

# "Les Romanesques"

by Edmond Rostand



Thursday September 22-Saturday October 8th  
Premiere performance at the newly remodeled  
Chapel Theatre

in Wallingford's Good Shepherd Center  
4649 Sunnyside Ave N. Seattle, 98103

All performances in both the original French  
and English languages

(evening performances at 8:00, Saturday matinees at 4:00)

Tickets \$16 general admission  
\$10 seniors and students  
Call (206) 935-8261

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<http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2228>







**Colton Michael Carothers (Percinet)** - With “Les Romanesques”, Colton is making his return to the stage after a two year absence. He has numerous musical theatre credits to his name, including *Charlie Brown*, *You’re A Good Man Charlie Brown*; *Moonface Martin*, *Anything Goes*; *Mordred*, *Camelot*; *Artful Dodger*, *Oliver*; and many more. Having just returned from Seattle University’s French-in-France program in Nantes, France, Colton is excited to be able to combine his two favorite activities with this production: performing and speaking French! On top of double majoring in Political Science/Pre-Law and French at Seattle University, Colton is also a Legal Assistant with an area law firm, Larson Hart & Shepherd, PLLC, as well as an intern at the French American Chamber of Commerce in Seattle.



**Kady Douglas\* (Stafarella)**- Miss Douglas has been involved in the Seattle acting community for more than 10 years, four of which have been with Steeplechase Productions co-producer, actor, costumer, prop-procurer, program and postcard designer and cheerleader. Shows she performed in for Steeplechase include: the West Coast premieres of *Life x 3*, and *What Happened Was...*, *Lettice and Lovage*, *Plaza Suite*, *Grace and Glorie*, *The Maids*, *A Coupla White Chicks Sittin’ Around Talking*, *Criminal Hearts*, *Jack and Jill*, *Uncle Vanya*, *The Gamblers (Premiere)*, *The Millionaire*, and *Edward Albee’s Seascape*. She is a former Board member of Theatre Puget Sound and is a member of the Actors Equity Liaison Committee. Additionally, she is a Professional Speaker and Trainer for the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising, a college located in California.



**Ronald Holden (Pasquinot)** - Ronald attended French-speaking schools in Geneva, Switzerland, and graduated from Yale. Trained as a journalist, he spent the better part of two decades in broadcast news, then turned his attention to writing about food, wine and travel. For 15 years he managed a luxury travel company, France In Your Glass, which required frequent and arduous research trips to Paris, Burgundy, Bordeaux and Champagne. He has appeared in *Under Milk Wood*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Murder in the Cathedral*, and, long, long ago, *The Fantasticks* (playing the same role as he does in this production). Ronald’s tasting notes and culinary dispatches appear on his blog, [www.cornichon.org](http://www.cornichon.org).



**David S. Klein\* (Bergamin)** - David has been a professional actor for 36 years but this is his very first show en français. His career includes an appearance at the Woodstock Festival in 1969, a tour of Poland, and 8 years running a small theater in one of the world’s most beautiful small towns, Thetford, Vermont. He was last seen this spring as Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman* at CHAC. He is a founding member of Book-It, where he has appeared in (and sometimes adapted) stories by Woody Allen, Anton Chekhov, Sherwood Anderson, James Caan and Sue Miller and appeared ever so briefly as Conan the Barbarian in Robert E. Howard’s *Black Colossus*.



**Darian Lindle (Sylvette)** -Darian is deeply grateful to Steeplechase for allowing her to revisit 2 long-lost loves, acting et la langue Française. Locally, she has worked as a director and dramaturg with Seattle Rep, Book-It, VIA, Freehold, Theatre Babylon, LiveGirls!, City3, The Shunpike, and Cornish. Most recently, Darian directed the critically acclaimed [*sic*] for her own company, FreshGoods. She wrote an adaptation of the children’s novel *The Westing Game* for FringeACT 2003 and is currently writing *Murasaki*, a play based on the life of 11<sup>th</sup> century Japanese novelist Murasaki Shikibu (Hear the 1st reading on 9/26 at LiveGirls! in Ballard). Thanks to Nick and Jeremy.

\*Member Actors Equity Association

**Scott Taylor (Director)** - Scott is an assistant professor of French at Pacific Lutheran University. He holds a PhD in French literature and critical theory from the Florida State University and a BA in French and Theater from the University of Tennessee. Scott has directed a number of productions in both French and English including: Ionesco’s “The Bald Soprano,” Beckett’s “Catastrophe” and Vian’s “Adam, Eve et le troisième sexe” among others. He was most recently published in the “Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism” where he discusses semiotic approaches to the study of performance. Scott is happy to be making his Seattle directorial debut with Steeplechase Productions.

## “Les Romanesques” scene by scene

The setting throughout is the gardens adjoining the Bergamin and Pasquinot estates, separated by an ancient stone wall. We begin at dawn and end at dusk.



### Scene 1

Fresh out of “college and convent” for the summer, our two lovers, Sylvette and Percinet, meet “secretly” by the wall that separates their fathers’ estates to read Shakespeare and enjoy each other’s company. They discover that they are “in love” (“How quickly it came on!”) and discuss various possible scenarios by which their fathers’ hatred may be put asunder so that their love may be actualized. Sylvette knows of “at least five, no six ways by which to do it!”



### Scene 2

Sylvette and Percinet’s rendez-vous is cut short by the arrival of Bergamin, Percinet’s father. Bergamin is annoyed by his son’s poetic nature and fondness for “aristolochia” (an exotic flowering vine, see photo). Sylvette hides behind the wall as Bergamin explains his plans to find a wife for his son. Alarmed, Percinet proclaims that he will not have “a marriage made of reason,” but rather, “a marriage madly, royally romantic.” (Let’s hope the wall heard this!) The scene ends with Bergamin chasing his defiant son back to the house.



### Scene 3

Enter Pasquinot, Sylvette’s father, who chastises his daughter for spending so much time by the wall that separates them from their “foes so spiteful.” He threatens to top the wall with iron spikes to keep his enemies at bay, but Sylvette is not too worried since “papa” is a bit of a cheapskate!

### Scene 4

With the children gone, the ruse is revealed as Bergamin and Pasquinot (not enemies after all) discuss how their secret plan to marry their two children is coming along. Taking his cue from one of Sylvette’s scenarios in scene one, Bergamin has called for the “spadassin” Straforella to arrange a feigned abduction in which his son will emerge victorious, saving Sylvette from her kidnapper and consequently clearing the path for Sylvette and Percinet’s marriage. (“All that’s lacking is a father’s yes...”)



### Scene 5

The mysterious Straforella arrives and discusses the various options for feigned abductions. They come in many categories and classes, “from a common ruction to the highest, sir.” Bergamin decides to “go the whole hog” and purchase an abduction of the highest class...with extras!

### Scene 6

Straforella exits, leaving Bergamin and Pasquinot alone to discuss the many changes they will make to their properties once the wall is gone and their children married. (These guys are really fond of each other!)



### Scene 7

Moved by their happiness at the possibility of spending old age together, Bergamin and Pasquinot’s embrace is interrupted by the arrival of their children. Surprised, they fake a fight to maintain the façade of their hatred.

### Scene 8

Night arrives as Straforella sets the stage for the feigned abduction. Not a detail is missed!

### Scene 9

Percinet arrives for his evening tryst with Sylvette and sings a song that praises her beauty.



### Scene 10

As the sacring bell rings, Sylvette is seized upon by Straforella. Percinet comes to her rescue and proves himself to be a valiant swordsman ... well, sort of...But all’s well that ends well, and with Straforella vanquished, Bergamin and Pasquinot reappear and give their blessings to the children. Tableau! There’s only one final detail remaining — the bill!



## Director's Note

Edmond Rostand (1868-1918), who is most famous for his play *Cyrano Bergerac*, was somewhat of a curiosity in his own time. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when he first produced *Les Romanèsqués* (his first commercial success and the play on which the highly popular musical, *The Fantasticks*, is based), French theater was divided between two primary opposing schools of thought: (1) Naturalism, inspired by Zola and adapted to the stage by le Théâtre-Libre d'Antoine, and (2) Symbolism, inspired by Mallarmé, and adapted to the stage by le Théâtre d'Art de Paul Fort.

The naturalist stage represented a desire for the implementation of the scientific method in the production of art and literature. The writer was to detach himself, like a scientist, from the object of his study, approach it methodically and “objectively” in order to offer a more accurate representation. It is from the naturalist movement that we get the term “slice of life,” which has had (and still has) major influence on modern and contemporary Western Drama.

Symbolism, on the other hand, consciously attacked the so-called “scientific objectivity” of naturalism and sought to discover and reveal, through the senses, a world that was “truer” than the one in which we actually live. The symbolist stage was suggestive rather than explicit; the dialogue and acting was highly stylized; stage sets and props were non-realistic and served to signify (or symbolize) larger concepts such as emotions or social values.

Rostand, however, was a bit of an anachronism for he subscribed to neither of these two schools of thought, but instead offered a return to the romantic period, a return to a theater written in verse, melodramatic in nature, and without philosophical pretension. He was a neo-romantic, an idealist, longing for a perfect love, a utopia, an imaginary paradise... He was not interested in offering an exact reproduction of the world on stage, nor did he seek to convince audiences of some profound message. Instead, he wrote simple stories for people to enjoy – “light, fanciful and charmingly poetic” as they have been described – plays that “show, preach, and exalt the dignity of love.”

It is love that is at the heart of our production tonight — love of poetry, language, and theatre, love of culture and community. In a world that has become so mechanized, depersonalized and wrought with endless conflict, Rostand takes us back to a simpler time and reminds us to appreciate the beauty of nature, the passion of poetry, and the wonder of romance.

Enjoy the show!

THANK YOU!

Kady Douglas and Seattle Rep (costumes)  
Historic Seattle (rehearsal and performance space)  
Theatre Puget Sound (Rex, lighting tech)  
Z-Lane Graphics (Bob, program)  
Michael Savage (original music score)  
Bob Borwick (fight choreography)  
Good Shepherd Center (Mark) (Neill, Photos)  
Café Solstice (Doug, sound system)



French Language Consultation  
by the Alliance Française of Seattle  
Jean Leblon,  
advisor to the board of directors  
Misa Bourdoiseau, Executive Director



Cookies, Coffee and Sound

