



LESS-THAN-STELLAR *CYRANO DE BERGERAC*: (left to right) Clémence Poésy, Kyle Soller & Douglas Hodge. Photo: Joan Marcus



Theater Review

Cyrano de Bergerac:

It's easy to turn one's nose up at this tepid revival of French classic

CYRANO DE BERGERAC

By Edmond Rostand

Translated by Ranjit Bolt

Directed by Jamie Lloyd

Through November 25, 2012

American Airlines Theatre

227 W. 42nd Street

(212-719-1300), www.roundabouttheatre.org

By David NouNou

In *Cyrano de Bergerac*, the word "panache" is a word that is bandied about, parried, and thrust throughout the show. However, in this revival, there is no evidence there ever was any. Rostand's *Cyrano* is a lovely, lyrical show (a variation of *Beauty and the Beast*), with equal measures of bravado and tenderness, assuredness and insecurity, all wrapped together in words of ephemeral beauty and heartache. That was achieved in David Leveaux's 2007 revival, starring Kevin Kline, Jennifer Garner, and Daniel Sunjata. What we have here is a vulgar translation by Ranjit Bolt, hyperkinetic direction by Jamie Lloyd that is loud and focuses more on the comedy than the tragedy, and an overall lackluster cast.

Cyrano (Douglas Hodge) is a soldier, swordsman, brilliant wit, ardent lover, and a devoted friend. Unfortunately, he was born with a grotesque nose that even repulsed his own mother. In this case it is not the usual long, pointy nose but more of a fat, bulbous pig snout. It is this hideous affliction that fills his insecurity with women, but in turn makes him excel in everything else and reveals the beauty of his soul. Mr. Hodge, you may recall, played Albin in the 2010 revival of *La Cages aux Folles* (for which he won the Tony Award) is splendid at playing the jester, with his razor-sharp wit and agility, but totally

misses out on the tragedy. Even toward the end, when we should all be weeping, instead of tugging at our heart strings, he is still trying to tickle our funny bone.

Cyrano is hopelessly in love with his beautiful cousin, Roxanne (Clémence Poésy). She, in turn, is totally infatuated with the supposedly beautiful but totally dimwitted Christian de Neuvillette (Kyle Soller). Hence, Cyrano becomes the voice of Christian in order to complete the love triangle. If properly cast, this would be a magical trio. However, in this case, Ms. Poésy is flat and bland and does not register Roxanne's passion and affability. It doesn't make sense why Cyrano is so infatuated with her other than it is in the text. Then we come to the even bigger problem of Mr. Soller's Christian, who claims he is a dunce and an imbecile, but does he also have to be boorish and moronic (were all the good-looking but doltish actors out of town when casting was taking place)? This makes Roxanne's love for Christian totally incomprehensible.

The rest of the cast is just loud and rumbling around. What a shame for a missed opportunity to show a new generation of theatergoers the beauty, soul and majesty of this masterpiece, instead of just highlighting the brash and the slapstick.

Edited by Scott Harrah

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