



**PRESS RELEASE
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**FRESH ADAPTATION OF *CYRANO* BY AURORA THEATRE COMPANY'S
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR STARTS PERFORMANCES APRIL 7
BY EDMOND ROSTAND**

Adapted and directed by Josh Costello

BERKELEY, CA (March 21, 2023) Aurora Theatre Company's third play in their 31st season is an adaptation by Artistic Director, Josh Costello, of Edmond Rostand's *Cyrano*. He will also be directing the play.

CYRANO will be presented in-person on Aurora's mainstage from **April 7 - May 7 (Opens: April 13)**.

Costello adapted Rostand's classic play specifically for Aurora's intimate space, focusing on the heart of the story and the five most important characters while preserving the original's inspired language. "This is *Cyrano* without the crowd scenes," said Costello. "Most of the key events of the play happen between just a few characters. This isn't a 'trunk show,' where the actors each play a dozen roles with constant costume changes. It really is just the five of them. And that allows us to shine a light on the nuance in both the emotional journey and the language itself." Aurora's work has long been celebrated for detailed, nuanced acting and language. *Cyrano* will be a unique opportunity to experience the richness of this play in an intimate setting.

A tale of glorious theatricality, glittering poetry and heroic self-sacrifice... Cyrano de Bergerac [is] a hero for all time" — *The Guardian*

CYRANO

Aurora Artistic Director Josh Costello adapts the classic tale for the intimacy of Aurora's stage. Cyrano, the famed poet-soldier, loves Roxane but has one fear: to be mocked by a lady for his enormous nose. Young Christian has a pretty face but lacks the wit to woo. Cyrano's words and Christian's looks combine to form a hero of romance – but does Roxane fall in love with Christian's face or with Cyrano's soul? This story of unrequited love, sacrifice, friendship, and poetry all at a time of war is brought into new focus in this world premiere five-actor adaptation.

Post Show Discussions

Please join us for a discussion of Aurora Theatre Company's production of **CYRANO** by Edmond Rostand, hosted after select shows on the days listed below, including our affinity night for Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) on April 21. Aurora will be hosting a BIPOC Poetry Celebration with special guests. Discussion host and Artistic Director/director Josh Costello may be joined by the actors, community members, and local storytellers.

Friday, April 14

Tuesday, April 18

Wednesday, April 26

Thursday, May 4

Creative Team for CYRANO

Edmond Rostand - Playwright

Edmond Eugène Alexis Rostand was a French poet and dramatist. He is associated with neo-romanticism and is known best for his 1897 play *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Like many young men of his stature an period, he studied law through his long-abiding passion for literature remained. Upon completing his studies, he fully dedicated himself to create work. Rostand's romantic plays contrasted with the naturalistic theatre popular during the late nineteenth century.

Josh Costello (he/him) Adaptor/Director and Aurora's Artistic Director

Josh Costello is the Artistic Director of Aurora Theatre Company. Throughout his career, Josh has worked to make theatre more accessible for more people, sharing a passion for the visceral experience of live theatre with new audiences and underserved communities. He was the founding Artistic Director of Impact Theatre, which focused on audiences in their teens and

twenties. As the Artistic Director of Expanded Programs at Marin Theatre Company, Josh created and administered several programs that built relationships with new audiences. At Aurora, Josh initiated student matinee and Community Partner programs and led a revision of Aurora's mission to emphasize the theatre's role as storyteller to the community. Josh has directed *This Much I Know*, *Exit Strategy*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Detroit*, *Wittenberg*, and *The Heir Apparent* for Aurora, as well as the world premiere of *Eureka Day*, which won every Bay Area new play award. His world-premiere production of Aaron Loeb's *Ideation* with the San Francisco Playhouse in both SF and NYC won the Glickman Award for best new play in the Bay Area and the Theatre Bay Area Award for Outstanding Direction, and was named a New York Times Critic's Pick. Other directing work includes *My Children! My Africa!* at Marin Theatre Company, *House of Lucky* at Magic Theatre, and his adaptations of Cory Doctorow's *Little Brother* and Aphra Behn's *The Rover*. Josh was the Education Director at Marin Shakespeare Company, and a faculty member at Cal Shakes, ACT, SF Shakes, UC Riverside, Cal State Long Beach, South Coast Rep, and the American Academy of Dramatic Arts. Josh holds a BFA in Theatre from Boston University, and an MFA in Directing from the University of Washington, Seattle.

Dawn Monique Williams (she/her) Associate Artistic Director

Dawn Monique Williams, associate artistic director, joined the Aurora team in August 2019. A native of Oakland, CA, Dawn was previously the Artistic Associate at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Recent directing credits include the world premieres of Marcus Gardley's *Lear* (Cal Shakes) and *The Incrementalist* by Cleavon Smith (Aurora); August Wilson's *Two Trains Running* (Marin Theatre Company), *Une Tempete* by Aimé Césaire (American Shakespeare Center), *Beehive: The 60's Musical* (CenterREP), Lauren Gunderson's *The Half-Life Of Marie Curie* (TheatreSquared), *Sweet Water Taste* (Orlando Shakespeare Theatre), *Letters To Kamala* (American Stage Company), *Earthrise* (Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts), *The Merry Wives Of Windsor* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival), *Bull In A China Shop* (Aurora), *The Secretaries* (Profile Theatre), *Romeo & Juliet* (Chautauqua Theatre), August Wilson's *The Piano Lesson* (Le Petit), Lynn Nottage's *By The Way, Meet Vera Stark* (Douglas Morrison and UNCO), and *Women On The Verge Of A Nervous Breakdown* (Town Hall); audio versions of Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* adapted by Lydia R. Diamond (Aurora) and Lynn Nottage's *Las Meninas* (Profile Theatre).

The creative team for **CYRANO** includes **Carlos Aceves** --Scenic; **Kevin Myrick**--Lighting; **Maggie Whitaker**--Costumes; **Chris Houston**--Composition & Sound; **Scott Reardon**--Stage Manager; **Bella Campos Hintzman**--Assistant Stage Manager;

Cast

William Thomas Hodgson (Cyrano) is returning to the Aurora stage after *Father/Daughter* (2021). William is an artist and educator based out of Oakland, CA. After earning his MFA from UCSD, William became a founding member, and Co-Artistic Director of Oakland Theater Project. In 4 years at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival he played Romeo (R&J), Ferdinand (*Tempest*), and Stokes (*How to Catch Creation*) among others. Other shows include *An Octoroon*, and *Gloria* (Mixed Blood Theater), *It Can't Happen Here* (BerkeleyRep), *As You Like It* (CalShakes), *Calligraphy* (TheatreWorks), *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (La Jolla Playhouse), *El Henry* (SDRep), *Shrek* (Sierra Rep Theater), *Seussical* (Berkeley Playhouse), *Every Brilliant Thing*, and *I Am My Own Wife* (Oakland Theater Project). William also choreographs (*Tempest/OSF*, *Little Shop/TheatreWorks*, *Red Bike/CenterRep*) and directs (Passing Strange/Shotgun Players, Fun Home, Ragtime/Berkeley Playhouse, Is God Is/OTP).

Leontyne Mbele-Mbong (Roxane) was last seen at the Aurora in *Bull in a China Shop*, *Temple*, and *Breakfast with Mugabe*. Recent shows: *Fefu and her Friends* at A.C.T., *Lear* at CalShakes. Some favorites: title role in *Medea* (TBA Award), and Cleopatra in *Antony & Cleopatra* (TBA Award Finalist) with African-American Shakespeare Company; *The Half-Life of Marie Curie* (TheatreSquared, Fayetteville, AK); *Watch on the Rhine* (Berkeley Rep/Guthrie Theatre), *Top Girls*, *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*, *Fences*; *Andromache*, *Candide*, *Richard III* (3 times), *Twelfth Night*, and *Intimate Apparel* (Mayme; ARTY Award, best supporting actress). www.leontynembele-mbong.com

Ron Campbell (Count de Guiche) At the Aurora Theatre Ron performed the one person show *The Thousandth Night*, plus *Salome* and *Benefactors*. He was lead clown in Cirque du Soleil's *Kooza* and Cecil B. DeGrille at *Teatro ZinZanni* and has performed everywhere from the streets of Paris to the Royal Albert Hall in London, the Fuji Dome in Japan, the Theatre of Epidauros in Greece, The Habima in Israel, The Mercury Theatre, (Chicago) Huntington Theatre, (Boston) The Mark Taper Forum, Seattle Rep, American Conservatory Theatre, Berkeley Rep, TheatreWorks, and The Actors' Gang. Favorite roles include Don Quixote, Sherlock Holmes, Richard the Third and Cyrano. Other One Man Shows: *R. Buckminster Fuller*, *How to Fail*, *Shylock*, *The Dybbuk*, *The Boneman of Benares* and *A Tale of Two Cities*. Awards include Chicago, San Francisco and Los Angeles Critics Circle Awards, TBA Awards for Lead Actor and the Fox Fellowship for Distinguished Achievement. For more check www.soarfeat.org.

Adrian Roberts (Le Bret) is thrilled to be back working at the Aurora. Mr. Roberts was last seen at the Aurora as Willie in *Master Harold And The Boys* and The Bodyguard in *Breakfast With Mugabe*. Other Bay Area credits include Prospero/Caliban at Oakland Theater Project, Bob in *Becky Nurse* at Berkeley Rep, Macbeth in *Macbeth* at African American Shakespeare Co., Steve in *A Lesson From Aloes* at Z Space Below. Regional credits include three seasons at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Ken In *Playboy of The West Indies* at Lincoln Center. Has appeared in such television shows as *Scrubs*, *Criminal Minds*, and *Chance*, among others.

Steven Flores (Christian) is a bi-coastal actor originally from Northern California. He originated the role of Seketemaqua/Luke in “*Manahatta*” for its world premiere at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Yale Repertory Theater. He has performed as Menelaus in “*Helen*” and Master Puppeteer for “*Puppets & Poe*” at Theatre of Yugen as well as for The UC Berkeley production of “*Daughters of Leda*” Other credits: “*Last of the Caucasians*” (The Barrow Group Theater Company, NY) “*Delusion: The Blood Rite*”

(Haunted Play, Los Angeles), Jakubei in “*A Noh Christmas Carol*” (T. of Y. San Francisco) and Ba’Homa in “*Pueblo Revolt*” Alter Theater. TV/Film: *The Monster Project, It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia*. Studied at the Herbert Berghof Studio, NY.

CALENDAR EDITORS

Aurora will also offer a week of streaming **CYRANO** performances for audiences to enjoy in their homes. Streaming performances will run concurrently with in-person performances, from **May 2 - May 7**. Aurora is hosting a BIPOC Poetry Night on Friday, April 21st with a pre-show reception featuring readings from local poets, and a post show discussion. All are welcome (as always) for this special night.

DATES

Previews: Friday 4/7 and Saturday 4/8 at 8 p.m.

Sunday, 4/9 at 2 p.m.

Tuesday and Wednesday, 4/11 & 4/12 at 7 p.m.

Open: Thursday, April 13, 2023 at 8p.m.

Close: Sunday, May 7 at 2 p.m.

Shows: IN-PERSON PERFORMANCES (Apr. 7 - May 7):

Tuesday and Wednesday at 7 p.m.; Thursday through Saturday at 8 p.m.; Sunday at 2 p.m.

STREAMING PERFORMANCES (May 2 - May 7).

A filmed performance for audiences to enjoy in their homes.

Each performance is available for 36 hours, from 12 p.m. on the performance date to midnight the following day.

TICKETS

For single tickets (\$20-\$75) or subscriptions (\$200-\$385), the public can call **(510) 843-4822** or visit www.auroratheatre.org.

PHOTOS

<http://www.auroratheatre.org/pressroom>

ABOUT AURORA THEATRE COMPANY

As the storyteller for our community, Aurora Theatre Company inspires new audiences and longtime theatre lovers alike with the visceral power of live theatre. Our venues, the most intimate professional stages in the Bay Area, highlight great acting, nuanced language, and an immediacy that makes for exhilarating theatre. By telling deeply relevant stories, we're building a new culture of theatregoing in the Bay Area and contributing to a revitalization of theatre nationwide, challenging all of us to think deeper, laugh louder, and engage more purposefully and profoundly with our neighbors and our world. It has an operating budget of \$2.3 million.

Aurora Theatre Company gratefully acknowledges Executive Season Sponsors: Craig & Kathy Moody. Associate Sponsors Amy & Tom Worth.

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