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Dramatic Publishing

Cyra & Rocky



Comedy
By
Cherie Bennett



The Dramatic Publishing Company

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Cyra & Rocky

Cast: 2m., 2w. Ms. Bennett has deftly adapted *Cyrano de Bergerac* in this side-splitting but poignant version, set in modern America. The Cyrano character, Cyra (called Cyra) Berger, is a teen girl with a weight problem, instead of an outsized nose. She's also a skateboarder, a comic genius, an ace letter-writer, and a wonderful friend. Cyra's gorgeous friend, Chrissy, falls for equally-gorgeous faraway pen pal Rockland ("call me Rocky") Robinson, and it's Cyra who ghost-writes Chrissy's poetic love letters. When Rocky and his cousin Brett come to Nashville on vacation to finally meet Chrissy, all the familiar Cyrano story elements come to life, but in a completely unique way. Between the laughs, *Cyra and Rocky* teaches important lessons about tolerance, acceptance, honesty and friendship. *Running time approximately fifty-five minutes. Simple unit set.*

Code: C97

Front cover: Shalom Theatre, Nashville, TN premiere production featuring: (l-r) Josh Rew (Rocky), Harrison Gray (Brett), Zoe Jarman (Chrissy), Meredith Jones (Cyra).

Photo by Marvin Koch.

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CYRA & ROCKY

A Play for Young Audiences

by

CHERIE BENNETT

Gently adapted from

CYRANO DE BERGERAC

by

Edmond Rostand



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • London, England • Melbourne, Australia

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(CYRA & ROCKY)

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CYRA & ROCKY was first presented as a staged reading in May 1996, at the Kennedy Center, as part of New Visions/New Voices 1996. Its world premiere was in the fall of 1996 at the Foothills Theatre Company, Scottsbluff, Nebraska.

PRODUCTION NOTES

While it is helpful if the actors cast in the roles of Cyra and Rocky can skateboard, any reasonably coordinated actor can be taught the basics necessary for these roles. If the actors are terrific skateboarders, this is just an added plus. If necessary, frisbee freestyle can be substituted for skateboarding, with appropriate line changes. Additional line changes may be obtained from playwright (through the publisher) for teen slang, as it changes in the future.

The playwright wishes to encourage colorblind and multi-cultural casting. Also, in all cases, roles may be played by actual teenagers or by adult actors who play young.

Although there are different scenes in this play, the sense of time and movement should be one of continuous flow, one scene bleeding into another, except as indicated in the script. Set elements need only be suggestive—this play is designed to be produced and toured easily.

CYRA & ROCKY

**A Play in One Act
For 2 gals and 2 guys**

CHARACTERS

**CYRA BERGER 14, overweight, attractive face, smart,
funny, witty, irreverent, sensitive, wonderful and very
brave, all at the same time. An excellent skateboarder.**

**CHRISSY NEUVILLE 12-14, very pretty, guileless,
shy, inarticulate, klutzy, generous, kind**

**ROCKLAND (ROCKY) ROBINSON 12-14,
so fine he makes a girl's IQ slump, smart, deep,
a great skateboarder. Takes himself very seriously.**

**BRETT BABBITT 14, Rocky's cousin, an insecure,
cheerful jerk**

TIME: The present.

PLACE: Michigan and Nashville, Tennessee.

CYRA & ROCKY

(Pre-show tape should be a mix of classic and current alternative rock, from The Doors and Janis Joplin to Hootie and the Blowfish and Dionne Farris. Eight minutes before curtain, we hear Hootie and the Blowfish sing "Hold My Hand." Then, the last song before lights up is Janis Joplin's "Piece of My Heart.")

NOTE: During the opening letter sequence, the first two times the lights come up on CHRISSY we hear Faith Hill's bouncy country bubblegum version of the rock classic "Piece Of My Heart." The first two times the lights come up on ROCKY we hear the original Janis Joplin rock version of the same tune.

Lights come up on CHRISSY NEUVILLE, in her bedroom, writing a letter. R. Faith Hill music up, to which CHRISSY bops happily. CHRISSY is dressed in cute, preppie clothes, might have hair in a high ponytail. There is a large gauze bandage on her forehead. She is not a very good reader. There are probably spelling errors in her letter. Her "ha-ha" and her "okay? okay!" are her trademarks.

CHRISSY (reading her letter out loud). Dear Rockland, (She pronounces his name "Rock Land.") My name is Chrissy Neville and I am 12 years old. I live in Nashville, Tennessee. Today was the first day of seventh grade. I almost did

not get to go because I accidentally walked into the sliding glass door in our family room. The stitches do not hurt too much, ha-ha. My teacher, Mrs. Yooglee, says we have to be pen pals with the kids at your school in Michigan. We had to pick a name from the pen pal list and I picked yours because all the others were already taken. I do not think anyone wanted to write to someone named Rockland, no offense, but it does not matter to me as long as I get an A on the assignment, ha-ha. About me, well, there is not too much to tell. I have a dog named Spot and a cat named Fluffy and a little sister who is getting toilet trained soon I hope. *(She takes her pencil and writes in a ha-ha, first saying the words softly and then again, loudly).* Ha-ha! Oh, one other thing, I am a junior baton twirler this year and I am taking baton lessons. So far I cannot do any tricks but I am working on it. It is really super. Well, I have to go now. Sorry so sloppy, okay? Okay. Your new pen pal, Chrissy.

(Lights down on CHRISSEY, up on ROCKY. Music changes to opening of the same song by Joplin, as he slam-dances all around his room for about 15 seconds or so. ROCKY is very fine, but his whole style is alternative—from his partially buzz-cut/partially long hair to his ratty jeans and t-shirt with Kurt Cobain's picture on it. He finishes writing his letter and reads it out loud as music goes out.)

ROCKY *(reading)*. Dear Chrissy, Yeah, my teacher is making us do this stupid pen pal thing, too. Frankly, I think it is really stupid to write to someone you don't know, will never know and don't really want to know, no offense. I am twelve years old and I think school is stupid because no one ever learned anything really important in school like

lessons about life. You can really learn about life from a poet like Kurt Cobain. Like he said, "I feel stupid and contagious/Here we are now, entertain us."

ROCKY'S MOTHER (*shrill, off-stage voice*). Sweetie, did you do your homework yet?

ROCKY (*pointedly ignoring his mother*). I bet no one ever called Kurt Cobain "sweetie," and I bet he never had to write to a stupid pen pal, either. One other thing. I have this really stupid family name and nobody calls me Rockland—

ROCKY'S MOTHER (*shrill, off-stage*). Rockland, did you hear me??

ROCKY (*pointedly ignoring his mother*). —Nobody. Rocky.

(Lights down on ROCKY, up on CHRISSEY. Her bandage is now gone. Faith Hill music up, CHRISSEY bops 'til it fades.)

CHRISSEY (*reading a new letter*). Dear Rockland, I got your letter. I like poems, too! There is a lot of great poetry in country music. For example, "Don't tell my heart, my achy breaky heart, I just don't think it will understand, and if you tell my heart, my achy breaky heart, it might just blow up and kill this man." Well, I have to go now, they are having twirlers on the Mickey Mouse Club today. Yours 'til Mount Ever Rests, ha-ha, Chrissy. P.S. Rocky is an old movie with Sylvester Stallone. I saw it on cable. P.P.S. I can do one baton trick now, which is I can throw the baton...only so far I do not usually catch it.

(Lights down on CHRISSEY, up on ROCKY. Janis Joplin music up, and ROCKY rocks out to it. Then music fades out as ROCKY reads.)

ROCKY (*reading a new letter*). Dear Chrissy, Happy holidays. I got all the Grateful Dead's CDs. I would have gotten a guitar, too, but my parents went ballistic after my cousin, Brett, pierced my ear and blood gushed all over the carpet in the living room which used to be white. I think it is stupid that parents care more about material possessions like carpets than they do about their own son. Rocky.

(Lights down on ROCKY, up on CHRISSEY, who now types with one hand on a small laptop computer. The other hand is in a cast.)

CHRISSEY (*reading what she's typed on the laptop*). Dear Rockland, Hi. What's up? How are you? I am not fine. It is our spring vacation and I was supposed to go to baton twirling camp but now I cannot go. Yesterday I was in the family room practicing that baton trick I told you about, okay? Okay. Well, this time I actually caught the baton, but then by mistake I ran into the aquarium and kind of knocked it over. All the fish were flopping all over the place but my best friend, Cyra, and I were able to get them all into the bathtub except for this one which I stepped on by mistake. It was so gross. So I tried to save it anyway and ran with this mushed fish to the bathroom but I slipped and broke my arm and now I cannot do anything except type with one hand. De liver de letter de sooner de better, ha-ha, Chrissy.

(Lights down on CHRISSEY, up on ROCKY, writing a letter.)

ROCKY. Dear Chrissy, (*All in one breath.*) It is the last day of school and my teacher said we have to write one last

letter to our pen pal but she didn't say how long it had to be...*(Several beats.)* Rocky.

(Lights down on ROCKY, up on CHRISSEY with her laptop. No cast.)

CHRISSEY *(reading from her laptop)*. Dear Rockland, I am so excited to be in eighth grade, aren't you? Mrs. Yooglee says this year we will get extra credit every time we write to our pen pal and she is a really hard teacher so I will be writing to you a lot, ha-ha. Chrissy.

(Lights down on CHRISSEY, up on ROCKY who now has a laptop, too.)

ROCKY *(reading from his laptop)*. Dear Chrissy, It is two o'clock in the morning but I can't sleep. I just read the coolest book called *The Catcher in the Rye*. Did you ever read it? It is only totally and exactly how I feel about everything in the entire universe. Sincerely, *Holden Caulfield*.

(Lights down on ROCKY, up on CHRISSEY.)

CHRISSEY *(reading from laptop)*. Dear Rockland, I was never up at two o'clock in the morning in my whole life except for this one time when I had an accident on my bike and the handlebars went through my stomach and I had to have this emergency surgery and I was up all night dying from the pain but I do not remember that too well which my mother says is a good thing, ha-ha. I never read that *Catcher in the Rye* book but it sounds like it is about baseball which I like a lot. Go, Braves! Sincerely, Chrissy. P.S. Okay, I know you have a funny name, Rockland, but

changing it to Holden whatever-you-said is not really a good idea and I think it would hurt your parents' feelings, no offense.

(Lights down on CHRISSEY, up on ROCKY.)

ROCKY *(reading from his laptop)*. Dear Chrissy, I've decided I'm going to become a writer like J.D. Salinger. Writers have to know pain, so I'm going to get a tattoo someplace on my body where it will really hurt. Probably my forehead. Rocky.

(Lights down on ROCKY, up on CHRISSEY.)

CHRISSEY *(reading from her laptop)*. Dear Rockland, I am just going to come right out and tell you how I feel, okay? Okay. Tattoos are stupid, Rockland. And there isn't a girl I know who would like a guy who had a tattoo on his forehead, no offense. You might be a really nice person inside but with a tattoo on your forehead you are going to look like a crazed geek from one of those R.L. Stine novels, no offense. Please think about this, okay? Okay. Your sincere pen pal, Chrissy.

(Lights down on CHRISSEY, up on ROCKY. Joplin music up. ROCKY looks fierce. He stands up and faces the audience. He has placed a mailing-label sticker on his forehead, on which he has drawn a third eye. It's his test tattoo and he's proud of it. He unpeels the sticker and tries it out on another part of his forehead, as he admires himself in a hand mirror. Then, he peels the label off. Lights fade on ROCKY, up on CHRISSEY.)

CHRISSEY (*reading from her laptop*). Dear Rockland, I haven't heard from you in a really long time. I guess you were mad at me for what I said about the tattoo but I had to tell you how I really feel, okay? Okay. Well, it is the end of eighth grade, can you believe it? This year went by so fast. I just wanted to say it was fun writing to you for two years even if we didn't have very much in common or anything. Good luck next year in high school, Chrissy.

(*Lights down on CHRISSEY, up on ROCKY.*)

ROCKY (*reading from his laptop*). Dear Chrissy, I've been in high school for two weeks and so far it is the same *mind-numbing hell* as middle school except with more homework. Honors English is pretty cool. At least we get to keep journals. You won't believe this but my new social studies teacher, who incidentally has a long, black hair growing out of her right nostril, says we have to continue to write to our pen pals from middle school, and we have to exchange photos, too. Now, how lame is that?

(*Add lights on CHRISSEY.*)

ROCKY & CHRISSEY (*each in his/her own separate world*). We're putting up this bulletin board of all the pen pal photos, so please send me your photo, not too large, as it has to fit on this (*ROCKY says "stupid," Chrissy says "really cute."*) bulletin board.

CHRISSEY. Sincerely—

ROCKY & CHRISSEY (*each in his/her separate world*).
Rocky (Chrissy).

(Lights down, then back up on CHRISSEY, who stares at a photo of ROCKY, which clearly has her swooning. She positions herself pseudo-seductively, taking her hair out of her ponytail and letting it flow. Same girl, new attitude.)

CHRISSEY *(reading from her laptop in an oh-so-sophisticated tone)*. Dear Rocky, Thanks for sending me your photo so quickly. It's funny, but somehow I already knew just what you'd look like. Sometimes the soul of a true poet just shines through, you know? I recently finished reading *The Catcher In The Rye*. What an incredible book. Just because I'm a baton twirler who looks great in a really short skirt doesn't mean I can't relate to Holden Caulfield, because I can. Only shallow people define others by how they look or by the silly activities they try on and discard like cheap clothes at the mall. A person should be judged by permanent things, like her character, her heart, her unbending soul. Yours most sincerely, *Christine*.

(Lights fade on CHRISSEY, up on ROCKY. BRETT, Rocky's cousin, plays hackysack while a Grateful Dead tape blasts from a tape deck. Suggestion: "Sugar Magnolia." BRETT might be wearing a sleeveless t-shirt and below-the-knee baggy shorts. His sunglasses are handy. ROCKY reads CHRISSEY's last letter then grabs Brett's hackysack mid-game.)

BRETT *(objecting)*. Hey!

ROCKY. Listen to this! *(Reading from CHRISSEY's letter.)* "A person should be judged by permanent things, like her character, her heart, her unbending soul."

BRETT. Gag me.

ROCKY. What do you mean “gag me”? Take a look at her!
(*ROCKY shows CHRISSY’s photo to BRETT.*)

BRETT (*grabbing the photo*). Hel-lo! Serious babe alert!

ROCKY. And she’s, like, really deep!

BRETT (*taking out a photo of his own pen pal*). How come your pen pal is a babe, and mine looks like a Chia pet?

ROCKY. Her letter is so awesome!

BRETT (*looking at CHRISSY’s photo again*). I wonder what she looks like naked!

ROCKY (*grabbing the photo from BRETT*). Get your mind out of the gutter, slob.

BRETT (*sarcastic*). Oh yeah, you appreciate her for her mind, right...

ROCKY. Right!

BRETT. Yeah, so how come for two years you been whining every time you had to write her a letter, answer me that!

ROCKY. She grew up lately, okay? I’m writing her back...

BRETT. Cool. Ask her what she looks like naked—

(Lights down on Rocky’s room, up on Chrissy’s. Loud Grateful Dead music—the same song ROCKY had on, blares from a tape deck. CHRISSY’s best friend, CYRA, does skateboard tricks, as CHRISSY reads out loud from ROCKY’s latest letter.)

CHRISSY. Oh, my gosh, Cyra, listen to this! (*Reading.*)
“Your letter was so beautiful, as beautiful as you are. It’s so amazing to connect this deeply with someone you’ve never even met, and I can’t help but wonder what you look like naked—your naked soul that is. Be brave enough to send me all the unedited words that are your naked soul, and I shall do the same. Yours, Rocky.”

CYRA (*as if narrating a skateboard tournament*). Yes! Cyra Berger executes a perfect layback grind, folks, which puts her in first place! And the crowd goes wild! (*CYRA makes crowd cheering noises with her mouth and cupped hands.*)

CHRISSY. Cyra—

CYRA (*as if she's an MTV veejay*). MTV music news update: Unknown but soon-to-be-superstar Cyra Berger has just been hired to replace Jerry Garcia for the Grateful Dead's national tour—let's go to the videotape—

CHRISSY. Cyra—you're not listening to me! Turn off that awful music! (*CHRISSY marches over and turns off the tape deck.*)

CYRA. That "awful music" just happens to be the Grateful Dead, which just happens to be some of the best music on the planet.

CHRISSY. About my pen pal. He—

CYRA. —wants to see you naked.

CHRISSY. My naked *soul*, he says!

CYRA. I'm so sure.

CHRISSY. But he's not like that! He's really deep! Like you! I wish I had your brains, Cyra...

CYRA. Yeah, well, I wish I had your body.

CHRISSY. You're beautiful.

CYRA. No. Guys see me, they see...you know. *You're beautiful.*

CHRISSY. But Rocky fell in love with my *inner* beauty, because of my last letter. And we both know *I* didn't write my last letter. *You* did.

CYRA. I especially liked that "only shallow people define others by how they look or by the silly activities they try on and discard like cheap clothes at the mall." And notice how I got in that you look great in a miniskirt and made you sound deep at the same time. Guys love that.

CHRISSEY. It was brilliant.

CYRA. True.

CHRISSEY. *You're* brilliant.

CYRA. Also true.

CHRISSEY. Which is why I want you to write to him again for me.

CYRA. Wrong-a-mundo.

CHRISSEY. Please—

CYRA. No, negative, nada, nein. Write to him yourself!

CHRISSEY. I did! For two years! He hated me!

CYRA. But now he's seen your picture. Once a guy has seen *your* picture, all *you* have to do to get him to like you is stand there and *breathe*.

CHRISSEY. Not this guy.

CYRA. Does he have eyes with which to take in the perfection that is you?

CHRISSEY. This guy is different, Cyra. (*CHRISSEY shows ROCKY's photo to CYRA.*)

CYRA (*ho-hum*). Yeah, he's cute. So?

CHRISSEY. Cute? This isn't just cute! This is...this is gorgeous! This is I-have-to-have-him-or-I-will-die gorgeous! Just write one more letter from me, this'll be the last time, I swear it—

CYRA. Read my lips: no. Write it yourself.

CHRISSEY. I can't! I'm not like you. I don't know how to say things, especially to a cute guy! It's like the words just won't come out of my mouth! And it's just as bad on paper! There's my pen, and there's all this white space, and what comes into my mind is just a big...nothing. (*CHRISSEY hands CYRA pen and paper. CYRA hands it back.*)

CYRA. At least try. Come on, I'll help you.

CHRISSEY (*with a sigh*). Oh, all right. I'll try. So, how should I start?