



"Cyrano"

From Cyrano De Bergerac, by Edmond Rostand

Adapted by Cora Alley For the Christmas Madrigal Dinner

Scripture: 1 Samuel 16: 7b

"... man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart."

Dramatic Category: Christmas Madrigal Dinner Theater

What is a "Madrigal Dinner"?

A "Madrigal Dinner" is a trip back in time. Twelve singers dress in 16th century, English costumes and herald in the Christmas season with a harmonious concert of traditional, acappella carols. The ten members of the royal court join the King and Queen as they sit on stage in a semi-circle that opens to the audience.

The guests are seated at festively decorated tables ready to enjoy a Christmas dinner with all the trimmings: the Wassail (hot apple cider), the "boar's head" (prime rib), and Figgie Pudding (bread pudding). The King's Jester serves as the "Master of Ceremonies" for the evening, as he delights and surprises the audience with toasts, jokes, and comic asides.

A troupe of the "King's players" join the Court and present a traditional play that dates back to the time of classic European literature. The scenes of the play are woven among the courses of the meal and set up the sweet message of the Christmas carols. The audience comes away from the evening having enjoyed a delicious holiday feast, laughed and cried at the players, and marveled at the vocal talent of the ensemble.

NOTE:

See the "Madrigal Checklist," at the end of the script, to assist you in producing the wonderful evening of celebration.

Topic: The sacrifice of true love

Performance Time: 1 hour program + the concert and the meal = 2 hours total

Number of Players: 2 players, 12 singers, (with an option of 15+ entertainers)

Objective:

To show that true love produces a willingness to sacrifice for the sake of the beloved, as God did for His creation when He sacrificed Jesus for us all.

Synopsis:

Tonight's story is loosely adapted from Edmond Rostand's 18th century classic, *Cyrano De Bergerac*. It is a love story, presenting the age-old struggle of unrequited love! Cyrano, born with a nose that could be the grand prize in a lottery, loves the fair Roxanne; but her heart belongs to the handsome Christian, one of the young knights who has been handpicked by the King to enter a contest for Princess Roxanne's hand in marriage. What is the contest? Poetry!

The men bristle at expressing themselves in verse, but Cyrano's poetic soul finds wings! Cyrano's illusions of marrying his dear Roxanne are dashed, however, when he sees how much she loves Christian. Cyrano must now measure the true depth of his love. Will Cyrano help Christian win Roxanne by breathing his poetic soul into Christian? Will he write for Christian? Will he speak for Christian? Will Cyrano sacrifice his happiness to give Roxanne the desire of her heart?

Will Roxanne discover that "Beauty is empty entertainment, and she who finds entertainment in mediocrity reveals a bankrupt soul"? Let the merriment, the feast, and the melodies work their charm, as together we explore the depths of true love!

Cast:

The Royal Players:

Cyrano: A gentle heart, a grand captain, and a large nose!

Jester: A fun-loving clownish fellow who conducts the evening

The Madrigal Singers:

King:A grand, hospitable, jolly manQueen:A sympathetic mother to RoxanneRoxanne:A fussy little miss who wants romance

Christian: A very "basic" man who is attracted to Roxanne

Ladies 1, 2, 3, 4: Royal female members of the court

Lords 1, 2, 3, 4: Royal male members of the court

NOTE:

These 12 singers, dressed in Renaissance costumes, make up the king's court. They are an acappella singing cast, which also presents a concert of Christmas carols during the program. Mix the vocal parts as you see fit. The parts sung do not have any bearing on the parts spoken.

Additional Cast (optional):

(*The play does not <u>require</u> these people*, but they add a wonderful dimension to the program)

1 Juggler: *entertains at mealtime*

3 Mimes: *perform antics during mealtime*

4 Minstrels: *serenade with instruments at mealtime, at the tables*

Trumpeter(s): signal events with fanfare

2 Beefeaters: *armored knights who stand guard at the door*

2 Announcers: announce guests by name, at the door

Serving girls: dressed as peasants, to wait on each table (as many as you need)

2 Litter bearers: *carry in the courses of the meal*

1 Magician: entertains guests during mealtime, at their tables4 Troubadours: sing to guests during mealtime, at their tables

Dancers: They add festivity to the evening. They perform a dance number

dressed as "Merry Maids" with flowing dresses and flowers in their

hair; like in the days of "Robin Hood."

Orphan children: This is an opportunity for your "children's choir" to get involved.

They sing a song to the audience during the show. Dress these elementary-aged children in rags, dirty their faces, and give them bowls to beg at the tables. Then, put chocolate "gold coins" on each table and let the people give them to the children when they come by.

Disgruntled Serving Girls: An ensemble of six women who work up a few songs that are

off-pitch, and silly in nature. They are generally irritated that their voices are not good enough to be one of those "uppity Madrigal Singers." After all, "We clean up real nice, too!

Costumes:

Dress in Renaissance and medieval costumes. See specific cast descriptions above, for costuming suggestions.

Props:

Set the King's table for a traditional Renaissance Christmas feast

Rolled up "poems" with the letter "C" on them

A basket to collect the poems on the table

Feather pens for each of the "Lords" at the table

Parchment-looking sheets of paper for the "Lords" at the table

A sword for Cyrano

Gold-wrapped, chocolate coins (for "Orphan Chorus" option)

Lights:

Design the lighting in such a way that the players and King's Court are highlighted according to their dominance in the program.

Sound:

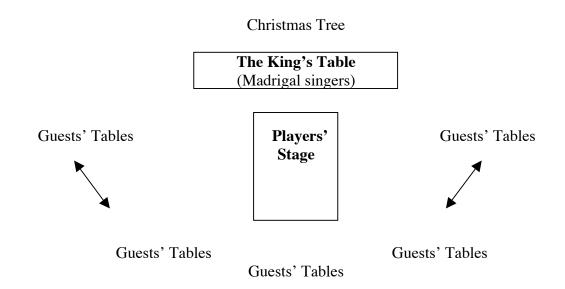
Microphones for the singers, at the table

Wireless mics for the actors with lines, who aren't at the table

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Staging:

If you can "transform" your room into a "castle hall" with "theater-in-the-round" seating, it will enhance the "ambience" of the evening. Here is a suggested diagram:



A Guide to 16th Century English Christmas Customs

Wassail - The festive holiday drink from the Anglo-Saxon, "Wes-hal," means "be whole." The old wassail bowls, usually of silver or pewter, were immense. It was the custom of the stewards upon entering the banquet hall to call out, "Wassail, Wassail," and this was answered by the host and the guests alike with song or carol. A forerunner was "lamb's wool," a mixture of hot ale, sugar, spices, eggs, and roasted apples. Thick cream was sometimes added. It was served in the wassail bowl with pieces of toast floating on top. Hence, the origin of the drinking toast.

Boar's Head - Traditionally, this is the heart of the Christmas feast. Its mouth propped open with an apple, the head was brought in on a silver dish, to a fanfare and a special carol. Its origin comes from Psalm 80, in which Satan is the "boar out of the wood." The head of the slain boar, paraded about the Great Hall, showed the defeat of Satan by the newborn Christ child. The master of the house would take an oath upon it to perform some charitable deed, and often the other gentlemen seated at the table would follow suit.

Plaming Plum Pudding - Everyone in the household stirred the plum pudding and made a wish. If a trinket were found in the piece one ate, the wish would come true; consequently, it became known as "Figgie Pudding."

The Twelve Days of Christmas - Known liturgically as Epiphany, representing the traditional time of the journey of the Magi to worship the Christ child. The twelve days were a time of great feasting, celebration, singing of Madrigals and carols, plays and general merry making.

A vocal music idiom from the 14th and 15th century in Italy, the Madrigals developed chiefly in the 16th century in England. The word has its origin in either Mandrialis (pastoral song), or matricials (in the mother tongue). English Madrigals were variously called songs, sonnets, canzonets, and ayres.

Instruction for the beginning:

Do a cheery job of decorating the set like an old English castle. Use coats of arms, banners, swords, thrones, drapes of rich tapestry, etc. The Christmas tree should be magnificent, the wreaths and centerpieces should be studded with decorations and lights, and the entire mood should be magical.

Set all the tables with china and good glassware. No paper plates. Outfit each table with rolls and fill the water glasses. People want something to eat and drink the minute they arrive. Hungry people are generally grumpy!

Light the candles, dim the lights and instruct the minstrels to roam the house playing their instruments while the guests enter. The "announcers," welcome each guest and shout out his/her name (i.e. "The Lord and Lady Parker"). Servers wait inside the hall near the door, with their guest list for their table in hand. When they hear a name called that is assigned to their table, they come to the door and escort them to their table. Mimes and the magician can entertain the guests.

Caution:

Assign the mimes, the musician, and the juggler, various parts of the house at various times, so they do not wear out their welcome by frequenting the same part of the house all night.

The Script:

Fanfare 1

(The trumpeters enter and march around the hall. They meet at the front of the King's table.)

(Prologue)

Jester: (*He enters the hall with exuberance.*)

Alas, dear guests, you've filled our hall! Our King welcomes you, one and all!

So gaily clad in handsome dress, (aside) No doubt this royal mob you'll impress.

Unstick thy mind from present day, Let it come with us, let it fly away,

This room is now a castle hall, And we are players--one and all.

Turn back the clock a thousand years, To knights and ladies, toasts and cheers!

(to a man seated with his lady)
Good sir, is this your lady love?
This precious gift from God above?

Hold her man! Show her your heart; (He puts the man's arm around her.) For this is life's delicious part!

Tonight, on love, I also feast; While you're just gumming roasted beast.

LIGHTS: SPOTLIGHT ON CYRANO

(With admiration)
His love is daughter to the King,
Roxanne, her name his heart could sing!

He's loved her since their childhood days, He's mesmerized by all her ways.

(snapping out of his dream-like state)
Our feast is but a grand contest,
Roxanne will see whom she loves best!

The bravest men of valor and wit, Tonight at our King's table sit.

Roxanne will put them to the test, Who shall win? Who is the best?

Alone, he's killed a hundred men, Then patched them up to fight again!

He's grace, honor, and civility, Cloaked always in perfect humility.

(Cyrano bows.)

(peering at someone in the audience)
You are staring, and it shows!
Are you marveling at his nose?

It's but an indicator, you understand; For the soul of him is equally grand!

LIGHTS: OFF ON CYRANO

(The Jester mounts the stage.)

(changing the mood)
Well, let's be on with it, I pray,
Our cook has labored all the day.

Hear me now guests, and don't forget, My simple rules of etiquette!

(unfurls his scroll)

Please be cordial, never rude, And do not steal your neighbor's food.

Eating with fingers will make a mess, So, wipe them on your lady's dress.

And if you feel the need to spit; Please wait until the singers quit.

Do all you are told by the King and his Queen Don't cross him, just don't...If you know what I mean.

There, of rules, there are no more, But if you break them, you're out the door

Speaking of the door, our evening begins! Our Madrigals enter; enjoy them, my friends.

(drawing the attention of the audience again) The fairest Roxanne floats on the air, See her, oh look, she's right over there!

Processional:

(The madrigal singers enter as they sing a Christmas carol. "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" is a favorite. They line up at opposite doors as they enter, weave through the audience as they sing, meet at the front, curtsy and bow to each other, and finally the Ladies are escorted to their seats by the Lords.)

King:

(All Madrigals remain standing; The King opens his arms wide as he welcomes his guests.)

Welcome guests from far and wide, From hill, and vale, and countryside,

My bounty is yours' eat, drink, and be merry! With jests and fine song this party will tarry!

Though cook has labored all day long, Let us thank our God in gracious song.

SONG: "The Blessing" (Or a prayer-like song or a spoken prayer)

Scene 1: "The Contest"

King: Tonight you witness a grand selection,

My daughter, Roxanne, will choose perfection,

From among the young men assembled tonight,

She'll decide on a husband, right?

Roxanne: Right!

Queen: Good husband, love is not a thing you can hurry;

She's not an old maid; there's no reason to worry.

King: Dear wife, the fruit on her tree is ripe,

The pickers are here, now enough of this tripe!

(to Roxanne)

My daughter, they all have wealth, brains and brawn,

Please make it simple; just pick one.

Queen: She'll live with this choice for the rest of her life;

It's no easy thing to be a man's wife!

King: I have wealth and brains and brawn;

So advise her wife, for you weren't wrong.

Queen: (playfully staring at her husband)

Wealth, and brains and brawn, you said; Well, I guess two out of three's not bad.

Roxanne will glean ample advice,

Her handmaidens will report on each man's vice!

(The ladies nod in agreement.)

King: (recovering from the insult and addressing Roxanne)

Tell us, how shall these men compete?

Jousting, fencing, or some brute strength feat?

(All the knights at the table flex their muscles.)

Roxanne: (rising to her feet and addressing the crowd)

Love is a matter of the heart,

It is here such noble emotions start.

So this is what the contest shall be:

(All of them eagerly lean in.)

Poetry!

(Each woman sitting beside each knight produces a quill and a scroll. The knights grimace.)

Letters of love; rhymes of verse!

(The men stare at Roxanne in disbelief.)

I could have thought of something worse!

(They shake their heads.)

(The knights grumble to each other and to the ladies. The girls turn a deaf ear.)

King: Enough! Enough! Before you turn pale.

Drown your sorrows men, in a cup of wassail.

Jester: Ah, a cup of wassail;

My favorite ale!

SONG: Wassail Song

"Wassail, Wassail all over the town...."

(A bowl of apple-colored gelatin that "looks like cider, but isn't" is carried by the pages on a litter. It is paraded around the house and stops at the king's table for approval. The King rises, survey's the cider and nods. He waves the pages on, and they exit.)

WASSAIL SERVED:

(The hot apple cider brought out by the servers.)

Fanfare 2

THE TOASTS:

King: (lifting his glass high)

Now to a man who's tongue is as sharp as his sword; Some toasts, my friend, for each lady and lord!

Cyrano: My verse is legendary, good King;

Poets, and priests, my praises sing.

(Cyrano bows, and each one of the knights begins to poke silent fun at his nose)

Christian: Doesn't he boast a bit too much?

That nose of his could be a crutch!

King: Do not mention anything cartilaginous or convex,

Or his sword your innards will perplex!

Cyrano: Is the court ready to be stunned with rhyme?

King: Begin your toasts sir, anytime.

Cyrano: (selecting a man in the audience)

May God grant you vision to always see beyond...

Christian: Your nose!

(The court is shocked that the knight would be so rude as to comment on Cyrano's nose.)

Cyrano: (flashing an evil eye to Christian as he finishes the toast)

... beyond tomorrow.

(The court and the audience toast. Cyrano moves to a woman in the audience.)

May you never have to pay...

Christian: Through the nose.

(again, the court is shocked)

Cyrano: (glaring at Christian)

Pay the piper.

(audience toasts)

(Cyrano approaches Christian, and leans into him.)

My witty companion, my time is now, your time is later.

Ask yourself, "Why am I putting my...

Christian: Nose in?

(Cyrano reaches for his sword.)

Cyrano: Two cents in!

(Cyrano struggles to keep his composure.)

(He finds a couple and toasts them.)

May you two always be...

Christian: Rubbing noses...

(The court is once again shocked.)

Cyrano: (with his teeth clenched and glaring at Christian)

Blessed with good health!

(They finish their toast.)

(Cyrano boldly approaches Christian.)

Do you wish to make some comment about my nose?

Christian: It is rather large

Cyrano: (gravely) Rather.

Christian: Quite!

Cyrano: (coolly) Is that all?

Christian: Isn't that enough?

Cyrano: Ah, no good sir? You are too simple.

Why you might have said

Oh a great many things, why waste your opportunity?

Had you been <u>aggressive</u>: "Sir, if that nose were mine,

I'd have it amputated on the spot!"

Or, friendly:

"How do you drink with such a nose? You ought to have a cup made especially."

Descriptive:

"'Tis a rock--a crag--a cape--a cape?

Say, rather, a peninsula!

Kindly:

"Ah, do you love the little birds so much that when they come and sing to you, you give them this to perch on?

Insolent:

"Sir, when you smoke, the neighbors must suppose your chimney is on fire!"

Cautious:

"Take care, a weight like that might make you top-heavy."

Eloquent:

"When it blows, the typhoon howls, and the clouds darken."

Dramatic:

"When it bleeds, the Red Sea!"

Simple:

"When do they unveil the monument?"

Practical:

"Why not a lottery with this for the grand prize?

Or parodying Faustus in the play:

"Was this the nose that launched a thousand ships?"

These, my dear sir, are things you might have said Had you some tinge of letters, or of wit To color your discourse.

But wit; not so.

You never had an atom!

And of letters?

I need but three to write you down!

If I were Samson, I should ask to borrow your jawbone!

King: (trying to settle the dispute)

Ah, peace, peace my friend; this little twit, Is not a fitting adversary for your wit.

Dear guests, I've been remiss in introducing the one,

Who's consented to conduct our evening's fun.

Captain of the guard, and newly back;

Cyrano De Bergerac!

(The court applauds and the ladies twitter.)

Queen: This battle of wit must end, if it can.

Cyrano: I never do battle with an unarmed man!

Roxanne: Cyrano, may I have a word with you later?

I have something of great importance to tell you.

Cyrano: (hurrying over to her and very thrilled)

Importance?

Roxanne: Oh yes, a deep and precious secret of the heart!

(whispering to Cyrano)

I think I've already made my choice!

Cyrano: And you want to tell me?

(Roxanne nods. Cyrano is delighted and convinced it is him she loves.)

King: This romantic dribble is all well and good,

But I still haven't gotten a morsel of food.

Cyrano: Ah, food for the body; but love for the soul;

(snippy at the men on the court)

One moment, Roxanne, I must take control! (He exits, sword unshielded, shouting.)

Jester: I'll get it, my captain. I judge by her tone;

(pointing to Roxanne)

Her message is dear; <u>lettuce leaf</u> them alone.

(impressed with himself)

Ha! Get it? "Lettuce leaf" them alone! Salad... lettuce... Oh well, enjoy!

SALAD IS SERVED:

(Play some Old English harpsichord-type music.)

Option: The "Disgruntled Servers" Perform a Song.

(The reactions of the Madrigal singers are shock and distaste.)

Fanfare 3

Scene 2: "The Sacrifice"

Cyrano:

(Enters with a quill and a scroll in hand. He writes a poem for Roxanne, as he finishes, he reads part of it.)

Sending you kisses through my finger-tips--Lady, oh read my letter with your lips!

Roxanne:

(Approaching the front of the stage as she leaves her place at the table. The rest of the court does not heed their conversation. It appears to be private. The knights are busy writing poetry, and the ladies look over their shoulders and twitter.)

Cyrano: (Seeing Roxanne approach, he quickly hides the letter and he extends his hand.)

Oh, my sunlight...tell me your secret!

Roxanne: I shall, (looking around)

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But first, tell me, are you still my friend like you were when we were children?

Cyrano: Each summer you came to Bergerac?

Roxanne: You used to make swords out of bulrushes.

Cyrano: And your dandelion-dolls with golden hair.

Roxanne: Was I pretty?

Cyrano: (playfully) Not too plain.

Roxanne: In those days, you did everything I wished.

Cyrano: Then and now!

Tell me what you wished to tell me.

(She takes his hand in hers and comes close.)

Roxanne: (looking around) I... I love someone!

Cyrano: (delighted) Ah!

Roxanne: Someone who does not know; at least not yet.

Cyrano: Ah!

Roxanne: But he will know someday!

Cyrano: Ah!

Roxanne: He's a soldier, in your regiment!

Cyrano: Ah!

Roxanne: And such a man!

He is proud, noble, young, brave, and beautiful!

Cyrano: (touching his nose) Beautiful?

Roxanne: What's the matter?

Cyrano: (regaining his composure)

Oh, nothing.

Just tell him, quickly, for you hold his trembling heart in your ivory hand! (He takes her hand in his and kisses it.) **Roxanne:** But we've never spoken!

Cyrano: (looking up in disappointment and slowly dropping her hand)

(Turning his back) You've never spoken!

Roxanne: We have with our eyes! Such eyes!

Such a beautiful face must have a beautiful soul.

Cyrano: Pure love has its own beauty.

What does its wrapping matter?

Roxanne: Oh it matters greatly!

Who could bear to look at ugliness each day, no matter how sweet the words?

Cyrano: His name?

Roxanne: What?

Cyrano: Your love, what is his name?

Roxanne: (pointing to Christian)

Baron Christian de Neuvillette.

Cyrano: (looking in Christian's direction in disbelief)

No!

Why do you tell me this?

Roxanne: My heart is so full; I cannot contain my secret any longer.

Oh, hope with me, my friend, that his soul is as beautiful as his face.

I shall die if he cannot speak with his heart!

Keep my secret?

Cyrano: I shall.

Roxanne: Oh, I always did love you!

(Roxanne kisses Cyrano on the cheek and hurries back to her place at the table.)

Cyrano: (trailing behind her, but she doesn't hear)

If only your love were blind,

or my love shone out from a beautiful frame.

No hope remains for me with this protuberance!

I have no more illusions. I will grow old alone with this

poor big devil of a nose which, after a spring rain, inhales April!

(to himself) I have my bitter days.

So ugly, so alone. But I shall not weep. Not ever!

No, that would be too grotesque:

tears trickling all the long way down this nose of mine!

I will not so profane the dignity of sorrow.

(Cyrano stands for a moment and stares at Christian. Finally, he approaches him. Motions to him, they walk to the front of the court and speak)

Christian: (trying to be coy.)

Still cross about that verbal joust we had?

Cyrano: If I were to engage in a verbal joust, I should

be talking to myself!

(aside) He is a handsome devil!

Christian: Then am I to prepare for a duel?

Cyrano: No, no; that you have already won.

Christian: (giving Cyrano a puzzled look)

I have won a victory over you?

No, that is a conquest I would remember!

Cyrano: Well, take a good look, then.

(He turns completely around.)

Vanguished, conquered. She loves you!

Christian: Loves me? Who?

Cyrano: Her! Roxanne!

Christian: She loves me? She's not seen my poetry!

Cyrano: But she's seen your face. Let's hope your verse matches your profile!

(He turns Christian's head to a profile.)

Flawless! Let's hear it!

Christian: (unfolding his poem and adopting a heroic stance.)

Roxanne, I love you!

Cyrano: (bitingly) Why keep her hanging?

Christian: I love you! Love you with all my heart! And I never, never want to part.

I love you from your toe to your head, Now, let's get married and go to...

(Cyrano cuts him off.)

Cyrano: Stop!

Christian: Like it?

Cyrano: Apart from its meter, rhyme, and message;

It's immortal!

Christian: Well, I wouldn't call it immoral...

Cyrano: (shouting) Immortal!

Christian: You don't like it?

Cyrano: It wreaks! Your crude verse will break her heart.

Christian: (staring at his poem) It's not good, then?

Cyrano: Your talent for verse and my nose were both created on one of God's off days!

Christian: Then I shall lose her?

Cyrano: That I could abide, but her losing you; that I cannot.

Christian: I wish I had your wit!

Cyrano: I wish I had your face!

(The two of them stare at each other for a moment.)

If only my heart beat within your chest;

Ah, we two could make one hero of romance, 'eh?

(thinking for a moment)

Would you dare to repeat to her the words I gave you?

Christian: You mean?

Cyrano: Roxanne will have no disappointment!

Shall we win her together? My soul breathed into you!

Christian: Why would you do this for me after I...

Cyrano: Not for you! For her!

If anything in me could bring her happiness, then I must give it.

Is it a deal?

Christian: Indeed!

(He hands Cyrano his poem.)

Can you repair this?

Cyrano: As easily as I could give birth!

(He gives Christian the letter he had written to Roxanne.)

Give her this.

Christian: (reading it) Oh, this should get her!

Cyrano: Get her! Chickens are gotten!

Women are won, wooed, treasured, exalted. Good heavens, man, she's not a side of beef!

(He looks shocked.)

Beef! Pfi! I forgot. I have a feast to conduct! (He runs off, turns and shouts to Christian.)

I'll write a few notes to her and sign your name!

Her dream will come true!

(Cyrano enters with the boar's head and rings a bell to cue the singers.)

Jester: How noble his heart; though it breaks as he speaks;

My Captain is right; this man's poetry reeks!

This is devotion; born from above, To sacrifice one's self; that is true love. (in a dreamy stupor; then snaps out of it)

Now comes the feast!

SONG: The Boar's Head

(A pig's head, carried by the pages on a litter is paraded around the house and stops at the king's table for approval. The King rises, survey's the head and nods. He waves the pages on, and they exit.)

Option: "Orphan Chorus" (sung by the "orphan children")

(The children perform their song, then stroll among the audience singing for three tables at a time. The people seated at the tables give the children gold foil-wrapped candy in the shape of money which was laid on the tables beforehand.)

THE MEAL IS SERVED:

(Throughout the meal, the magician does tricks, and the minstrel(s) play. Jugglers stroll among the audience also as the musicians play throughout the meal. When the meal is finished, the trumpeters enter.

During dinner, rolled poems, tied with ribbons, with a red seal and a "C" are handed to Roxanne by the mimes, magicians, instrumentalists, and guards. Roxanne reads the notes as they come. She shows her maidens who point to Christian because they think the "C" means that the note is from him.)

Fanfare 4

(Trumpeters hand the Roxanne another note when they are finished with the fanfare; this adds to the large basket that she has gathered.)

Scene 3: "Words of Love"

King: (watching the knights struggle over their poetry)

So, daughter, shall we end their curse?

I see you've gotten ample verse.

(He motions to the basket of red-sealed poems.)

(The ladies all encourage her to read one aloud.)

Roxanne: My Lord, these notes were penned to me,

By one who signs each, with a letter "C."

(The entire court looks in the direction of Christian.)

Lady 1: (gazing at Christian)

Let's hear it, so our hearts can race! His words must surely match his face!

Roxanne: (reading a poem)

My heart is open and waits for you, My words, so sweet, your spirit woo!

They travel to your heart, their home;

Like bees heavy with honey; to the honeycomb!

(She holds the note tightly. The ladies swoon. Christian looks quite proud of himself. The King coughs to get everyone's attention again.)

(snapping out of her dream)

From the rest of these, (motioning to the men at the table)

I have not heard.

Not one romantic, breathless word.

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(She looks at her maidens who in turn stare at the men who are writing furiously trying to finish their poems.)

King: They should have fought, then one would win.

Poetry emasculates burly men.

(The queen jabs him.)

Cyrano: (entering from the back of the hall)

Not so, my king, a poetic soul,

Fights with passion, and makes heads roll!

(He raises his sword.)

Roxanne: I'm ready. (*She sits and waits patiently*.)

My heart is an empty slate.

Cyrano: (*satirically*) Write on it boys, I can hardly wait.

Lady 4: I pray, my lady, let this man start. (motioning to Lord 4, next to her)

It's such an edict from the heart.

Lord 4: (Stands, holding his poem up proudly; the court turns to him.)

The blossoms of spring wither and die,

And so, my love, will you and I.

Some day our bodies will be too old, To warm the wintry nights so cold.

Let's harness passion while we can, Don't you see that I'm your man?

(Roxanne cringes, the maidens laugh, the other knights applaud. The poem is passed to Roxanne, who begins to put it in her basket with the others, but then changes her mind, and lays it aside.)

Cyrano: (*satirically to Roxanne*) Is there a doubt?

Roxanne: (glaring at Cyrano)

Of all the poems I've ever heard,

(The knight leans in anxiously)

(holding the poem) This was one of them.

Lady 2: My lady, give ear to this handsome lad; (motioning to Lord 2, next to her) His poetry is not half bad.

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Lord 2:

(Standing. Ceremoniously unfolding his poem and reading with particular emphasis on the ending rhyme.)

Oh glory of the morning mist, I wish that I your face could kist.

I pray my words your heart will move, For you're the one I really looove,

When you are near, I scarcely breathe, You're like a flower beside the weethe. (After bowing, he sits down proudly.)

Cyrano: (Turning his head to the writer.)

His pen is a scalpel, dear lady; Such a surgeon of the language! What a shame the patient died.

Queen: (to Lord 1, seated between herself and Roxanne)

Is there life in this man's poetry?

Lord 1: (stands, prepares to read, and faces Roxanne)

If you will not have me, I shall die! Eaten by maggots; oh, wonder why.

Such a man could go to waste, And rot in his grave without a taste, Of your sweet lips, or fingertips.

Like bodies swollen in death, on the battle field,

Now how would that make you feel? (After bowing, he sits down proudly.)

Cyrano: (*To Roxanne*) Doesn't that just slay you?

Roxanne: (mortified) Please!

Lady 3: This poem you'll find less pain staking; (coaxing Lord 3 to his feet)

Not such a grave undertaking!

Lord 3:

(While Lady 3 keeps the beat with snaps of her fingers. He reads rather haltingly and out of sync.)

When the sun spits out each brand new day, I say...

Oh, what a glorious sight!

But it is nothing compared to you;

You drip... with sweetness like the morning dew.

You buzz around my melting heart,

Like flies on a tart.

(After bowing, he sits down quickly.)

Cyrano: (to Roxanne)

He called you a tart.

King: (pleading with Cyrano)

Tart? 'Lest I loose my dinner on this rug,

Perhaps dessert could be a plug?

(Cyrano signals to the Jester.)

Jester: Dessert! Ah, how could it compete,

With poetic utterances so sweet?

King: Let dessert give it a try;

Before I let my dinner fly!

DESSERT IS SERVED

Option: The "Disgruntled Servers" Perform a Song.

Fanfare 5

Scene 4: "The Disappointment"

(The Queen calls the court to order and directs this question to the ladies who sit near each knight.)

Queen: Perhaps poetry is not their only ability,

How do they fare in civility?

Lady 2: (motioning to Lord 2) This one burps!

Lady 4: (motioning to Lord 4) And this one slurps!

Lady 3: (motioning to Lord 3) He chews his food for all to see,

It really quite repulses me.

Lady 1: (motioning to Lord 1) I haven't made one flaw's detection;

My lady, here you see perfection!

Cyrano: (entering from the side)

You have decided on the winner, eh? This man is perfection, did you say?

Roxanne: (taking another poem out of the basket)

What else can I decide? Listen:

(reading the poem)

"There is no more to say: only believe In writing, I down more than you receive;

(Cyrano faces the audience and mouths these words.)

Sending you kisses through my fingertips, Lady, O read my letter with your lips.

(The court is amazed with this poem; they applaud. Roxanne speaks to Christian:)

One final test, my love-to-be; A final poem from thee to me.

Come, (she motions to Christian to stand before her.)

Improvise, rhapsodize! Be eloquent!

Christian: (overcome by shock)

Ah... I... ah... surely I...

Cyrano: (to Christian) Her name is not Shirley, it's Roxanne.

(Taking Christian aside when he comes down from the table to make his way over to Roxanne.)

We've no time to lose.

Come learn your lines. Look intelligent!

Christian: (stopping abruptly and shaking loose of Cyrano's grip)

No!

Cyrano: What?

Christian: I've had enough of taking my words, my letters all from you!

Making our love a little comedy!

It was a game at first, but now she cares.

I'll speak for myself, thank you.

I know enough to get a woman in my arms!

(He walks to Roxanne with confidence and stands before her.)

Cyrano: (reluctantly) Speak for yourself, my friend!

Scene 5: "The Facade"

(Christian stands before Roxanne, she stands up. The rest of the court listens in anticipation of what Christian will say. Cyrano stands off to the side, leaning on the edge of the table with his other hand on his sword.)

Jester: Oh merciful heavens... now she's hooked!

And this buffoon... (pointing to Christian)

His goose is cooked!

Roxanne: Now, tell me lovely things.

Christian: (after a brief silence and several gasps of air)

I love you.

Roxanne: (closing her eyes) Yes! Speak to me about love.

Christian: (after another brief silence)

I love you.

Roxanne: (peeking out of one eye) Now, be eloquent.

Christian: I love...

Roxanne: (opening both eyes widely) You have your theme,

now improvise. Rhapsodize!

Christian: I love you so!

Roxanne: (growing impatient) Of course. And then?

Christian: And then... Oh, I should be so happy if you love me, too!

Roxanne, say you love me, too!

Roxanne: (discouraged) I ask for cream and you give memilk! No, water!

Tell me first, how you love me!

Christian: Very much!

Roxanne: (bothered) Tell me how you feel!

Christian: (trying to be romantic with his eyes)

Your throat... If only I might kiss it!

Roxanne: What!

Christian: (frustrated) Oh, I know I grow absurd!

Roxanne: And that displeases me as much as if you had grown ugly!

Adieu!

Christian: (panicked) But wait!

Please, let me... I was going to say...

Roxanne: That you adore me. Yes, I know that, too.

No! Go away!

(She turns her back to Christian and folds her arms.)

Cyrano: (grabbing Christian by the sleeve and pulling him down below the table line)

Brilliant!

You have ended forever the debate that apes can speak!

Christian: (desperate) Help me!

Cyrano: (whispering hoarsely) Repeat what I tell you.

Call her.

Christian: (pleading) Roxanne!

Roxanne: You again! Go away; you do not love me anymore!

Scene 6: "The Puppet"

(Cyrano hides underneath the tablecloth. Cyrano's head sticks out. Christian repeats what Cyrano tells him. He is kneeling down on one knee, so that she can only hear him and not see him.)

Cyrano: (whispering) Not any more...

Christian: Not any more...

Cyrano: I love you... evermore...

Christian: I love you... evermore...

Cyrano: ...and ever... more and more!

Christian: ...and ever... more and more!

Roxanne: (*mildly surprised*) A little better.

Cyrano: (continuing to whisper) My love grows...

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Christian: (haltingly) My love grows...

Cyrano: ...and struggles...

Christian: ...and struggles...

Cyrano: ...like a child ready to be born;

Christian: ...like a child ready to be born;

Cyrano: ...it bursts forth from my heart.

Christian: ...it bursts forth from my heart.

Roxanne: (pleased) Better still.

(She leans over to see him better.)

But why do you speak so haltingly?

Are you well?

Cyrano: (quickly) Let my humble words float to your heights.

Christian: (nervously) Let my humble words float to your heights.

Cyrano: Do not lower your eyes to me.

Christian: Do not lower your eyes to me.

Cyrano: I am unworthy.

(Roxanne turns away and stands tall once again.)

Christian: (panics, and is short of breath) I am unworthy.

Roxanne: Your words come so strangely.

Cyrano: (kneeling to replace Christian who lies faint)

Not strange words my lady, only strange circumstance...

that your lowly servant is allowed to share his heart with so lofty a vision as yourself.

Roxanne: Oh, I like that!

Cyrano: (passionately) You've never heard 'till now,

my own heart speaking.

Roxanne: Why not?

Cyrano: Until now, I have spoken through...

Roxanne: Yes?

Cyrano: Through the sweet drunkenness you pour into the world out of your eyes!

But, tonight... tonight, I indeed speak, for the first time!

Roxanne: For the first time? Your voice is not the same!

Cyrano: I have another voice tonight: my own!

You are etched into my heart, my dear Roxanne. Is that strange?

You know how, after looking at the sun, one sees red suns everywhere? So, for hours, after the flood of sunshine that you are, my eyes are blinded

by your burning hair!

Oh my love, I tremble when I am near you.

Roxanne: You have made me tremble. I love you!

Cyrano: In my fondest dreams I have not hoped for this.

(whispering to Christian) I have made her tremble!

Now let me die! I ask for nothing more!

Roxanne: What?

Christian: (pulling Cyrano away and pleading)

I ask for one thing more!

Roxanne: What?

Christian: A kiss!

Cyrano: (whispering) A kiss? You barbarian!

Roxanne: A kiss! Of course!

(Roxanne, runs down from the table and hurries to Christian. The rest of the court strains to see. Cyrano hides completely behind the tablecloth. Christian grabs her in his arms.)

Wait! Let me etch this moment in my memory, with poetry.

Speak, my love!

Christian: No! This is not a time for words. It is a time for lips!

Roxanne: First a thought for the heart!

Christian: First a deed for the body!

Roxanne: (struggling to get herself free of his grip) No!

Your love grows basic! I want the complexity of the heart!

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Gather your dreams into words!

Christian: (growing ever more frustrated) I... I...

Roxanne: You love me, I know!

Christian: (at wit's end) I... I... want to kiss you, now!

Roxanne: Yes... I should loan you my throat; except that it is connected to my heart!

(She turns away and sits again at the table with the others.)

Cyrano: (coming out from under the table and whispering to Christian)

The last time I saw a man operate with such grace,

I was at a butcher shop!

King: (trying to be comforting)

Am I to assume the contest is still on?

Queen: Don't mock her, my Lord; can't you see she's in pain?

King: I will be too, if I hear poetry again!

We will cheer you, daughter, with carols of old, That sing of Christ's birth, and man's ransomed soul.

Queen: (trying to comfort her daughter)

I know you feel like none will do, But, listen; hear God's words to you.

Though men will come from every shore;

No one will ever love you more!

THE CONCERT:

(This is 6-8 old-English Christmas carols arranged for 12 acappella voices. The standard favorite in this set is "The Twelve Days of Christmas," with hand-motions. A really funny gag, is to have one of the Lords try in vain to lay a golden egg each time his turn comes in the song. At the very end, he produces a golden egg, and the court applauds his efforts.)

Scene 7: "The Revelation"

(After the concert is over, Roxanne takes her basket of love poems and gets up from the table. She begins to make her way out of the hall.)

Jester: Poor Roxanne; her heart is broken,

Each man's love is just a token.

Oh, dearest guests, I must tell all...

But wait, he's there... (pointing to Cyrano)

He's in the hall!

(joyfully, he gets Cyrano's attention and points out Roxanne)

King: (to Roxanne, as she is leaving)

Daughter, you do not wish to exit with the court?

Queen: (hushing the King)

Shh! You mustn't with her feelings sport.

Roxanne: (referring to the letters in her basket)

The soul in these letters has eluded me.

My contest is only a mockery!

God's love is true, He's the only one. I'll live henceforth, as a pious nun.

(She walks out, leaving the court amazed.)

Cyrano: (approaching her at the outskirts of the group)

Ah, the sun that sparkles in your eyes, has set.

Why so glum?

Roxanne: I cannot find him.

The man who wrote these letters is not real.

Cyrano: (examining one letter) Humm.

Seems real enough to me.

Looks like flesh and blood writing.

Roxanne: Flesh and blood, and soul!

Such beauty of soul.

Cyrano: Ah... beauty; it's everything, I know.

Roxanne: Not so!

Oh, I thought it was. I should love this man even if he were ugly!

(She holds up a letter he has written.)

Cyrano: (thoughtfully touching his nose) Even if he were ugly?

Roxanne: Beauty is empty entertainment, and she who finds entertainment in mediocrity,

reveals a bankrupt soul.

Cyrano: Ah, such a profound lesson for one so tender.

Roxanne: And wiser.

Cyrano: (taking a letter) Is he beautiful?

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Roxanne: In every way, listen.

(She begins to read one of the poems.)

Love seeketh not his own!

Dear, you may take my happiness to make you happier.

(Cyrano begins to mouth the words.)

I never look at you, but there is some new virtue born in me,

some new courage.

Cyrano: (continues reciting the poem from memory)

Love, I love beyond breath, beyond reason,

Beyond love's own power of loving!

Your name is like a golden bell hung in my heart,

and the bell swings, and rings: "Roxanne, Roxanne, Roxanne"!

(Cyrano bows before her with his head bent.)

Roxanne: (in disbelief) It was you!

Cyrano: No! (He turns away.)

Roxanne: (following him) I should have known.

Cyrano: (pointing to Christian) Christian loves you.

The witty one; the poet!

Roxanne: (seeming to ignore his persistent denial)

Every time I heard you speak my name.

Cyrano: (turning to her as he tries to exit)

My life is in your name.

Roxanne: When did you first love me?

Cyrano: (wistfully) Since your dandelion dolls.

Roxanne: And your swords made of bulrushes?

It was you who wrote all of these letters.

Cyrano: No! (He starts to leave again.) I couldn't... I...

Roxanne: It was you who spoke to me for that brief moment at dinner.

Cyrano: My dear Roxanne, how could one with a countenance like mine,

dare to even suggest that you could love...

Roxanne: (cutting him off) You are that beautiful soul!

(lifting his face) And that beautiful face.

Come!

(She leads him to the front of the hall where the court waits.)

Cyrano: (realizing what she is about to do) No!

(He wrenches free from her grip.)
I have love to offer you, not beauty...

not royal beauty.

I cannot fit into your world!

Roxanne: (very piously) True love has its own beauty;

what does its wrapping matter?

(persistently) Come, the contest has ended!

(She proudly presents Cyrano to the court.)

(Both she and Cyrano bow.)

The contest has ended, father. I have made my choice!

King: An end to poetry? Come, glasses raised!

(The court raises its glasses high.)

You've found a husband? Let God be praised!

Queen: Tell us, who will our new son be?

The man who signs his letters "C"?

(Everyone on the court looks at Christian who sits up hopefully.)

Roxanne: (She looks at Christian, then at Cyrano.)

Yes, this man who helped my heart to grow, "C" not for Christian, but for Cyrano!

(The court is shocked, surprised, pleased!)

King: A better man, I don't know one!

Once friend, then ally, and now my son!

(to the audience) Rejoice, with us this holiday season!

My family now has both rhyme and reason!

Jester: Oh joy, oh bliss...

They'll soon enjoy that holy kiss! You see, dear guests, love is blind! When'er a lovely heart you find.

THE BENEDICTION:

Queen: Our evening, dear friends has come to an end,

And all of you I heartily commend,

Your warmth and your humor have been our delight, And we wish you God's speed as you homeward tonight.

King: I'll echo my Queen as she commends your grace.

Your Christian charity shines on each face.

Please join us now in this most beloved carol, "Silent Night" as the Yuletide we herald.

THE RECESSIONAL:

(The court exits in much the same way as they entered. They stand in among the audience as they sing "Silent Night.")

The End

NOTE:

The following "Cheat Script" is a handy tool to put at the King's table for the singers; also, place this at all the entrances and exits for the players. This sequence of events can get confusing for even the most seasoned performers, and the last thing you want is for fine talent, dressed in their Elizabethan finery, to suffer from a brain vacation.

"Cyrano"

- Ye Old Cheat Sheet -

Fanfare 1

(Prologue)

Jester: Alas, dear guests, you've filled our hall!

Processional

King: Welcome guests from far and wide,

Opening Prayer

Scene 1: "The Contest"

King: Tonight you witness a grand selection...

Roxanne: Right!

Queen: Good husband, love is not a thing you can hurry...

King: Dear wife, the fruit on her tree is ripe...

Queen: She'll live with this choice for the rest of her life...

King: I have wealth and brains and brawn...

Queen: Wealth, and brains and brawn, you said...

King: Tell us, how shall these men compete?

Roxanne: Love is a matter of the heart...

King: Enough! Before you turn pale...

Jester: Ah, a cup of wassail...

Serve The Wassail

Fanfare 2

Toasts

King: Now to a man who's tongue is as sharp as his sword...

Cyrano: My verse is legendary, good King...

Christian: Doesn't he boast a bit too much...

King: Do not mention anything cartilaginous or convex...

Cyrano: Is the court ready to be stunned with rhyme?

King: Begin your toasts sir, anytime...

Cyrano: May God grant you vision to always see beyond...

Christian: Your nose!

King: Ah, peace, peace my friend; this little twit...

Queen: This battle of wit must end, if it can...

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Cyrano: I never do battle with an unarmed man!

Roxanne: Cyrano, may I have a word with you later...

Cyrano: Importance?

Roxanne: Oh yes, a deep and precious secret of the heart!

Serve The Salad

Option: "Disgruntled Servers" Song

Fanfare 3

Scene 2: "The Sacrifice"

Cyrano: Sending you kisses through my fingertips...

Roxanne: (leaving the table, approaching the front of the stage)

Christian: (trying to be coy) Still cross about that verbal joust we had?

(Cyrano & Roxanne discourse)

Boar's Head Song

Option: "Orphan Chorus"

Serve The Meal

Fanfare 4

Scene 3: "Words of Love"

King: So, daughter, shall we end their curse?

Roxanne: My Lord, these notes were penned to me...

Lady 1: Let's here it, so our hearts can race...

King: They should have fought, then one would win...

Cyrano: Not so, my king, a poetic soul...

Roxanne: I'm ready. (*She sits and waits patiently*.)

Cyrano: (satirically) Write on it boys, I can hardly wait...

Lady 4: Let, this man start...

Lord 4: The blossoms of spring wither and die...

Cyrano: (satirically to Roxanne) Is there a doubt?

Roxanne: Of all the poems I've ever heard...

Lady 2: My lady, give ear to this handsome lad...

Lord 2: Oh glory of the morning mist...

Cyrano: His pen is a scalpel, dear lady...

Queen: Is there life in this man's poetry?

Lord 1: If you will not have me, I shall die!

Cyrano: Doesn't that just slay you?

Roxanne: (mortified) Please!

Lady 3: This poem you'll find less painstaking...

Lord 3: When the sun spits out each brand new day...

Cyrano: He called you a tart!

King: Tart? 'Lest I loose my dinner on this rug...

Jester: Dessert! Ah, how could it compete...

King: Let dessert give it a try...

Serve The Dessert

Option: "Disgruntled Servers" Song 2

Fanfare 5

Scene 4: "The Disappointment"

Queen: Perhaps poetry is not their only ability...

Lady 2: This one burps!

Lady 4: And this one slurps!

Lady 3: He chews his food for all to see...

Lady 1: I haven't made one flaw's detection...

Cyrano: You have decided on the winner, eh?

Roxanne: What else can I decide? Listen...

Christian: Ah... I... ah... surely I...

Cyrano: (to Christian) Her name is not Shirley, it's Roxanne!

Christian: (stopping abruptly and shaking loose of Cyrano's grip)

No!

(Discourse w/ Cyrano & Christian)

Scene 5: "The Facade"

Jester: Oh merciful heavens... now she's hooked!

Roxanne: Now, tell me lovely things...

Christian: I love you...

(Discourse w/ Roxanne, Cyrano & Christian)

Roxanne: Go away; you do not love me anymore!

Scene 6: "The Puppet"

Cyrano: Not any more...

(Discourse w/ Roxanne, Cyrano & Christian)

Cyrano: (coming out from under the table and whispering to Christian)

The last time I saw a man operate with such grace...

King: Am I to assume the contest is still on?

Queen: Don't mock her, my Lord; can't you see she's in pain?

King: I will be too, if I hear poetry again! **Queen:** I know you feel like none will do...

The Concert

Scene 7: "The Revelation"

Jester: Poor Roxanne; her heart is broken...

King: Daughter, you do not wish to exit with the court?

Queen: Shh! You mustn't with her feelings sport...

Roxanne: The soul in these letters has eluded me...

(Discourse w/ Cyrano)

Roxanne: Come, the contest has ended!

King: An end to poetry? Come, glasses raised!

Queen: Tell us, who will our new son be?

Roxanne: Yes, this man who helped my heart to grow...

(identifies Cyrano)

King: A better man, I don't know one!

Jester: Oh joy, oh bliss...

Concert Conclusion

The Benediction

Queen: Our evening, dear friends has come to an end...

King: I'll echo my Queen as she commends your grace...

The Recessional

The End

Madrigal Checklist

Costumes

2 Beefeaters* Serving girls* 4 Troubadours*
4 Minstrels* 3 Mimes* 1 Jester
1 Magician* 12 Singers 1 Juggler*
2 Announcers* 2 Litter-bearers* Trumpeter(s)*
Dancers* Orphan children* Cyrano

* Optional cast members

Publicity

NewspapersChurch paperBulletinTown marqueeFlyersPostersTickets madeTickets salesPrograms

Rehearsals & Performances

Production Calendar

Technical

Sound Lights Tables Clean-up Props Set

Decorations

Design Madrigal table House Foyer Guest tables Clean-up

Entertainment

Minstrels Troubadours Mimes
Magician Jester Callers

Food Service

Menu Caterers Cast/Crew