

SMUIN

CONTEMPORARY BALLET

CELIA FUSHILLE / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Limitless Michael Smuin

September 16-20, 2021

CYRANO

World Premiere: May 11, 1997

Choreography & Libretto: Michael Smuin

Music: W.A. Mozart

Costumes: Sandra Woodall

Lighting Design: Sara Linnie Slocum

Fencing Choreography: J. Steven White & Michael Smuin

Concept: Daniel Levenstein

This world premiere is a salute to the 75th anniversary of the San Francisco Opera.

This ballet is dedicated to the memory of Herb Caen.

"Herb was our Cyrano, the City his Roxanne." – Stephanie Salter

Cyrano de Bergerac	Gregory Amato
Roxanne	Celia Fushille
Christian de Neuville	Lee Bell
Comte De Guiche	
(and all of Cyrano's enemies)	Charles Torres
Montfleury	Michael Kruzich
White Sheep	Dalyn Chew
	Jennifer Jaffe
Black Sheep	Laura Tombosky
Cyrano's Assistant	Amy London
Servants	Osmani Garcia
	Noé Serrano
Nuns	Dalyn Chew
	Jennifer Jaffe
Soldiers	The Company

Program Note for *Cyrano*
by Michael Smuin

I love to tell stories in dance, and for years I've wanted to make a ballet based on Rostand's great romance, *Cyrano de Bergerac*. But I was daunted by the very nature of the work: it's a play about poetry, about passion expressed in words. How could I make a dance out of that? I needed to find a metaphor for Cyrano's poetic rapture; I found it in partnering. In the ballet, Cyrano doesn't woo Roxanne with his words—he dances with her.

In order to make the Ballet comprehensible, I had to take certain liberties with the text. I combined all of Cyrano's enemies into the character De Guiche, for example, and omitted the secondary characters. The essence of Rostand's play remains intact. This is the story of an ugly man with a beautiful soul, a man who sacrifices his own deepest feelings for the sake of the woman he loves. In an act of supreme nobility, he charms Roxanne on behalf of his rival, whom she believes she loves. In the end, this selflessness proves disastrous for all three. As Roxanne concludes, "I have loved only one man in my life, and I now have lost him twice."

Synopsis

Cyrano's Dream: Cyrano dances rapturously with his beloved Roxanne, but only in a dream.

Roxanne's Fencing Lesson: In childhood, Cyrano and Roxanne were playmates; now he is her devoted friend—and fencing master.

Christian: Roxanne confides that she is in love, and Cyrano has a moment of ecstatic hope before she reveals that she has chosen the handsome Christian.

At the Theater: Cyrano, a true poet and wit, rids the stage of the pompous Montfleury, whose vulgar display offends Roxanne. Cyrano is forced into a duel with the actor's protector, De Guiche.

Christian's Lesson: Cyrano tries to teach the good-hearted but clumsy Christian how to dance with Roxanne.

The Rendezvous: In disguise, Christian attempts to woo Roxanne, but fails. Wearing a matching mask, Cyrano, with his elegant and ardent partnering, wins Roxanne—for Christian.

The Battle: Enraged by his humiliation at the theater and by Roxanne's marriage to Christian, De Guiche sends Christian and Cyrano into battle against terrible odds.

The Death of Cyrano: Years later, at the convent where Roxanne retired after Christian's death, Cyrano keeps his weekly appointment with her despite an ambush by his enemies. He succumbs, fighting his old adversary Death to the end. Only then does Roxanne recognize the scarf she gave years ago to the man who had won her heart. She realizes at last that it was always Cyrano's noble soul she loved behind Christian's handsome face.

Recorded May 11, 1997