



Denver Center  
Theatre Company

# Inside Out

A STUDY GUIDE

PRODUCED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

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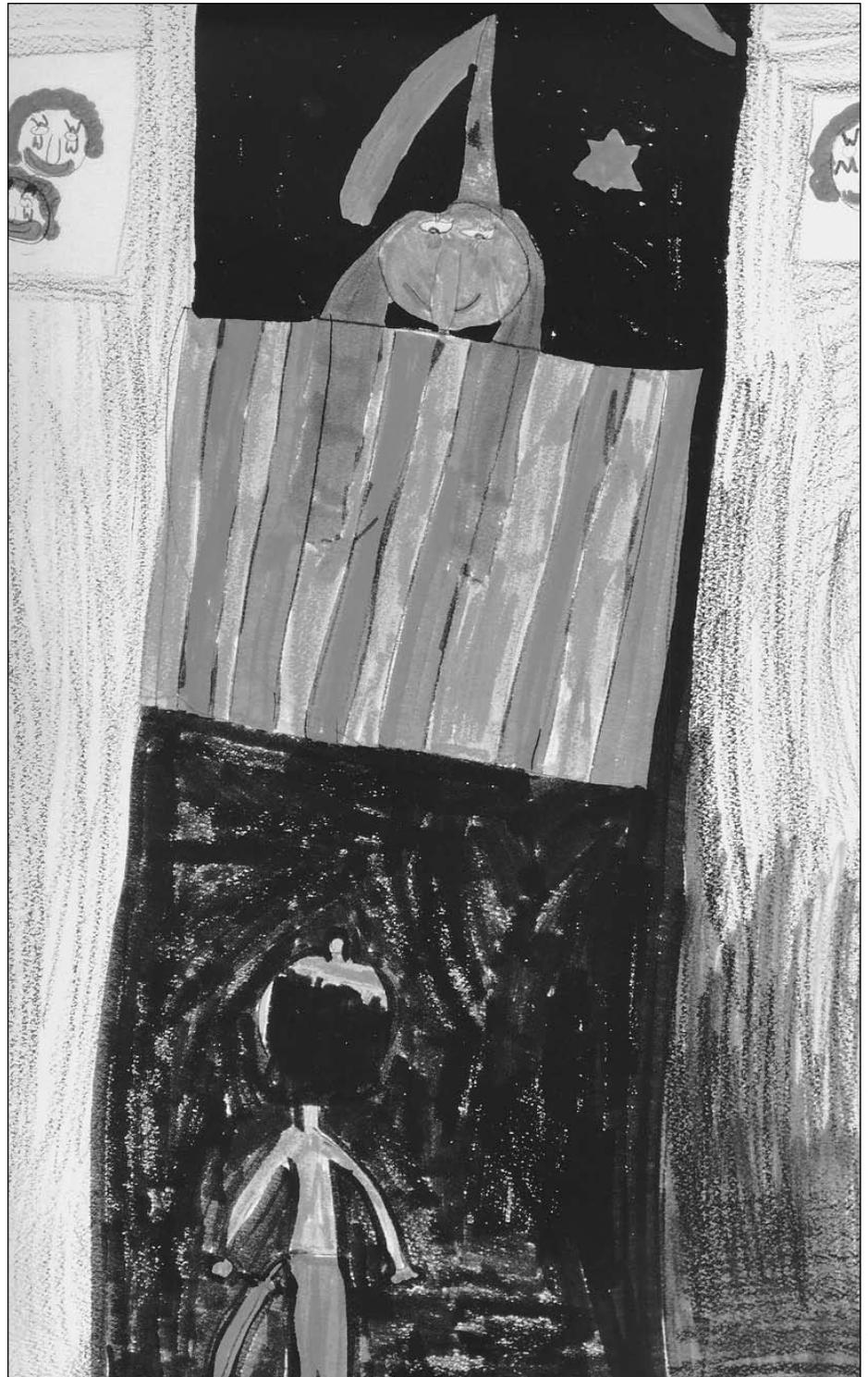
## CYRANO

### The story and history of *Cyrano de Bergerac*

**C**yrano de Bergerac is popular with young people because it is reminiscent of fairy tales, such as, *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Ugly Duckling* in which the plain, indeed ugly, character succeeds. Cyrano's adventures, both in the play and in his own life, give a taste of the action-packed life of which we can only dream, for he represents the "freedom, independence, nonchalance and impetuosity which we barter away in order to become responsible citizens... qualities which we never forgive the adult world for taking from us."<sup>1</sup>

The real Cyrano de Bergerac, sometime Hercule de Bergerac, often referred to as Savinien de Cyrano de Bergerac, was born in Paris in 1619. As a young man, he was such a rascal that his father

*CYRANO* continued on page 2



# Our Cyrano



by Luanne Nunes

**T**In the realm of children's theatre, the biggest challenge, and often the most fun, is to adapt a sophisticated, classic play, making it accessible to a younger audience. Everyone loves a good story, and a great story can be enjoyed by all, regardless of age or educational level.

Stories become classics because they share universal themes in a memorable format. The life of Cyrano de Bergerac is a clear example of one such story. The unforgettable balcony scene has been rewritten and restaged by the big screen and the "Brady Bunch." The story of Cyrano, as you will see, is both timeless and universal. Everyone has experienced the sense of being different and wanting badly to fit in, but not knowing how.

Classic adaptations involve getting to the very meat of the story with talented actors, who will make bigger-

than-life characters become real people. I don't think that children's plays always need to teach morals or lessons. The best stories are those that promote ideas we can share with each other, moments that we can identify with our own lives, and people about whom we care.

The *Cyrano* we present today follows the original heroic and funny romance of Cyrano and Roxane, but this production includes a new twist. Cyrano has a normal nose while everyone else has a large one! Cyrano's desire for love and acceptance is a universal theme that appeals to all ages. Beautiful language, exciting sword fights and zany slapstick create an interactive performance for grades K-6. Addressing intolerance, peer pressure and prejudice, *Cyrano* reveals the power of words, poetry and the triumph of the human spirit.

You'll notice other differences in our play compared to the original version. It's length has been trimmed from over

three hours to 45 minutes. Our cast of players drops from 36 to 4. The Actor General is really a compilation of several villains from the original piece. Roxane is a modern woman. That she is a teacher underlines the value of language and communication. Because our production primarily visits schools, the occupation of teacher seemed the obvious choice for a modern heroic figure. If our schools are doing their jobs, teachers, by way of their contact with our children, really will be able to stop a war.

In Rostand's *Cyrano*, the end of the play is also the end of Cyrano's life. Redemption through death emphasizes Cyrano's dedication to the idea of what is honor and truth. We, however, attempt to get more mileage by keeping Cyrano alive so that his growth can be rewarded. I am of the belief that children are absolutely accepting of death in a story line. Adaptations must find the convention that best tells their audience the story as a whole. We did not feel compelled to have Cyrano die in order for him to be redeemed. Children are the harbingers of hope; we aim to encourage them as the bearers of such needed light.

We hope that you enjoy our version of Rostand's tale of language, love and laughter and that it opens opportunities to discuss its many themes with your students. ■

**CYRANO** continued from page 1

threatened to disown him. A good friend encouraged Cyrano to join the *gardes nobles*. He fought for France against the Spanish in Flanders, where he was wounded. When he was mustered out of the service, he returned to Paris to pursue the study of science and literature, and to join the service of the

Duc d'Arpajon to whom he dedicated several of the books he wrote. Incidentally, the size of his nose was a matter of historical fact and, like the Cyrano of Edmond Rostand's play, he gloried in it.

Those who saw por-

traits of the soldier-poet described it as "monumental."

**IN ACT I** of Rostand's play, it is 1640 in the Hotel de Bourgogne, and cavaliers and commoners await the start of a theatrical production. Among them is Baron Christian de Neuville, a handsome but dim-witted officer in love with Roxane, a beauty he has observed from afar but not dared to approach. The production begins with its star actor, Montflueury, but is immediately interrupted by the swashbuckling Cyrano, who kicks the inept actor off the stage. He reimburses the theatre owner with a purse of coins and then challenges the angry audience. When a count insults him and his nose, Cyrano, in a witty speech, suggests how variously his nose might be described. Then he duels with the insulting nobleman—composing a ballad during the swordplay and finishing both the ballad and his opponent with a grand lunge.

**IN ACT II**, Roxane comes to meet her cousin, Cyrano. His hopes rise with the appointment, but alas, she confides in him that she loves Christian. She elicits from the heartbroken Cyrano the promise that he will protect Christian and have him

**CYRANO** continued on page 3

My Dearest  
Roxane



# THE CHARACTERS

## .....CYRANO

In the traditional telling of the story, *Cyrano de Bergerac* has a monumental nose that shocks and surprises all who see him. In our version, Cyrano actually looks a bit like you and me while every one else in the play has a big nose! Because Cyrano looks like “everyman,” we hope that the audience sees that sometimes our “faults” are just in our heads, or that these faults are determined by the society in which we live. Cyrano is a poet, an inventor and a great swordsman. He lives a life of adventure and romance because he creates those circumstances for himself. Cyrano is a flawed hero in that while we are on his side, we see that even he doesn’t always do the right thing. Cyrano lies to Roxane and Christian, as well as to himself, because he is afraid to reveal his true feelings. Ultimately, Cyrano is forced into doing what he knows in his heart is the honest thing to do. In doing so, he becomes exactly the kind of person he wants to be.

## .....ROXANE

Roxane is not the typical lady of the period. She is a combination of traditional femininity and modern daring. Roxane is a teacher, an athlete and an adventurer. She is a heroine. She risks her safety by breaking through battle lines to feed soldiers and risks friendship by confronting Cyrano and asking him to be honest with her and himself. But like all of us, she is not per-

**CYRANO** continued from page 2

write to her of his love. After she departs, Christian confronts Cyrano with an insult about his nose. When Cyrano learns who the young upstart is, he clears the room and tells Christian, who confesses his weakness with words, that he will help him with his letters to Roxane.

**IN ACT III**, Roxane is thrilled by Christian’s “beautiful” letters. As night falls, Christian visits Roxane and, with Cyrano’s promptings, begins to rhapsodize his love. But Christian is so inept that Cyrano pushes him aside and, shielded by a tree, opens his heart so eloquently that Roxane consents to a kiss. Christian leaps to the balcony and while he embraces Roxane, Cyrano concludes, “...kissing my words/My words upon your lips!” The couple is married, but then Cyrano and Christian are ordered to battle. Roxane again entreats Cyrano to pro-

tect Christian and to have him write every day, which Cyrano promises to do.

**IN ACT IV**, the company of soldiers is starving. They are hopelessly outnumbered and besieged by the Spanish. However, Cyrano mails his letter (written in Christian’s name) daily to Roxane. Then, Cyrano gives Christian a farewell letter he has written for him to Roxane... spotted with a tear. Suddenly, drums roll, a coach appears and out steps Roxane, who has come through Spanish lines with provisions for the troops. Before the battle, Roxane tells Christian she loves him, not for his looks, but for his soul, which he has revealed through his letters. Christian is about to reveal the truth and have her choose between him and Cyrano, but he is hit by a bullet and dies. Roxane finds the farewell letter spattered with blood in Christian’s breast-pocket and departs, grieving. Cyrano, in despair,

fect. She has fallen in love with a man she has only seen. So, she imagines he has qualities that he doesn’t actually possess.

## .....CHRISTIAN

Christian is part “good ol’ boy” and part romantic clown. Like Roxane, he’s too quick to judge a book by its cover. Christian longs to be someone that he is not, but he’s not exactly sure who that someone is. Christian is a loyal friend. He struggles with his inability to communicate throughout the entire play, but we care about him because he tries. He’s not a fool; he excels in areas that he doesn’t think are valued in his world. Ultimately, though, he’s a brave soul who tries his best to do what is right, even if that means giving up the woman he loves.

## ..... THE ACTOR GENERAL

The traditional “clown” of the story is found in the character of The Actor General. He is constantly pretending to be something that he is not and this gets him into a lot of trouble. He’s fun to mock because he thinks so highly of himself. It is a pleasure to watch him fall down. The Actor General’s character, unlike the others in the story, makes no great character improvements. He starts out as a lying coward and ends up that

leads the cadets in a charge against the Spanish hordes.

**ACT V** takes place 15 years later, in the garden of the convent where Roxane retired after Christian’s death. Cyrano has come to visit her each Saturday. On this Saturday, as usual, he appears, but he is impoverished and fatally wounded by a hired assassin. He asks to see “Christian’s” last letter and starts reading it, continuing to do so as darkness falls. Roxane finally realizes that he is reciting by heart in a voice she heard once long ago. Though he denies everything, Roxane exclaims, “It was you!” Cyrano is dying when Roxane confesses, “I never loved but one man in my life/And I have lost him—twice.” As Roxane kisses him, Cyrano smiles up at her and proudly envisions his imminent appearance before God. ■

# CLOWNS ARE CLOWNS IN CLOWNS ARE CLOWNS IN CLOWNS ARE CLOWNS IN

The actors in  
**Cyrano** perform  
many humorous acts,  
so they could be  
called **clowns**.

**F**rom Balinese to Mexican, Chinese to Native America cultures, clowns or clown figures have always existed. There is no culture in the world that doesn't have a clown character—one who tells stories, makes fun of the pompous, explains the changing nature of reality and talks about our fears.

The clowns of ancient Greece were bald-headed, padded buffoons who made fun of the actions of the more serious actors and sometimes pelted the audience with nuts. The same clown appeared in the Roman mime (acting without speech), wearing a pointed hat and a patchwork robe; this clown usually served as the target for all the tricks and abuse of the other actors.

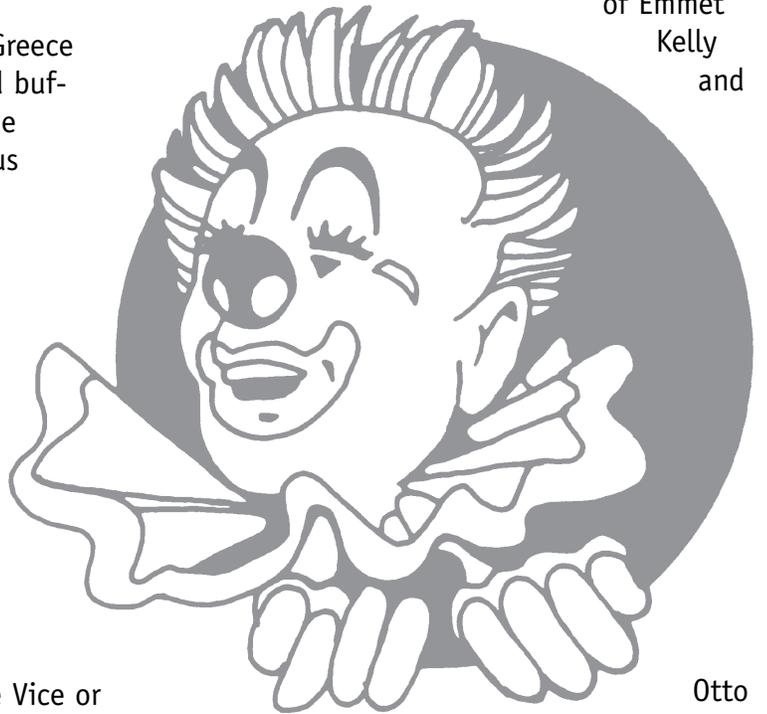
**T**he English clown descended from the Vice or Devil character of medieval mystery plays and was characterized as a buffoon and a prankster. Two of the most famous were William Kempe and Robert Armin, both in Shakespeare's company. Traveling English actors of the 17th century were responsible for the introduction of stage clowns to Germany. One of the favorites was Pickelherring, whose costume of oversized shoes, waistcoat, hat and a giant ruff around his neck is

still popular to this day.

The traditional whiteface makeup of the clown was introduced with the character of Pierrot, the French clown with a bald head and flour whitened face who first appeared in the late 17th century. First created as a foil for Harlequin, Pierrot was gradually softened and sentimentalized until he became the lovesick, pathetic, melancholy clown of today.

The earliest of the true circus clowns was Joseph Grimaldi, who first appeared in England in 1805. He was called "Joey" and specialized in physical tricks, tumbling, pratfalls and slapstick beatings. A famous American clown of the 19th century was Dan Rice, whose costume resembled that of "Uncle Sam."

The "tramp" clowns  
of Emmet  
Kelly  
and



Otto  
Griebling  
led to the  
character of "Little

Tramp" developed by Charlie Chaplin for the movies. Chaplin, Laurel and Hardy, Buster Keaton and the Marx Brothers brought clowning to the peak of its popularity in the 20th century. Clowns and comics exist today and represent the creative, irreverent side of the human condition. ■

# A Brief History of WORDPLAY and Its Use on Stage

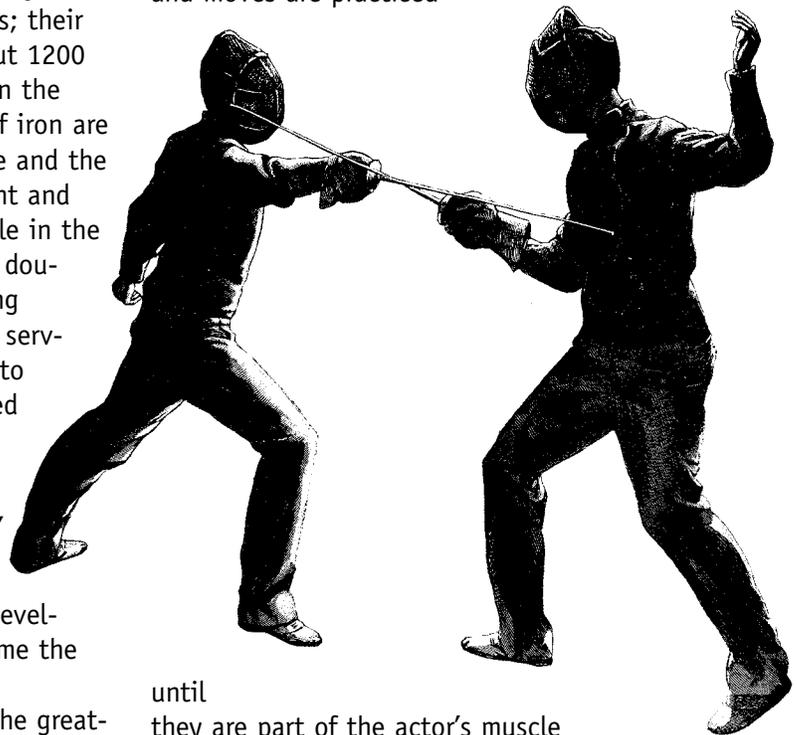
.....

**I**n our development from primitive hunter-gatherers to sophisticated city-dweller, we mimicked many of the things we saw in the world around us. After observing wild animals, primitive people patterned weapons after their claws and tusks. Early people discovered that a pointed stick or sharpened rock could pierce and tear flesh just as animals did. As early people beat and pounded stones to form weapons and tools, they discovered some stones that were more pliable than others. As early as 6500 BC, East Anatolia had developed the use of copper. When copper is mixed with tin, a more durable metal, bronze, is produced. The Bronze Age began about 2000 BC. The earliest bronze swords were those made by the Assyrians, the Egyptians, the Babylonians and the Greeks; their blades were long, thick and quite heavy. About 1200 BC, the advantages of iron were discovered in the Middle East and southeast Europe. Weapons of iron are stronger and lighter than those of cast bronze and the blade can be fashioned with a very sharp point and edge. The character of the sword changed little in the Middle Ages. It consisted of a broad, straight double-edged blade, wide at the base and tapering toward its point. At the end of its plain grip, serving to give a better hold on the weapon and to balance it, was a flat, dish-shaped piece called "pommel." During the Middle Ages, an armed man engaged in a large number of skirmishes in order to settle disputes with his neighbors, so "trial by combat" or dueling became common. In order to perfect using the sword, men practiced dancing and mock combat to develop their techniques and from among them came the fighting guilds or sword-masters.

**T**he 16th century, or Renaissance, saw the greatest development of the sword. Sword makers devised a better hilt of guard, grip and pommel, and blades were sharper. Instructors of arms began to teach more than simple tricks and began to develop theories about the practice of the sword. The second half of the 16th century marked the "Golden Age of Swordplay." The rapier was introduced by the Spanish noblemen to the court of Mary Tudor (1553-58) and

marked the beginning of the end of heavy suits of armor. In contrast to military swords, it was a lighter weapon with a narrower double-edged blade and sharper point. It transformed the entire science of defense from circular patterns of footwork to the linear method using the lunge. As the 17th century progressed, the rapier became even lighter and was referred to as the "small sword." It became the weapon of "gentleman" and the foundation of the modern sport of fencing. From 1800 to the present, swordplay became a manly contest, while armies found themselves more forceful with firearms.

**S**tage combat, until a few years ago, was an inexact practice handled by just about anyone who felt qualified. Sir Laurence Olivier, the acclaimed British actor, once said: "My training and exercise in the art of fencing has been largely grounded on the technique of 1, 2, 3, or bish, bash, bosh: bash, bosh, bish..."<sup>2</sup> Stage combat is now handled by the fight choreographers who emphasize safety first. They retrain the body and mind of an actor from the reality of actual fighting to "acted" aggression. Weapon holds, body alignment and footwork are taught and moves are practiced



until they are part of the actor's muscle memory. The objective of the techniques is to communicate the story to the audience. A stage fight is a "physical dialogue—designed to further the plot and character in a production. It is the job of the choreographer to set that dialogue and the job of the actor to communicate."<sup>3</sup> ■

# ACTIVITIES

## BEFORE-THE-PLAY ACTIVITIES

### K-3

#### Story Stick

Find a stick. Have the students help you decorate it.

Gather the students in a circle and present the "Story Stick." Explain that you will pass the stick around the circle and whoever is holding it may add to the story.

Start the story with an interesting beginning (maybe something that you are studying at this time).

Bring the story to a close when it returns to you.

## AFTER-PLAY ACTIVITIES

### K-2

#### Teacher of the Day

Roxane is a teacher and has the power to even stop a war. To assist students with their self esteem and leadership, let them role play being a teacher for a day.

Let the children choose a day. Perhaps use a calendar for scheduling. Have the students submit a "Lesson Plan." Perhaps the students can tell a story, lead a daily activity, or maybe you can offer a suggestion.

#### Secret Pal Mailbox

Use a cereal box to create a main post office and paper bags to create individual mailboxes.

Ask students to write notes of encouragement to their fellow students. For those who do not write yet, ask them to draw a picture.

Ask them to place their notes in the main mail box. At the end of the day deliver them to the addressee's individual mail boxes.

#### Telegraph

Sit in a circle. Have one student whisper in the ear of the person next to him/her and so on. At the end, see if the message is the same.

#### Create your own melodrama

Create your own melodrama based on

the first line in the play. Be sure everyone overdramatizes everything they say.

#### Noses

Make noses out of construction paper and fabric. You can decorate your noses with all sorts of things.

## Grades 3-6

#### Odd Man Out

Everyone picks a piece of paper from a hat. Several pieces of the paper have little black dots on them. Without looking at your paper, hold it against your forehead so that others can see it. Those with black dots should not be allowed to associate with those whose papers are blank. Walk around the room and talk to others to see if you can figure out whether or not you have a dot. Afterward, discuss how it feels to be the odd man out.

**Onomatopoeia:** The formation of words in imitation of natural sounds, naming of a thing or action by a more or less exact reproduction of the sound associated with it.

Collect words that are onomatopoeic.

Write them on slips of paper or cardboard.

Explain onomatopoeia. Ask each student to select a slip of paper with a word on it. Ask them to physicalize the word they have chosen. (i.e. Buzz -

**BUZZ**  
hiss-s-s-s-s  
**POP!**

The student may imitate a bee, or buzz his/her whole body.)

One sentence story: Have the students make up a title of a book that has never been written. You will start the story, "Once upon a time... ." Each student will add to the story with a new sentence and only one new sen-

tence per student. In the new sentence, the student must use his/her word. Remind the students that a story must have a beginning, a middle and an end. The story can go anywhere they want it to go, but it must make sense.

Ask the students to remember their sentences. After the story is completed, retell the story having each student repeat their sentence and physicalize their onomatopoeic word.

#### Round Robin

This exercise can be done with the entire class or you can divide the class into smaller groups.

Ask each student to create a title for an original story.

Ask each student to write the first paragraph of his/her story.

Pass each story to another student who will write the second paragraph.

Repeat with a third student. We would recommend that you limit the number of times the stories are passed.

This will allow you to remind the students that each story must have a beginning, middle and an end.

Return the stories to the original authors. Did the story turn out as they had imagined it?

#### Blue Eyes/Brown Eyes

Select two students, one with blue eyes and one with brown eyes.

Ask each of them to form a group made up of other students. Inform the two students that they are only allowed to have classmates with their own shade of eye color in their group (blue or brown). Others are not allowed to join their group. They are not to explain to anyone that eye color is the reason for being allowed to join their group.

Ask the two students to stand on opposite sides of the room.

Inform the class that these are the group leaders and you must join one of the groups. Only certain people may join the group because there are certain criteria needed to join. The group leaders will either accept or reject each student.

The student must try to join one of the groups. There may be students that don't fit either group (green, hazel, gray).

## ACTIVITIES *continued from page 6*

When all students have been accepted or rejected stop the game.

Ask the students who are not the leaders why they are in the group?

Once the eye color criteria is revealed ask the students what it was like to be rejected for something they were not aware of or could not control? Did they feel different when they were accepted into a group? What was it like to watch others trying to get into a group?

### Card Party

You will need a deck of cards (or enough for each member of your class to have a card).

Make up a party. Select someone to be a host.

Everyone in the room selects a card from the deck.

The host will start the party. Each student is a party guest and must join the party by knocking on the door. The host will let them in.

Each student has a card which will give them status in the party. Ace being the lowest, King being the highest. Each guest must show his/her card to the other guests. Each guest is to react to the other guest according to their status, i.e., a King may not talk to a 3, but he would talk to a Queen.)

After everyone has joined the party and has interacted, stop the game and discuss the party. What was it like to be a 2 or 3? King or Queen? Did you feel different? Did you want to be accepted in the other group?

### Discussion

Discuss the message of the play.... that you should be yourself and accept who you are. Of course, that doesn't mean you should forget about learning and improving yourself. Cut out pictures of people you admire and would like to emulate from magazines and newspapers. Tell why you'd like to be like them.

Make a list of what we think, here in America, makes people attractive. Get ideas from magazines and newspapers and list them.

### Words to Know

Using your dictionary, look up the meanings of some of the following words. Pick

five that describe Cyrano, five that describe Christian, five for The Actor General and five for Roxane.

beauteous, comely, fearless  
attractive, arrogant, brave  
rational, bombastic, timid  
irrational, haughty, dauntless  
discursive, swaggering, ingenuous  
perceptive, bizarre, pretentious  
garrulous, absurd, condescending  
profound, inane, ludicrous  
obtuse, resplendent, shallow  
puerile, nimble, loquacious  
foolish, cunning, frivolous  
exquisite, considerate, verbose  
discerning, enlightened, haughty  
tedious, hebetudinous, fluent  
sincere, adlepatated, demure  
candid, vacuous, buffoonish  
pretentious, jejune

### Write a Letter

Try using some of these words to write a letter to someone you admire.

In order to gain an appreciation of the wide-range of clowns, look up individually or in groups some famous clowns and report on them. Some suggestions are:

Joseph Grimaldi  
Abbot and Costello  
Bill Cosby  
Bert Williams  
Lucille Ball  
Robin Williams  
The Fratellini Brothers  
Jackie Gleason  
Jim Carey  
Charlie Chaplin  
Danny Kaye  
Michael Richards (Kramer on "Seinfeld")  
W. C. Fields  
Cantinflas  
Emmett Kelly  
Laurel and Hardy  
Marcel Marceau  
Jerry Lewis  
The Marx Brothers  
The Three Stooges

### Laughter

In Chinese theatre, 20 different varieties of laughter have been catalogued. See if you can laugh in these styles and convey the meanings.

laugh happily  
laugh conceitedly  
pretend to laugh  
laugh coldly

laugh jealously  
laugh surprisedly  
laugh hysterically  
laugh insanely  
laugh violently  
laugh flirtingly  
laugh treacherously  
laugh uneasily  
laugh coyly  
laugh heartily  
a frightened laugh  
laugh brokenheartedly  
laugh reluctantly  
laugh flatteringly  
laugh scornfully

### Create Your Own Clown Character

Give him/her a name. Remember, character is the central core of the clown. Find the main qualities that make up your clown's personality and behavior. Some character traits you might pick from are: stubborn, clumsy, determined, shy, conceited, confident, stylish, sneaky, snobbish, nervous, pompous, self-satisfied, self-conscious, insecure, bumbling, cheery, gloomy, energetic, sluggish, friendly, suspicious.

Pick two of the qualities from the list above for your clown and show how he/she would react to these situations:

losing your keys  
getting caught in the rain  
getting a bucket of cold water  
dumped on him/her  
sitting down on a lit match or a tack  
drinking a very hot beverage  
taking a big bite of food and then  
having to answer the phone  
stepping on a sticky piece of gum  
chasing your runaway dog  
encountering a bear  
waiting to see a dentist  
smelling a bad smell  
tripping over a chair

Design a costume for your clown. See if you can fit your clown as a character in a story that you know, such as *Cinderella*. Or write a skit in which your clown is a major character.

### Handkerchief Flirtations

The handkerchief, among lovers, is used in a different manner than its legitimate purpose. The most delicate hints can be given without danger of misunderstanding and in "a flirtation" it becomes a

**ACTIVITIES** *continued from page 7*

very useful instrument because bystanders are not aware that the handkerchief is being used as a signal. The following rules are the law on the subject:

Drawing it across the lips.

*Desiring an acquaintance.*

Drawing it across the cheek.

*I love you!*

Drawing it across the forehead.

*Look, we are watched!*

Drawing it through the hands.

*I hate you!*

Dropping it.

*We will be friends.*

Folding it.

*I wish to speak with you.*

Letting it rest on the right cheek.

*Yes!*

Letting it rest on the left cheek.

*No!*

Letting it remain on the eyes.

*You are so cruel.*

Opposite corners in both hands.

*Do wait for me.*

Over the shoulder.

*Follow me.*

Placing it over the right ear.

*How you have changed.*

Putting it in the pocket.

*No more love at present.*

Taking it by the center.

*You are almost too willing.*

Twisting it in the left hand

*I wish to be rid of you!*

Twisting it in the right hand.

*I love another.*

Winding it around the forefinger.

*I am engaged.*

Winding it around the third finger.

*I am married.*

**Glove Flirtations**

Like the handkerchief, the glove at times takes an important part in flirtations. The following are the known rules on the subject:

Biting the tips.

*I wish to be rid of you very soon.*

Clenching them, rolled up in right hand.

*No!*

Drawing half way on left hand.

*Indifference.*

Dropping both of them.

*I love you!*

Dropping one of them.

*Yes!*

Folding up carefully.

*Get rid of your company!*

Holding the tips downward.

*I wish to be acquainted.*

Holding them loose in the right hand.

*Be contented.*

Holding them loose in the left hand.

*I am satisfied.*

Left hand with the naked thumb exposed.

*Do you love me?*

Putting them away.

*I am vexed!*

Right hand with the naked thumb exposed.

*Kiss me!*

Smoothing them out gently.

*I am displeased!*

Striking them over the shoulder.

*Follow me.*

Tapping the chin.

*I love another.*

Tossing them up gently.

*I am engaged.*

Turning them inside out.

*I hate you!*

# NotEs

1. Marowitz, p. xii.
2. Girard, p. 42.
3. Girard p. 48.

*Inside Out* is intended for students and teachers but may be enjoyed by audiences of all ages.



## Denver Center Theatre Company

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A division of The Denver Center for the Performing Arts



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