller. And in doing that we ended up making a whole bunch of seats

kind of really bad. So in order to move those seats we had to put seats back where the big platforms in the audience were….

SC: Oh, so we're getting rid of the platforms that are in the audience?

AD: Yeah we're going to replace those with seats….

SC: So are you doing the play in the time period it is set, or are you modernizing it, or is it basically kind of timeless?

AD: I'm basically doing it in the time period, but the way we put it is, "All the fun and interesting bits about the time period," and not "All the annoying accurate bits." *[Laughs].* …If you're really -- costumes is really where this shows up the most… what we *think* we know about what people actually wore - some of it isn't really helpful you know, and some of it is -- so you kind of strike a balance between [the two]. Things that are as long ago and as far away as this is, [are] particularly tricky, because everyone had an idea of what *they think* it should look like. Everyone in the audience will have a slightly different idea of what they expect and that's often not the same as what it is. It's normally something what we learn through movies you know, or paintings, and it kind of adds up to this, "That's what they wore in France in 1640," and it's not necessarily accurate. But in the same way if you even think about …the '90s.
If you think about fashion, like what people were wearing in the early '90s, what you remember people wearing is really a combination of things from the '80s and the '90s. But if you were to do research and say, "What was fashion in the early 90s?" you'd get this really specific looking thing that -- if you actually put it on stage people would think it was a joke. Do you know what I mean? …Like in set design, if you need to – you want to do a really like, really realistic interior of the house – and you think "the '70s," we all sort of think like *The Brady Bunch* -- and that's not really how people lived, that's what T.V. told us about how people lived. So period, time period is just a really tricky question that way. So what we're trying to do with *Cyrano* is make sure that we ring all those bells for people about what they think a long time ago in France was like, and not spend a lot of time on the details that aren't really helpful.

SC: Historical accuracy about what every detail of the dress looks like isn't as necessary as the idea of the play, of getting the concept.

AD: Exactly, and making it work. It becomes tricky for characters like Roxane, you know, she is supposed to be the most beautiful woman in the world and what women were wearing in this period really had a lot do with something else; they don't look very accessible or pretty. But we need her to look accessible and pretty, you know? So you make choices based on that.

SC: It will be interesting to see. Next year you will actually be directing the *The Fantasticks*, which actually turns out to be based on a story that was written by Rostand (who is the author of *Cyrano*.) ….That's kind of funny because you directed two Dickens plays this year, -

AD: That's true, yeah that's true. *[Laughs].*

SC: - and now you're directing two Rostands. Are there similarities… between the two plays or the writing style?

AD: There are, it's interesting. I had forgotten that the *The Fantasticks* was adapted from the plays of Rostand's. It's just not what you think of when you think of *The Fantasticks*. But um, in doing some work on that at the same time that I'm doing work on this, I did notice that there is something that I just think of now as very French about it. There is a certain kind of -- I really want to say like fairytale or fantasy kind of aspect to a lot of Rostand's writing, that's present in both of these stories. He was really interested in very, very -- the word would be archetype….archetypical characters. You know, sort of the heroine, the hero, and the way that all of these people relate in a kind of magical realism landscape…but that's kind of what he was writing. I guess another way to put it is basically fairytales. Stories about love, and heroism, and loss, and adventure, and you don't really -- you see that in a lot of different cultures writings – but there is something particularly French, and I still can't quite put my finger on. It's a little bit to do with the poetry and I think a lot to do with the romance of it. I just don't see it addressed quite the same way in the British literature, or the German literature, a little bit more in the Italian literature of the period and the Spanish literature, but it feels very French.

SC: It's a very romantic, you kind of want to fall in love with each of the characters. Even though they have their positives and their negatives, you want to cheer for Christian, you want to cheer for Cyrano.

AD: And I think that it might boil down to they're always on this quest, this quest for love; and like in England they're normally on a quest for you know, power, (not like you don't see love stories coming out of that country) but it's much more political. And France is really known for those two things: the stories about love and then the comedies. You know Molière established a great comic tradition. And *Cyrano* is also very, very funny in that way.

SC: What is it about *Cyrano* that makes it so contemporary? I mean it was originally performed in 1897, so why now?

AD: Everyone keeps asking me that question. Um, and I really will have a better answer a week from now but I …what I always want to say is that it's really timeless first (and that's vague, that doesn't say much) -- so what do I mean by that? I think that the basic, the basic problem that he has (unlike something like *Hamlet*, which is really about this revenge story – you know what's revenge and does that work?) ...but [*Hamlet*]'s got this big idea around it. *Cyrano* doesn't really have that big idea; it's just this story about this man and these people. …I just think everyone can identify with Cyrano's problem (which is very external for the character) but he's ugly. And I think everyone can understand what it is to feel like -- to be afraid to take a risk because you think that you're not good enough, you know? And that's what, that's what that character is really about for me, and that's what the story's really about. And why I think it's a tragedy is that he -- you know, he dies. [He] finally gets round to actually telling this woman that it's been him for years, years…he's been in love with her and writing to her, and she thought that it was somebody else. And by the time this finally comes out in the open he's about five minutes away from expiring. And I just don't think we should live our lives that way, you know? So I go through the whole thing, and I guess I come … going back to "Why now?" About how it's terribly important to live

your life in as honest and as exposed a way as possible, and really put yourself out there for the things that matter to you; because eventually, we will all die. And whatever it is you believe happens to you after death, it's not the same as what we're dong right now. So you've got maybe 80 years to live your life, and you should live it. And I think that is maybe more relevant when the world is sort of as ugly and scary as it is right now. Maybe that's why I like it right now, that I think we need permission to just live our lives in some way you know, or to know that that's worthwhile – something like that. But I still, I honestly can't quite put my finger on it.

SC: But, I mean, it will change and grow as you're working on the play.

AD: It will. I will gain insight into the play in rehearsal in a way that I can't get into by just reading the play. And what I'm keenly aware of: the fact that it is first and foremost a really entertaining story. Actually, the plot is really entertaining; and I don't mean entertaining like, "Ha ha ha," (I mean, sometimes it's that), but it's really engaging. The characters are really interesting, and that on this whole other level by itself is really enough for me. …And I also know that I have a really short attention span actually. I read a lot. I'm a really voracious reader. And a lot of the stuff I read …I'm reading it and I enjoy it, and then it doesn't really stick. And I read about 5 books a week…but most of them just go, "Foomp, foomp, foomp," and when I hit stories that are - that really stick with me I get really interested in them. And this play (when I hadn't read it for years) when I went back and read it when I was trying to figure out the season, I really was just shocked at how much it just stuck with me. So I figured that, well it's probably worth doing.

SC: -Yeah well, if it means something to you, then it has to mean something to someone else.

AD: It has to, and that's -- as directors that's just a big thing that we rely on all the time. We really rely on that, because there's no -- you can't know how other people's heads work, and you can't know what everybody's interested in, and you can't even be so presumptuous as to say, "Everybody must see this play now." You can only rely on the fact that if you are moved by it, if you are interested in it, somebody else probably will be too. And if someone else is, then probably someone else after them is, and so on and so on. And we hope, we hope that that's true – and we never really know.

SC: You just gotta take a risk.

AD: Exactly. And it's *[pause]* a nice story. *[Laughs].* That's so lame. *[Laughs].*

SC: No, it's a good story. *[Laughs].*

AD: It's also, you know, something that I really believe in -- if this message can get out there to students I'm happy to have it get out there – that um, you know there's…whenever you're doing analysis -- which is really what you're asking me when you say, "Why now?" You're asking me what its central theme is and how its central theme relates to society today, and I can do that in a way that was really sort of book smart, you know? In the theater we have permission to make sure that our analysis is always going through something personal. And I actually think that that's a really good way to read everything. And to always do your analysis through something that's about, "How does this connect to *me*?" You know that's ultimately going to be more interesting

than saying, "*Oedipus* is about Hubris." What's Hubris? – It's an idea. So it sometimes makes its harder to articulate, but usually at the end of the road when you really figure it out, it's worth it.

SC: The whole point of going to see a theater production is to see the humanity in it, and also the humanity in you that is brought out by it.

AD: Yes, exactly.

SC: So students as readers or audience members should be connecting….

AD: They should allow themselves to connect, and that's the tricky thing to do: that allowing yourself. Because it all has to do with what state of mind you're in when you turn to page one or when the lights go down. It's all about that state of mind. And you don't have to be, "Oh, I'm going to love this." And you also don't have to be, "Well, I might not like this." If you can just learn how to be present and open, you can really get taken into a story actually much more effectively, and you can actually get more joy out of it that way. And I wish that people did that all of the time, and I know that there's a certain amount of -- its my job as a director to always make sure that things begin in some way that allows people to do that. It's sort of different with different plays and you don't always succeed at it, but it's a fun challenge.

SC: Well it's hard for some people to open up and to put themselves out there.

AD: It is, and that actually goes back around to what *Cyrano* is about, you know? …How hard it is to open up and to put yourself out there. And yet it really makes you - I think it makes you a better member of society; I think it makes you a better person. I think that on this whole other level (that I talk about a lot.)…just about empathy. We can't move into the modern age as a society (these are big words but I mean them) without really becoming more empathetic. We have to be really able to understand – not sympathetic, but empathetic; we have to be able to imagine ourselves in a different place, in a different position, and just think from that person's point of view. You don't have to agree with them at all - *at all* - you can think that, you can do that, and at the end of the day still disagree. But then you can learn how to agree to disagree, which is really important. And as we're at war, you know, this is a huge issue this world war in Iraq, and as we're at war in this country, and as we see violence, and as we look at why people fight - I mean basically why war happens is that people can't figure out how to agree to disagree. So learning empathy teaches you how to do that. And everything that I do - I hope that in the telling of the story people will allow themselves to connect, and in allowing themselves to connect they'll learn something about empathy, and they'll take that out into their lives. So maybe this all circles around to "Why *Cyrano* now?" is that I think it's a really - I actually think it's an easy story to connect to. I don't think it's hard to connect. And I think that it is surprisingly, *surprisingly* tragic. It really moves you along to this place where you're like, "Oh, oh he's dying!" And you're like "Uh, how awful." And that really just kind of cracks you open. And making people, making people do that I think is important right now in the world, and this is just a story whereby to do it.

SC: I think that it also connects – because people see *Cyrano* passing away and they go, "I hope I don't end up like that. What can I do to change that? What can I do to better live my life?"

AD: Exactly. And that would all circle back around to talking to your loved ones, telling them the truth, not being afraid -- being brave. And those are really great values to have right now.

SC: And rare.

AD: - And rare. And I think they're just going to become more important as the world becomes more complicated.

SC: And also an important kind of discussion of *Cyrano* for students who are coming of age, is the idea of the inner-beauty, and how Roxane is originally drawn to the outward beauty and by the end (but not until the very end) realized that [there is] …inner-beauty. Is there anything you wanted to say about that theme?

AD: Just that's true, and, you know, it's about what's inside of people and not what you see. And that what's inside of people -- it's both, it's our job to make sure that we look at each other as what's inside; that I want to know what's inside of you -- not just what I see on the outside. And it's also my job to make sure that I am willing to let people see that. Cyrano in many ways is a jerk and he's really a screwed up person. I mean he's got so many defense mechanisms and everything that is really true about him is pretty much a secret. And that's not healthy.

SC: He doesn't really let anyone see the true him.

AD: No! At very brief moments, and those are the moments I'm actually wondering about cutting because sometimes I look at them and go, "Well…"

SC: This doesn't quite seem right.

AD: Yeah, yeah, I think this would be stronger if this didn't happen. And I'm still not sure about that. But he rarely lets people in - you can definitely put it that way. And more often than not he uses his – I mean he's funny, and he's smart, and he can rhyme and he can fight, and he uses all those things as walls. Christian is actually totally the opposite: he wears his heart on his sleeve; and there just appears to be not much 'there-there,' but actually what we learn about Christian in the fourth act is that he has quite a 'there-there.'   You know when he finds out that it's not his letters that Roxane has been receiving he tells Cyrano that he will tell Roxane that she's really in love with Cyrano [and] not him, and he says he will give her up even though he loves her desperately. That's really brave too. So you know, even that pretty boy is actually something different. And Roxane -- we really see her go from...this really simple arc of knowing what she thinks love is, to learning what love really is, to then being confronted with it directly and embracing it -- and that's a great thing too.

Romanticism

> **ROMANTICISM:** Artistic and intellectual movement that originated in the late 18th century and stressed strong emotion, imagination, freedom from classical correctness in art forms, and rebellion against social conventions.

Resulting in part from the ideals of the French Revolution, the Romantic movement was a revolt against the prescribed rules of classicism. The basic aims of romanticism were various: a return to nature and to belief in the goodness of humanity; the rediscovery of the artist as a supremely individual creator; the development of nationalistic pride; and the exaltation of the senses and emotions over reason and intellect. In addition, romanticism was a philosophical revolt against rationalism.

> **CLASSICISM (or NEOCLASSICISM):** Artistic historical tradition or aesthetic attitudes based on the art of Greece and Rome in antiquity. In the context of the tradition, Classicism refers either to the art produced in antiquity or to later art inspired by that of antiquity; Neoclassicism always refers to the art produced later but inspired by antiquity. Thus the terms Classicism and Neoclassicism are often used interchangeably.

Characteristics of Romanticism:
- A deepened appreciation of the beauty of nature
- A focus on emotion and using the senses rather than the traditional focus on reason and intellect
- A heightened look at the human personality and its moods and mental abilities
- A focus on passions and inner struggles
- A new view of the artist as a creator, whose creative spirit is more important than strict adherence to formal rules and traditional procedures
- An emphasis on imagination as a gateway to spiritual truth
- An obsessive interest in folk culture, national and ethnic cultural origins, and the medieval era
- A fondness for the mysterious

Romanticism and Art: Late 18th to Mid 19th Century

Romanticism in art was a European and American movement extending from about 1800 to 1850.

Romanticism cannot be identified with a single style, technique, or attitude, but Romantic painting is generally characterized by a highly imaginative and subjective approach, emotional intensity, and a dreamlike or visionary quality. Whereas classical and neoclassical art is calm and restrained in feeling and clear and complete in expression, romantic art characteristically strives to express by suggestion states of feeling too intense, mystical, or elusive to be clearly defined. Thus the German writer E. T. A.

Hoffmann declared "infinite longing" to be the essence of romanticism. In their choice of subject matter, the Romantics showed an affinity for nature, especially its wild and mysterious aspects, and for exotic, melancholic, and melodramatic subjects likely to evoke awe or passion.

Obvious successors of Romanticism include the Pre-Raphaelite movement and the Symbolist painters. But Impressionism, and through it almost all of 20th century art, is also firmly rooted in the individualism of the Romantic tradition.

Picture: *Morning in the Mountains* (No later than 1823) Caspar David Friedrich
Reference: http://www.j-m-w-turner.co.uk/artist/turner-romantic.htm

Activities:

1. Break students into groups and distribute a color reproduction of various paintings from the period. Have students discuss the romantic characteristics that they find in the painting.
   - What is the painting of? Is this characteristic of the Romantic style?
   - Does the painting adhere to the rules of Romantic Period?
   - What feeling does the painting evoke in you?

2. Have students research various artists from the Romantic Period and give a brief presentation on their artist.
   - William Blake   http://www.huntfor.com/absoluteig/blake.htm
   - J.M. Turner   http://www.artchive.com/artchive/T/turner.html
   - John Singleton Copley   http://www.huntfor.com/absoluteig/copley.htm
   - Albert Bierstadt   http://www.huntfor.com/absoluteig/bierstadt.htm

3. Have students create a piece of Romantic art and share their works with the rest of the class. See if other students can guess what feeling the artist was trying to convey. Create an art gallery in the hallway to share your works with the rest of the school.

Romanticism and Music: 1810 - 1910

Classical composers had tried to create a balance between expression and formal structure; Romantic composers altered this balance by applying more freedom to the form and structure of their music, and using deeper, more intense expressions of moods, feelings, and emotions. An increased interest in literature, nature, the supernatural, and love, along with nationalistic feelings and the idea of the musician as visionary artist and hero (virtuoso) all added to the development of Romanticism. The movement reached its height in the late 19th century, as in the works of Robert Schumann and Richard Wagner (väg ' ner)

Resource: http://www.tiscali.co.uk/reference/encyclopaedia/hutchinson/m0019061.html

Activities:

1. Start the day off by playing an excerpt from a piece by Wagner, Brahms, Tchaikovsky or any famous composer from the period. Ask students to close their eyes and listen. Ask them what emotion the music stirs up in them.
   - Was anyone imagining a story while the music was playing?
   - Make a list of adjectives that describe what the students were listening to.
   - How does the piece fit into their definition of 'romantic?'
2. Have students discuss what songs they listen to today that have meaning to them.
   - What makes that song special? Did the music simply remind you of something in your life or a particular feeling or emotion?
   - Do you think a musician writing a piece of music purposely begins composing a piece of music to make you feel a particular emotion? Why or why not?
   - If you wanted to compose a piece of music that was tragic how might the song go? Happy? Sad? Dramatic? What moments would characterize the piece?

Other musicians to look into:
- Franz Schubert   http://www.classicsforkids.com/shows/bio.asp?ID=25
- Johannes Brahms   http://www.classicsforkids.com/shows/bio.asp?ID=39
- Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky   http://www.classicsforkids.com/shows/bio.asp?ID=17

Other Resource:
- Here is a great site devoted to getting music into your classroom and kids excited about music! *Classics for kids*: http://www.classicsforkids.com/index.asp

Romanticism in Literature

The British Romantic period spanned from 1785 to 1830. Due to the French Revolution and the rapid industrialization of Europe, writers began to focus on the main topics of the time: democracy, human rights, and the importance of revolution itself. Writers also began to focus less on telling the story of the world around them, but rather the worlds inside themselves: emotions, feelings, and thoughts.

In England, the Romantic Period in literature was designated by the publication of Wordsworth and Colderidge's *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). In the preface to the second edition "Wordsworth stated that poetry results from 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings,'" and pushed for the use of everyday language in poetry. Coleridge felt that the imagination was more important than obeying all the literary rules of the past (or **classicism**).

In America, Romanticism appeared in the works of Emerson and Thoreau in a philosophical and literary movement called **transcendentalism**. The movement stressed the beauty of nature, a belief that all men are naturally good, and that insight was more powerful than logic itself.

Activities:

1. Have students break into groups and read a poem from Wordsworth and Colderidge's *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) or other poems by romantic poets (see above).

- What scene does the poem paint for you? What do you visualize?
- What type of emotion(s) do you feel while reading the poem? Are there any particular lines that make you feel this way?
- Are there any words in the poem that are capitalized and why?

2. The following website contains a lesson centered around basic understanding and discussion of Wordsworth's "The World is Too Much With Us," and culminates with the student writing a letter to Wordsworth telling him what they think he would think of today's society. http://www.powertolearn.com/teachers/lesson_activities/language_arts/CBV.17.S.LA.R1.F.pdf

Poem from: The Wordsworth Trust: http://www.wordsworth.org.uk/Default.asp?page=114

The Daffodils by Wordsworth (1807, 1815)

I wandered lonely as a Cloud
That floats on high o'er Vales and Hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:-
A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company:
I gazed-and gazed-but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude,
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the Daffodils.

Unit 2: The Role of the Actor and the Playwright

Community Building

We are absolutely convinced that community building must be the first order of business in entering into any type of group project, no matter what subject matter you are teaching. At first, and on the surface, it may seem a frivolous use of time. Students may resist at first. However, be assured that community building is absolutely imperative to the success of and dedication to the project. As a result of their involvement in activities connected to community building, your students will develop relationships with each other and with you in a much more human way.
        - Deanna Camputaro and Len Newman

All the community-building exercises in this section should be used to set the tone of your class and to create a safe space for performance. It is important for teachers to participate in and model these exercises.

PAIR INTERVIEWS – Tying Themes to One's Own Experience

Divide students into pairs. Find interesting ways to pair students (i.e. distribute slips of paper with complimentary words and ask students to mill around the room looking for the complimentary word of another student – for example, coast and inland, Bert and Ernie, etc.) Their task is to interview one another and introduce their partners to the class. Write the following questions on the board for the students to ask each other:

> *Are you always truthful with the people that care about you?*

After the interview, ask students to introduce their partners to the whole class using the questions as descriptions: "Nancy is closest to her older brother Matt and feels that…"

BLIND WALK – Building Trust

Ask six students (three pairs) to leave the room, asking three to blindfold their partners. Then ask the remaining students to create a maze with their bodies in the classroom. Bring the six students back into the classroom. The blindfolded three should be led into the room with their partners and led around and through the student-created maze. The leaders should use voice and gentle, respectful touch to lead them through the room. The leader may let the follower feel different objects and textures in the room to acclimate them to their environment. Repeat until everyone in the class has had a chance to be a leader or a blind follower.
Post-Activity Reflection: Ask students what was challenging about that exercise. Did it become easier over time? What kind of faith do you need to have in the leader? What responsibility does the leader have? What responsibility does the blind follower have?

TRUST FALLS

(Model this exercise first!)

Divide students into groups of 10 and have them stand in tight circles, shoulder to shoulder. Ask for one volunteer to go into the center of the circle and "fall." The volunteer must set his or her feet firmly on the floor, cross his or her arms over the chest, close his or her eyes, and fall backwards or forwards into the wall of the circle. The falling student should be relaxed, but should help the circle by keeping his or her body straight. Students in the circle must gently catch and move the volunteer around, supporting his or her weight. The student in the center MUST NOT MOVE his or her feet. All of the movement must come from the ankles up. After a short period of time, have the first volunteer rejoin the circle and ask for someone else to enter the circle. Have every student take a turn at "falling."
Post-activity reflection: Did you trust that your circle would catch you? Did you find it easy or difficult to "fall?" Was the experience frightening? Exciting? Liberating? Was it difficult to be in the circle, catching the person in the center? Did you feel responsible for the volunteer in the center? Did you prefer to be in the circle, or in the center of the circle?

FAINT BY NUMBERS

Clear a space in the center of the classroom and have everyone find a little open space of their own, away from furniture, walls and other people. Ask them, on the count of three, to do a slow-motion faint to the floor. Do this several times until everyone has a clear idea of SLOW MOTION! Next, have the students count off until everyone has a number. Ask the students to mill around the room, keeping close to the center, keeping an eye on everyone else. Explain that when you call out a number, the person with that number must slowly faint, collapsing his or her body. It is the job of everyone else to catch that person before he or she reaches the floor. Encourage concentration and respect for other members of the class. Call out the numbers at random. After one person "faints", get the class moving again and then call out a different number. As students begin to get more proficient, call out more than one number at a time.

Post-activity reflection: Did you trust that someone would "catch" you? Was it easier to fall knowing that you were actually in control of your descent?

PASSING NOTES – Reflection

End your class five minutes early. Ask students to write you a personal note about how they thought the class went for them. Each day give students a new prompt such as:

- What was successful about today's class?
- Why was it successful? What could you/your group do to improve your work?
- What questions do you have about the work we're doing in class?

Build a rubric for group work based on student responses to the question: *What makes this exercise successful?*
Possible responses: We had to work together; each person had to know their role; we had to trust each other; we had to concentrate, etc.
Refer to pages 43-45 for more suggestions on creating a rubric and reflection.

Inspiration/ Entering the Text

The arts are forms of communication. Whether looking at a piece of visual art, choreography, or a theatrical performance, we are touched by the communication that occurs between ourselves as an audience, and the artwork we experience. In searching for what may have inspired an artist to create a particular work, we revitalize our own search for the inspiration inside and outside of ourselves. In looking at multiple artworks and resources related to a piece of theater, students can begin to look at how the piece might relate to their lives.
-Deanna Camputaro and Len Newman

Ask the students to choose a partner.

CHARACTER A is an acquaintance of CHARCTER B. CHARACTER B is shocked when CHARACTER A suddenly reveals a very deep secret that has been bothering him/her.   CHARACTER B is not sure how to respond.

Within each pair, have each actor choose a character to play. Give the characters names and determine as many specifics about the scene as possible. For example, where does the scene take place, how old are the characters, what is their relationship to each other. Each pair should improvise a scene that has a clear beginning, middle and end. Once the story has been established (more or less) have the actors script their dialogue, and perform again. Revise as necessary until each pair has developed a short, self-contained scene. Rehearse and perform for other members of the class.

Comprehending the Text

Using performance for entering and comprehending the text can help students physicalize and internalize themes, plot and character. It provides an opportunity for students to wrestle with some of the challenging themes and language in the text, and to be introduced to the characters' emotions and motivations.
- Deanna Camputaro and Len Newman

This section includes performance, writing and reading exercises to help introduce students to the characters and language of the play. Selected scenes and exercises will help you work with students on comprehending dialogue and scenes in the play.

My Name Is... The Characters Revealed!

Hand out the following lines of each character to each group. One student in the group will be the reader, and the others will each create a full-body pose that physicalizes their line (a frozen sculpture). Encourage them to improvise on the spot – they can use the whole line, or merely a phrase or word that inspires them to create a physical picture of their line. Give them thirty seconds to decide their pose, and then hand their lines to the designated reader. Have one group line up in numerical order (the other three groups will be the audience). One by one, each student should strike their pose, as the reader reads the line that corresponds. Each should stay frozen while the others pose, forming a character arc and sculpture garden. After the last pose, the reader announces the name of the character. Repeat for the other two characters.

CYRANO:
1. Modest? You fear to see my naked blade?
2. That is the one thing on this earth I fear!
3. Well, what if it be my vice,
    My pleasure to displease--to love men hate me!
4. The words I spoke just now!--my words--my words!

5. But since Death comes / I meet him still afoot,
   (He draws his sword):
   And sword in hand!

ROXANE:
1. But I have seen love trembling on his lips.
2. I hoped for cream,--you give me gruel!
3. But this is horrible!
4. O God! his tears! his blood!
5. . . .You shall not die!

CHRISTIAN:
1. I am lost if I but 'ope my lips!
2. I can hold my own like any soldier.
3. I'm sick to death of being rivals with myself!
4. Roxane!
5. Oh, if only I could find the words To speak these thoughts.

Post-Activity Reflections: What were the students able to determine about the characters through these short pieces of text? Do they have a picture of the characters? Can they hear the characters voices? How old do they feel the characters might be?

Characters and Conflict: Scene Studies

Divide the class into groups of three and hand out the following scenes. Divide each scene into several shorter segments and have the students in each group cast themselves in the roles of Cyrano, Christian and Roxane. Let the students read through the scene once amongst each other, and ask them to guess what sort of character they have from their speech patterns and responses. Encourage them to make clear, bold choices as a group to best show what their character is about.

SCENE ONE:
ACT I: Scene v   **Le Bret and Cyrano**

LE BRET (*astonished*):
What's this? Do I understand you rightly? Is it possible that…

CYRANO (*laughing bitterly*):
That I'm in love? (*Changing to a grave tone*) Yes, it's true.

LE BRET:
May I ask with whom? You've never told me…

CYRANO:
With whom I love? Come now, think a moment: this nose of mine, which precedes me by a

quarter of an hour wherever I go, forbids me ever to dream of being loved by even an ugly woman. You ask me whom I love? The answer should be clear to you! Whom else would I love but the most beautiful woman in the world?

LE BRET:
The most beautiful…

CYRANO:
Of course! The most beautiful of all women! The most captivating, the most intelligent… (*Dejectedly*) …the blondest…

LE BRET:
For God's sake, tell me: who is she?

CYRANO:
She's a mortal danger without meaning to be one; she's exquisite without giving it a thought; she's a trap set by nature, a rose in which love lies in ambush! Anyone who has seen her smile has known perfection. She creates grace without movement, and makes all divinity fit into her slightest gesture. And neither Venus in her shell, nor Diana striding in the great, blossoming forest, can compare to her when she goes through the streets of Paris in her sedan chair!

SCENE TWO:
ACT II: Scene iii   **Ragueneau and Cyrano**

CYRANO:
What time is it?

RAGUENEAU (*bowing to him*):
Six o'clock.

CYRANO (with great emotion):
One more hour! *(He begins pacing the floor.)*

RAGUENEAU (*following him*):
Congratulations!

CYRANO:
For what?

RAGUENEAU:
I saw your duel!

CYRANO:
Which one?

RAGUENEAU:
At the Hôtel de Bourgogne!

CYRANO (*disdainfully*):
Oh, that one….

RAGUENEAU (*admiringly*):
A duel in verse!

…………………………

RAGUENEAU (*lunging with a spit that he has picked* up):
 "When I end the refrain, I draw blood! … When I end the refrain, I draw blood!"
Magnificent! *(With growing enthusiasm)* "When I end the refrain…"

CYRANO:
What time is it, Ragueneau?

RAGUENEAU:
(*Looking at the clock while holding the position of the lunge he has just made*):
Five past six. "…I draw blood!" (*Stands up straight*.) Ah, what a ballade!

SCENE THREE:
ACT II: Scene vi   **Cyrano and Roxane**
_____

CYRANO:
May this day be blessed above all others: the day when you ceased to forget my existence
and came here to tell me … to tell me? …

ROXANE (*who has taken off her mask*):
First let me thank you for humbling that arrogant fop with your sword yesterday, because
he's the man whom a certain great lord, infatuated with me…

CYRANO:
De Guiche?

ROXANE (*Lowering her eyes*):
…was trying to impose on me as … as a husband …

CYRANO:
A husband only for the sake of form? (*Bows*) I'm happy to know that I fought not for my
ugly nose, but for your beautiful eyes.

ROXANE:
And then, I wanted to tell you… But before I make my confession, give me time to see you

again as I did in the past, when I thought of you almost as a brother. We used to play together in the park, beside the lake…

CYRANO:
Yes… You came to Bergerac every summer.

ROXANE:
You used a reed for a sword in those days!

CYRANO:
And you used corn silk to make hair for your dolls.

ROXANE:
We played all sorts of games.

CYRANO:
And ate blackberries before they were ripe.

ROXANE:
You always did whatever I wanted!

CYRANO:
You weren't yet known as Roxane. In short skirts, you were still called Magdeleine.

ROXANE:
Was I pretty then?

CYRANO:
You weren't ugly.

ROXANE:
Sometimes you came to me with your hand bleeding from some accident and I acted as if I were your mother, trying to make my voice stern. (*Takes his hand*) "What's this?" I'd say. "Have you hurt yourself again?" (*Looks at his hand*.) No! Let me see! You're still hurting yourself, at your age! How did you do it this time?

CYRANO:
I was playing again – at the Porte de Nesle.

ROXANE (*Sits down at a table and wets her handkerchief in a glass of water*):
Give me that hand!

CYRANO (*Also sits down*):
You still mother me!

ROXANE:
While I wash away this blood, I want you to describe what happened. How many were there against you?

CYRANO:
Oh, not quite a hundred.

ROXANE:
Tell me about it!

SCENE FOUR
ACT III: Scene iv: **Cyrano and Christian**
(This scene can be connected to Act III: Scene v to include Roxane.)

CYRANO:
I know what we need to know. Prepare your memory: here's a chance to cover yourself with glory! Why are you looking so unhappy? Come, there's no time to lose! We'll hurry to your house and I'll tell you…

CHRISTIAN:
No!

CYRANO:
What?

CHRISTIAN:
No! I'm going to wait for Roxane here.

CYRANO:
Have you lost your reason? Come with me, you must learn…

CHRISTIAN:
No, I tell you! I'm tired of borrowing my letters and speeches, of always playing a part and trembling lest I forget my lines! It was necessary at the beginning and I'm grateful to you for your help, but now that I feel she really loves me, I'm no longer afraid. I'm going to speak for myself.

CYRANO: (*Ironically*)
Do you believe that's a good idea?

CHRISTIAN:
What makes you think I can't do it? After all, I'm not so stupid! You'll see! Your lessons haven't been wasted on me, my friend: I'm sure I can speak without your guidance now.
And in any case I'll certainly know how to take her in my arms! (*Sees Roxane coming out of Clomire's house.*) Here she comes! No, Cyrano, don't leave me!

CYRANO (*bowing to him*):
Speak for yourself, sir. (*Disappears behind the garden wall*.)

SCENE FIVE:
ACT III: Scene v   **Roxane and Christian**
_____

ROXANE:
(*Roxane suddenly seeing Christian*)
Ah, it's you! (*Goes to him*.) Dusk is gathering. ….The air is pleasant and no one is passing
by. Let's sit down. Talk to me. I'm listening.

CHRISTIAN (*Christian sits down beside her on the bench. There is a silence*):
I love you.

ROXANE (*closing her eyes*):
Yes, speak to me of love.

CHRISTIAN:
I love you.

ROXANE:
That's the theme – now elaborate on it.

CHRISTIAN:
I love…

ROXANE:
Develop your theme!

CHRISTIAN:
I love you so much!

ROXANE:
Go on.

CHRISTIAN:
I…I'd be so happy if you loved me! Tell me that you do, Roxane!

ROXANE (*pouting*):
You're giving me water when I expected cream! Tell me how you love me.

CHRISTIAN:
I love you…very much!

ROXANE:
Surely you can express your feelings better than that!

CHRISTIAN:
(*Who has moved closer to her and is now devouring her neck with his eyes*) Your neck! I'd like to kiss it….

ROXANE:
Christian!

CHRISTIAN:
I love you!

ROXANE (*Starting to stand up*):
Again!

CHRISTIAN (*Quickly, holding her back*):
No, I don't love you!

ROXANE (*Sitting down again*):
At least that's a change.

CHRISTIAN:
I adore you!

ROXANE (*Standing up and moving away*):
Oh!

CHRISTIAN:
Yes….I'm becoming foolish!

ROXANE (*Curtly*):
And it displeases me! As it would displease me if you became ugly.

CHRISTIAN:
But. . .

ROXANE:
Try to bring back your vanished eloquence!

CHRISTIAN:
I. . .

ROXANE:
I know: you love me. Good-bye. (*She goes toward her house.*)

CHRISTIAN:
Wait! Let me tell you…

ROXANE (*opening the door*):
That you adore me? I already know that. No, no! Go away!

CHRISTIAN:
But I would fain. . . (*She closes the door in his face.*)

CYRANO: (*Who has returned a short time earlier without being seen*)
Congratulations on your success.

SCENE SIX:
ACT IV: Scene viii   **Roxane and Christian**

ROXANE:
Your true self has prevailed over your outer appearance. I now love you for your soul alone.

CHRISTIAN (*stepping back*):
Oh, Roxane!

ROXANE:
I know how painful it is for a noble heart to be loved because of an accident of nature that
will soon pass away. But you can be happy now: your thoughts outshine your face. Your
handsomeness was what first attracted me, but now that my eyes are open I no longer see it!

CHRISTIAN:
Oh!. . .

ROXANE:
Do you still doubt your victory?

CHRISTIAN (*Sorrowfully*):
Roxane…

ROXANE:
I understand. You can't believe in that kind of love.

CHRISTIAN:
I don't want it! I want to be loved simply for…

ROXANE:
For what women have always loved in you till now? Let me love you in a better way!

CHRISTIAN:
No! It was better before!

ROXANE:
You don't know what you're saying! It's better now! I didn't really love you before. It's what makes you yourself that I now love. If you were less handsome…

CHRISTIAN:
Enough!

ROXANE:
I'd still love you. If you suddenly became ugly…

CHRISTIAN:
Oh, don't say that!

ROXANE:
I *will* say it!

CHRISTIAN:
Even if I were ugly?...

ROXANE:
Yes, even if you were ugly! I swear I'd still love you!

SCENE SIX:
ACT IV: Scene ix   **Christian and Cyrano**

CHRISTIAN: (*Calling outside Cyrano's tent*)
Cyrano?

CYRANO: (*Coming out of the tent, armed for battle*)
Yes? Oh! How pale you are!

CHRISTIAN:
She doesn't love me anymore!

CYRANO:
What!

CHRISTIAN:
It's you she loves!

CYRANO:
No!

CHRISTIAN:
She loves only my soul now!

CYRANO:
No!

CHRISTIAN:
Yes! That means it's you she loves – and you love her too!

CYRANO:
I know it's true.

CHRISTIAN:
Yes, it's true.

CYRANO:

I?

CHRISTIAN:
You love her with all your heart.

CYRANO:
More than that.

CHRISTIAN:
Tell her so!

CYRANO:
No!

CHRISTIAN:
Why not?

CYRANO:
Look at my face!

CHRISTIAN:
She would still love me if I were ugly!

CYRANO:
She told you that?

CHRISTIAN:
Yes!

CYRANO:
I'm glad she said it, but don't believe such nonsense! Yes, I'm very glad she had that thought….But don't take her at her word! Don't become ugly – she would never forgive me!

CHRISTIAN:
We'll see!

CYRANO:
No, no!

CHRISTIAN:
Let her choose! I want you to tell her everything!

CYRANO:
No! I couldn't bear that torture!

CHRISTIAN:
Do you expect me to kill your happiness because I'm handsome? That would be too unjust!

CYRANO:
And do you expect me to kill yours because I happen to have been born with a gift for expressing…what you may feel?

CHRISTIAN:
Tell her everything!

CYRANO:
It's cruel of you to persist in tempting me!

CHRISTIAN:
I'm tired of being my own rival!

CYRANO:
Christian!

CHRISTIAN:
Our wedding took place in secret, without witnesses. The marriage can be broken-if we survive!

CYRANO:
You still persist!...

CHRISTIAN:
I want to be loved for myself or not at all! We'll see what she decides. I'm going to walk to the end of the camp, then come back. Talk to her while I'm gone, and tell her she must choose one of us.

CYRANO:
It will be you!

CHRISTIAN:
I hope so! (*Calls*) Roxane!

CYRANO:
No! No

Activity:

After the students have read through the scenes, clear a large playing space. Rehearse the scenes by having the groups come into the playing space in the order of the sequence of the scenes.   Once each group has had the opportunity to rehearse in the space, present the scenes in an informal presentation.

Creating Performance:
A Writer's Workshop and Scene Showcasing

Each playwright typically goes through an extensive process of rewriting when creating a dramatic piece of work. After the initial writing session, she or he may ask to hold a reading in which actors read the play aloud. After the playwright hears their piece, she or he may return to revising and rewriting. The play can then be put into workshop, where the director, dramaturg and actors work together to stage the play in a staged reading. When the play is ready, the playwright looks for a production venue.

Hold a writing session in which the students rewrite their Scenario scenes as short ten-minute plays. Revise and rewrite the scenes as needed, encouraging them to look back at the questions and prompts for help in strengthening and enhancing their work.

Hold an informal reading for each work to allow the students to hear their pieces and appropriate feedback. When scenes are reworked to the playwrights' satisfaction, cast each original scene and three of the students' favorite scenes from *Cyrano de Bergerac* for a director and actors. Rehearse each piece, rewriting the student-created work if desired.   Hold a performance of all the scenes interspersed.

> Before beginning rehearsals and the showing of your students' performances, write the following question on the board:
> *What makes a good performance?* (Commitment, focus, energy, audibility, movement, etc.)
> Take time to brainstorm with your students what contributes to achieving their best.

Building the Ensemble: Pair Interviews: Part II

Refer to the original directions for pair interviews on pg. 19. Give the students a question or questions to ask each other that may result in a very animated response. For example:

- Can you describe your most embarrassing moment?
- What is the funniest thing that ever happened to you?

Have the students divide up into pairs and conduct their interviews. After they have finished the interview, tell them that you're not interested in the words. You want each partner to identify two movements that their partner made while answering the question that summed up everything they had to say about the topic. Each partner must choose the two movements that defined their partner's answers.

Once they have all identified their movements, have them go up a pair at a time and present the movements to the class. Once each group has had a chance to present their movements, have the group stand in a long line and set a rhythm. Each person must do his or her two movements in a specified time frame (i.e; each person gets four seconds to do their two movements.) Go down the line sequentially with each person doing his or her movement.

Post-activity reflection: How observant were the students in terms of watching the physical gestures and expressions of their partners? What tells a more interesting story, spoken words or physical gestures? Which are more interesting to watch? Why?

Pair Interviews Part III: Silent Movie

Using the subjects from the interview above, have each pair choose one story from their pair interviews. Using only their bodies, movement, and very basic props, the students must convey the entire monologue without ever speaking.

Post-activity reflection: How comfortable were students communicating only with movement and gesture, as opposed to words? How effective were they in conveying the point of the interview without using words? How important is visual story-telling in live performance?

Inspiration: Exploring the World of the Play

While it is the playwright's job to write a good script, and the director and actors' jobs to bring those written words to life, designers play an invaluable role in creating the visual and aural world of the play. While a play could be presented on a bare stage with a minimum of sets, lights, props and costumes, the creation of a complete physical environment helps both the actors and the audience fully realize and enjoy the story. Design elements such as sets, lights, costumes and sound help to establish a number of details for the audience, such as:

- ❑ **Time period**: Is it modern-day, Victorian, in the future?
- ❑ **Location**: Indoors, outdoors, a home, a prison?
- ❑ **Time of day**: Morning, night?
- ❑ **Time of year**: Winter, summer, spring, fall?
- ❑ **Circumstances of the characters**: rich, poor?
- ❑ **Personalities of the characters**: Flashy, subdued, somber?

Designing a play is a very detailed process and involves a deep understanding of the play and a lot of research. The first thing a designer does is read the script, recording their responses to the play, and what they envision as the world of the characters.

Next, designers meet with the director to become aware of the director's intentions in his or her interpretation of the script. The directors will tell the designers if they have specific requirements for the set, costumes, lighting, etc. and will explore and brainstorm the world of the play with the designers. With this information, the designers will go off on their own to do their own research. This often involves historical research, in addition to finding images, colors, and patterns that they think are important and relevant to the direction in which the play is headed. They begin to sketch ideas for their designs and then meet with the director again to discuss them. As the designs are solidified, the designers may build set models, draw lighting plots, or costume sketches for different characters. The designers will tweak their designs throughout the process, so that all of the pieces of the show create a unified vision of the world of the play to be presented to the audience.

Inspiration: Who Does What?

THE SCENIC DESIGNER
The scenic designer is responsible for designing the set. It is his or her job to create scenery that appropriately represents the physical world of the play.

THE LIGHTING DESIGNER
Although the lighting designer's work may be subtler than that of the scenic designer, it is lighting that allows us to see the actors and the stage. And, indeed, the first rule of lighting design is *making sure the audience can see everything they need to see*! Once that is accomplished, the lighting designer helps the audience to see everything from time of day to time of year to the mood of the characters. Color and quality of light can make a scene feel

warm or cool, can make characters look well or sickly or ghostly, and can also help to create a number of spectacular effects on stage.

THE COSTUME DESIGNER
Like the scenic designer, the work of the costume designer has an immediate impact on the audience. Costumes are the clothes that the characters wear, and are very important in communicating a great deal of information to the audience. In additional to all of the background types of information (time period, location, etc.) costumes say a great deal about the characters that are wearing them. Costumes often tell us about a character's profession, status in life, age, and personality.

THE SOUND DESIGNER
The sound designer is an increasingly important figure in the production process of a play. In addition to creating or finding sound affects (i.e; door bells, car horns, any other background noises) sound designers select (and sometimes compose) music for plays. If a production requires amplification, the sound designer must select the appropriate equipment and find a way to make the amplified voices sound appropriate.

THE GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Although not directly related to the production of the play, the graphic designer does something very important. He or she designs the advertising materials and posters that let people know that a show is going on. The graphic designer has a very difficult and specific task, which is to try and sum up the entire play in one image that will be striking and attractive to prospective audience members.

These are just a few examples of the other artists whose expertise contributes to the production of a play. Depending on the production, other participating designers may include make-up designers, pyrotechnics experts, dance choreographers, combat choreographers, props designers (sometimes called props masters) and special companies that create effects such as "flying" the actors!

Entering the Text: What Am I Looking For?

Designers read the text of a play in a slightly different way than the actors do. Designers are looking for clues that tell them about the physical world of the play. Divide the class into several groups and revisit the scenes and monologues that have already been read, and the scene breakdowns below. Have the designers note how many "clues" there are in the following information that tell them what they need for their design.

Keep in mind that the designer does not take all of his or her ideas from the text. Much functional information is provided by the playwright, but many of the details of the design come from the director's and the designer's imagination, their vision of the play. While these choices must work within the context of the whole play, and should be based on information found in the script, most text is not proscriptive. Design choices help to communicate this collaborative interpretation to the audience.

These are some of the questions that the students must ask themselves in order to begin their work as designers. First they must answer the broad questions like time and place. Then, they can start to work on the details.

The following is an excerpt from the beginning of Act III and describes the setting near Roxane's house.

> *A small square in the old Marais. Behind, a huddle of old houses and narrow winding streets. On the Right, Roxane's house and a garden wall overrun with shrubbery. Above the door, a balcony and high window; beside it, a bench. The wall is threaded with clinging ivy; jasmine clings to the balcony and hangs quivering beneath. Using the bench and the stones jutting from the wall, it would be quite easy to climb to the balcony. On the opposite side, a similar old house, also made of brick and stone. Its entrance door has a large knocker wrapped in linen like a stubbed thumb. At rise, the Duenna is seated on the bench beside the door. The window leading to Roxane's balcony stands open.*

The following is an excerpt from Act One: Scene One, and is Ragueneau's description of his beloved Cyrano.

Ragueneau:
I doubt that we shall see his portrait done
In the solemn style of Philippe de Champagne.
His bold extravagance is captured best
By the garish brush of Jacques Callot,
Who loved to paint those florid buccaneers.
His hat, y'know is wedged with three white plumes;
His scabbard just from underneath his cloak
Just like the tail of an angry fighting-cock.
Prouder than the proudest knights that graced
The halls of Gascony, he bears beneath
His wide chapeau, a nose – and what a nose
It is, my lords! For as you watch it pass
You think: 'Impossible, it cannot be.
At any moment now he'll take it off.'
But there it bulges like a camel's back,
The very core of M'sieur de Bergerac.

Activity

1. How much information were the students able to extract from the text and the scene breakdown? See if they can answer the following questions:
   - What type of building are they in?
   - How many rooms does it have?
   - How many doors?
   - What time of day is it?

- How many props are needed in this scene?
- What kind of clothing might the characters wear?

2. Discuss the imagery that the playwright creates using his introductory set descriptions and the description of Cyrano by Ragueneau.
- What impressions did the Rostand's descriptions and the monologue make on you?
- Did you have a picture in your mind?
- What did the set and the character look like?
- How was he dressed? Would his character wear a particular color? Style? Texture?

3. Have students draw sketches of what they imagine the set looks like based on Rostand's description and the action that takes place during a particular scene or act. Display your sketches for the class and read the scenes that each group dissected; asking students to imagine the action taking place on the design sketch.

Costume Designers:

Ask each student to design costumes for the *Cyrano de Bergerac* characters. Refer to any of the text samples that are found in this guide, or to a copy of the script. Pass out the costume design examples below, and ask them to answer in their designs the following questions:

> *What taste does this character have?*
> *How is their personality expressed through their clothing?*
> *How concerned are they about their appearance?*
> *What are some of their favorite things to wear?*
> *What sorts of fabrics and colors would they wear?*

Examples of Costume Designs:

Encourage the students to use fabric and other material swatches, and to draw their own designs with pastels, watercolors, pens or pencil, or to make a collage/composite from

magazines. Ask them to use their imaginations as they experiment – the designs need not be realistic or perfect. Continue to stress that design is a process!

Once students have completed some preliminary design ideas, clear a space in the classroom. Announce a character's name, and ask the costume designers to come into the space and share their designs for that character, describing how and why they made their choices. Repeat for the remaining characters.

Post-activity reflection: How did your perceptions of the characters differ from other people in the class? Did your vision of the character change as other people shared their ideas?

Graphic Designers:

Design a poster for the play *Cyrano de Bergerac*, using any scene or character monologue as the basis for your idea. To begin, look over each of the posters Trinity Rep's graphic designer Michael Guy has designed for previous shows at Trinity Rep. What do you learn about each show from the poster? Which posters are you most interested in? Why? Which poster makes you want to come see the show? What is the function of the poster in the artistic process? Create a poster you feel best represents the show, using any variety of creative materials. Include the following criteria on the poster:

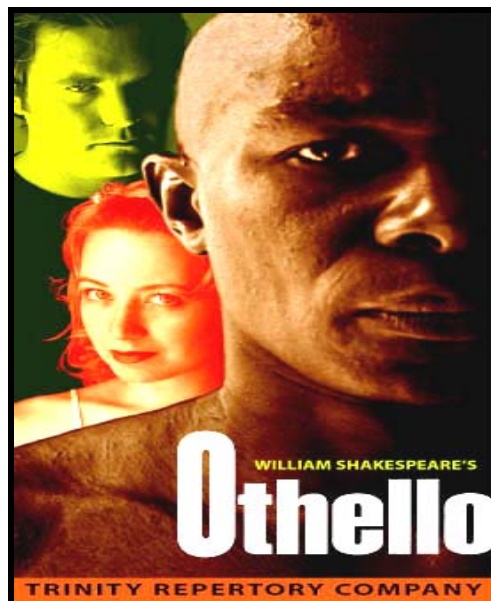> *Name of Play*: *Cyrano de Bergerac*
> *Playwright's Name:* Edmond Rostand
> *Director's Name:*   Amanda Dehnert
> *Address of Theater:* Trinity Repertory Company, 201 Washington St. Providence
> *Phone Number of the Box Office:* 352-4242
> *Sponsors:* Trinity Rep's Inner Circle and the Helen G. Hauben Foundation

A Set design for *Cyrano* by Cameron Porteus

Set Designers:

Create a model or collage of the world that the play *Cyrano de Bergerac* could occur in.
How would you approach the design of a show? What does the world of these characters
look like? What will be interesting both theatrically and functionally? What colors, shapes,
textures, and materials (wood, steel, glass, fabrics) will you use? Feel free to use pictures,
magazines, household products, or anything that you feel belongs in your conception of the
world of *Cyrano de Bergerac*.

Creating Performance:
An Exhibition on *Cyrano de Bergerac*

Hold an exhibition of all student-created work from this unit of study.

GALLERY:
>Ask students interested in showing their original art and posters to name, frame and
>mount their work, encouraging creative use of the space around the classroom.
>Arrange the set and costume designs around the room on small tables, and ask
>students to write short descriptions of their designs and to justify and explain the
>choices they made when creating the work.

FOUND SPACE:

Choose several of the playwright's scenes from the Rewriting exercise on pp. 20-21. Cast actors and a director for each scene and schedule rehearsal time while the gallery is being assembled. In one corner of the room, clear a playing space. Perform the student-created scenes in repertory with the scene studies on pages 22 -31 after the students have finished looking at the art, designs and posters on the walls.

Unit 4: Creating Performance

Performance happens in all shapes and sizes. It occurs when groups present creative solutions to kinesthetic challenges during "entering the text phase." Performances can be presentations of writing, excerpts from skills-building activities, reflections about artwork, opinions about seeing the play, or exercises in finding one's personal aesthetic. Performances do not need to be elaborate productions, but can be presented in the classroom, some without much practice, others with some revision. The emphasis is on content and experiential learning more than on developing artistic skill.
   -Deanna Camputaro and Len Newman

Interpretation: The Artist's Prerogative

Now that the students have had a chance to work with text, and to see the play performed, they may be interested in crafting their own piece for presentation. As you have seen, both actors and directors (not to mention designers!) take great liberties in interpreting the text to support their vision of the play. Encourage your students to think creatively as they envision their production. Have them ask themselves the following questions:

> ➢ Where else could the events of this play take place?
> ➢ What themes of this play are most relevant today?
> ➢ What other language style could be used in this play?

Before you begin to feel overwhelmed by the idea of a full-blown production, keep in mind that a culminating event can take any number of different forms. The primary goal of the performance is to share the work of the students, not to have a full set or lighting design or professionally built costumes. Below are a few ideas for culminating events. Keep in mind that a performance is simply a sharing of work that has been done. Also, be sure to set a realistic goal for the group, based on your timeline for the project!

The Pastiche Model: This model, which is probably the easiest to assemble, consists of a selection of the scenes from the play. The presentation usually consists of three or four scenes or monologues from the play linked thematically, performed in the original language of the text.

The Tableau Model: Using short pieces of text that can be read individually, or as groups, the students form tableaus to help tell the story of the play and physicalize its salient themes.

The Framing Model: To tell the story in a slightly different way, characters from the play are placed in a different context. For instance, Cyrano, Roxane, and Christian are put on the Jerry Springer Show to tell each of their stories and to confront each other. This model allows the students to develop their own script for one part of the presentation, while allowing for them to intersperse actual scenes from the play.

The "Concept" Model: This one could be anything! Students identify themes from the play and develop their own scenes in response to those themes. Keep in mind that the student's interpretation may take the form of scenes, songs, poetry, artwork, or all of the above. This is, of course, the most difficult and time-consuming model, but probably the most rewarding for the students. If you choose to go with a concept, be certain to allow yourself enough time for development and rehearsal!

Once you have developed and rehearsed your piece, the next step is to share it with an audience. Be sure to invite an audience with whom the students will be comfortable, and to stage your performance in a space that is conducive to student success.

Warming up on the Performance Day!

All performers get nervous prior to performing, so assure your students that this is a perfectly natural (and healthy) reaction to appearing on stage. The nervous energy is one of the elements that make your performance exciting! Still, it's a good idea to focus all of that good energy so that it doesn't turn into pure stage fright. The following exercises will help students to prepare themselves both mentally and physically for performance.

Shake It Out

Model this exercise first. Have students stand in a circle, placing yourself in a position for all to see you. For a backwards countdown of five each time, shake out each arm and each leg. Have everyone call out the numbers, and encourage full energy and shakes. After five, do each appendage for four counts, then three, and so on.

Breathing for Concentration and Stage Fright

Practice the following deep breathing exercises to focus and prepare students to deal with the rush of adrenaline before performance.
> *Inhale into the diaphragm.*
> *Hold.*
> *Exhale slowly counting backward from 10. (It helps to have one person count aloud.)*
> *Roll the head slowly from side to side, ear to shoulder.*
> *Drop the head slowly toward the floor on an exhale, bending at the knees and hips.*
> *Return to standing on an inhale, with the head slowly coming up last, building back up through the vertebrae.*
> *Lift the shoulders on an inhale.*
> *Drop them on an exhale.*

Diction and Vocal Warm-ups

The following exercises are the same techniques used by actors to learn how to speak clearly, increase clarity of diction, and to warm up their voices before a performance.

As a group, clearly and distinctly repeat the vowel sounds "A-E-I-O-U" out loud, concentrating on how your lips and jaw go from a wide position on "A" to a narrow position on "U." Exaggerate this motion and the difference between the sounds. After a few repetitions, try saying the following phrases out loud as a group. Try to speak as clearly and forcefully as possible, and exaggerate the sounds of the words.

- "You know you need unique New York."
- "Red leather, yellow leather, good blood, bad blood."
- "Sally sells seashells by the sea shore."
- "Whether the weather is cold, or whether the weather is hot, we'll be together whatever the weather, whether you like it or not."
- "I see Isis's icy eyes."

If you have extra time, try saying the tongue twisters with a particular accent – Southern, "very proper" British, Cockney, New York or Long Island, stereotypical "Ro Dilun," etc. What happens to the vowels in each of these accents?

Ask the students how the tongue twisters feel to practice. Which ones are harder or easier?

Other Elements of Culminating Events

You may have students that are not interested in performing. Some students are shy, others are simply disinterested, and many have other talents that they bring to the table that should be utilized. Some students have already begun to act as playwrights. Be sure to display their written work as a part of the culminating event. In the theater, all of the members of the ensemble work together to develop a performance piece, so everyone is recognized.

While you may not have the ability to build a set, visual artists may want to design the set upon which their performance piece belongs. Drawings, paintings and models displayed for the audience will help them create a setting in their mind's eye. The same is true for costume designs. Illustrations of their vision of the play are fun to look at, and indicate, just as clearly as performance, a student's comprehension of the play.

More Ideas for Preparing for Performance Day:

Advertisements

- Ask students to create posters and programs on the computer or by hand (recruit the artists in your class)
- Make copies of the scripts available to teachers and students
- Create and sell tickets
- Invite other classrooms, family and friends

Welcome the Audience

- Explain the process of creating the performance and the goals of the unit
- Demonstrate some of the warm ups and exercises used during the unit
- Introduce each section of the performance with excitement, enthusiasm and respect for the performers

Post-Show Celebration

- Bow to your audience. This is a very important aspect of the performance, which allows the actors to salute the audience, as well as giving the audience the opportunity to applaud the actors. This takes rehearsal, so reserve some time during your unit to practice.
- Have a post show discussion with students and audience. Ask the audience to offer their constructive feedback on what they observed about the performance

Unit Five: Reflection

Reflection should be an ongoing process. Whether your students are reflecting on their own aesthetic understanding of material, or on their process of community building, time should be allotted for reflection and assessment. Reflection should also take place in the form of critique and development of rubric.
- Deanna Camputaro and Len Newman

Though we've listed this part of the process last in the study guide, developing a rubric and a language for reflecting on student work should be one of the first things you do. We suggest you develop a set of questions and a rubric for assessment WITH YOUR STUDENTS. Please develop these sets of standards early in your unit so students will know what makes their work effective and how they can improve upon it.

Build a Rubric

One of the first reactions that students have to seeing a performance is their need to identify whether it was "good" or "bad". It is imperative that you take the time to develop a constructive language for reflection on all activities, as the students will eventually be assessing not only themselves, but also their classmates. Developing a rubric with your students will help to discourage such sweeping, negative and ultimately useless comments, such as "That was horrible!" by forcing students to explain their reaction to an activity, based on a set of standards developed by the group. It is also a good idea to have students identify elements that worked and elements that didn't work, no matter what the activity. Different activities will have different criteria for success, so take these student-generated rubrics and post them visibly in your classroom to use throughout your performance unit.

Remember that art is subjective and people tend to have completely emotional responses to it. Avoid the use of the words "good" and "bad" in discussions as these carry a value judgment. Try, for example, "effective" and "less effective", which are not absolute, and require a more informed explanation. While emotional responses will play a role in the building of your rubric, the students should also use their knowledge of the art form, the content of the play, and other relevant information to inform their opinions and their assessment tool. In fact, the development of the rubric is one more way in which we measure

the student's comprehension of the material. Use some of the following questions to begin to develop a rubric for performance:

- When you see a performance, what makes you enjoy it?
  (***Potential responses***: *it's funny, it tells a story, it makes me cry*)
- What do you think are the elements of a good performance?
  (***Potential responses***: *you're loud, you show your emotion, focus)*
- What steps did you need to take to create a performance?
  (***Potential responses***: *brainstorming, an outline, rehearsal)*
- What elements of your performance were effective?
  (***Potential responses***: *we were loud, there was action)*
- What would you change for next time to make the work stronger?
- What elements were used in the performance to clearly communicate to the audience?

There are limitless ways in which to build a rubric. First you must decide what outcomes you expect and are trying to measure, and then formulate questions that address those outcomes. It is important to be consistent. If you have been building rubrics in your classroom to conform to standards-based curriculum frameworks, keep your performance rubrics in line with your academic rubrics. If not, we've found that the following model can be very useful.

Discuss each activity with the group and allow them to set the standard. For example, the group establishes the following standard for effective performance:

- I can be heard by everyone in the room.
- I show my emotion.
- I have good energy.
- I am focused on what I'm doing.

Keep in mind that these are just examples and that it is important that you develop the rubric with your students, depending upon what you would like to measure. Now, each criterion will have to be scored, both for student self-assessment and critique of other students or other performances.   This can be very a simple measure, such as "Yes" (we met the standard) or "No" (we didn't meet the standard) or a fairly sophisticated system for measuring improvement. We suggest giving the students a fairly broad method of scoring. For instance:

1= No   **2**=Rarely   **3**=Sometimes   **4**=Mostly   **5**=Always

It will make your life much easier if your scoring method works for each of your rubrics, and it could certainly be broader than the example above. The following is example of how this type of a rubric might look for student self assessment:

What Makes A Good Performance?	1	2	3	4	5
I could be heard by everyone in the room					
I had good energy					
I showed my emotion					
I was focused					

Now, many of these students have never been on stage before and may not have a clear idea about what makes for effective live performance. If you are attending a performance at the

theater, use that performance as your standard-setting experience. What did they observe the actors doing that made the performance enjoyable or affecting? Ask both before and after the performance what the students think is important. Does seeing the play influence their opinions? This model can also be adjusted to allow students to critique performances and other related activities.

Keep a Log

A log is the record of a journey. Ask students to keep a record of their own journey as you study and see the production of *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Leave time at the end of each class for students to write in the journal. Help them with prompts such as:

- What are some of the lines you particularly enjoyed? Why?
- Personal impressions of the characters and reactions to the ideas or subjects that come up as you read and participate in the activities and scenes
- Notes on how you would perform one of the characters. What draws you to them?
- Comments on the importance of a reoccurring word or phrase.
- What do you think the title signifies?
- Which exercises in class did you enjoy? What made the scene or activity engaging and interesting for you?
- What skills do you think you need to improve on the scene you performed?
- What was the best part of the performance you took part in and/or saw at Trinity Rep?
- What were your impressions of the set, acting, lighting and staging after watching the show at Trinity Rep? How was the space used? Were the actors committed to their performance? Do you agree with the choices of the director, actors and designers? What would you have done differently?

Reflect Individually – Use Note Cards

- Read the students journals and create note cards to pass out to students that include your reflections.
- After each class ask students to reflect on the work of the day on the note card. Ask them specific questions that came up in the class. Read the student reflections to plan for the next day's class or to learn more about individual issues and questions.

Reflect In Small And Large Groups

- Using the prompts above ask the entire group to reflect on the performances
- Ask individual students to reflect on one specific aspect of the performance
- When doing small group work, ask students to focus on a specific aspect of the performance to work on (i.e. focus on improving commitment of your performance)

Original Review

Ask students to review *Cyrano de Bergerac* from their unique perspectives as young adults. Send the reviews to your local newspaper or to Trinity Rep at education@trinityrep.com. The Education department will choose one or two reviews to print in the theater's newsletter and to exhibit at the end of the school year.

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