

Mr. Les Misérables

THE NEW 25TH ANNIVERSARY PRODUCTION

Dream
the
dream



June 14 – July 31, 2011
Ahmanson Theatre

Welcome to Center Theatre Group and the new 25th Anniversary production of *Les Misérables*

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Inspired by Victor Hugo's novel, the musical paints a sweeping picture of 19th century France — a world with deep divisions between rich and poor, justice and mercy, poverty and opportunity. *Les Misérables* shows us a world where inequality turns good people into hardened criminals, forces woman and children onto the streets and leaves those who desire change few options but revolution.

While depicting and condemning these harsh realities, *Les Misérables* dares to do more — to dream of a new world, a world of freedom, opportunity and compassion for all people.

The characters we meet — Jean Valjean, a man imprisoned for stealing a loaf of bread to feed his family, Fantine, a single mother who sacrifices everything for her child, and Cosette, a child forced into hard labor — continue to envision a new world as well. No amount of suffering can rob them of their ability to dream.

Take a moment and think about dreams. Do dreams actually have the power to create change? Is imagining a new world the first step towards making one? What are some dreams you have for your own life, for your family, for our world? Do you believe that compassion can be stronger than violence? What is your vision of "a world you long to see"?

Les Misérables is the longest running musical in the world. The musical shares its vision using songs that are heartbreaking and inspiring, through characters who move us and characters who challenge our assumptions, through unflinching glimpses at poverty and violence, and with powerful moments of redemption and love.

Turn the page to explore the world of *Les Misérables* and the journey to turn this novel into a musical. Learn about Victor Hugo and the social ills of 19th century France. Meet the five young actors who appear in *Les Misérables* and discover what life is like balancing school with performing in a national tour.

Theatre raises questions and challenges audience members to discover their own answers. See what questions this information raises for you, and what questions and answers the performance provides. Thank you so much for joining us for *Les Misérables*. We look forward to seeing you at the theatre!

**"SOMEWHERE
BEYOND THE
BARRICADE IS
THERE A WORLD
YOU LONG TO SEE?"**

—Ensemble in *Les Misérables*

About the Play 2
 Victor Hugo's World 4
 "Les Miz" History 6
 Interview 7
 Credits 8



The New 25th Anniversary Production of *Les Misérables*. PHOTO: DEEN VAN MEER

24601

"Tell me quickly what's the story"
 —Javert in *Les Misérables*



Betsy Morgan as Fantine. PHOTO: DEEN VAN MEER

It is 1815 in Digne, France and a slave ship, rowed by prisoners, enters the stage to the sound of waves crashing. Inspector Javert announces that prisoner "24601," Jean Valjean, is being released on parole. After 19 years in jail for stealing a loaf of bread and trying to escape, Valjean is finally a free man. But as Valjean prepares to leave, with his yellow parole papers in hand, Javert casts a shadow on his newfound freedom. A criminal, he warns, can never escape his past — and Valjean is no exception.

It is not long before Valjean discovers the truth of Javert's warning. As Valjean struggles to make a fresh start, doors are slammed shut in his face. The ex-convict despairs that he is society's scum, nothing more than the "dirt beneath their feet." Finally, a kindly Bishop agrees to take him in for the night. Yet even this act of generosity cannot soften Valjean's embittered heart — during the night, he hastily steals the Bishop's silver, only to be caught by the police. When the authorities press the Bishop to accuse Valjean, he claims to have given him the silver. The Bishop urges Valjean to take the gift and use it to pursue an honest life. Deeply moved by this act of compassion and armed with a newfound faith, Valjean swears to uphold the Bishop's wishes.

Eight years pass and Valjean has started a new life as a factory owner in the seaside town of Montreuil-sur-Mer. Among the workers is Fantine, a young woman who also carries the burden of a shameful past. She is unable to care for her illegitimate daughter, Cosette, and pays the local innkeepers, the Thénardiens, to look after her. As the Thénardiens' financial demands become more unreasonable, Fantine falls into a life of destitution and ill health. Faced with Fantine's heartbreaking pleas, Valjean promises the ailing mother that he will take care

of little Cosette. His plan is complicated when Javert reappears and recognizes the factory owner as prisoner "24601." Following a violent confrontation between the two men, Valjean flees to rescue Cosette.

Ten years later, Valjean and Cosette have established themselves amongst the city's elite. The Thénardiens and their daughter Éponine have also reinvented themselves, as first-class thieves within the city's criminal underworld. The streets are overrun with the "misérables," including the mischievous street urchin Gavroche, who desperately fights for survival amidst the overcrowding and filth.

The city's well-to-do students are outraged by these terrible living conditions and spend their days plotting to overthrow the government. Their sole supporter within the government has died and the students see only one solution. Led by the passionate Enjolras, they decide to take arms and revolt. One of the young revolutionaries, Marius, has fallen in love with Cosette and before heading to the barricades he promises her that they will share a life together.

Unbeknownst to Marius, Valjean has planned to flee the city with Cosette. The relentless Javert has again tracked him down and Valjean will not risk staying the night. Yet Valjean's compassionate nature foils his plans for escape. Upon learning of Marius' love for Cosette, Valjean can think only of his adopted daughter's happiness. He rushes to the barricades in the hopes of saving the young man from death. The air is electric with revolution. Each character is drawn to the heart of the city with a purpose — sacrifice, duty, vengeance or love. The night sky, illuminated with stars, echoes with the sound of gunfire.

"Who Am I?"

—Jean Valjean in *Les Misérables*

Enjolras – Student, Revolutionary leader
 Enjolras is enraged by the inequalities he sees around him. The charismatic leader urges his fellow students to put aside their selfish worries and risk their lives to fight for a better country.

Marius – Student, Revolutionary
 Starry-eyed student Marius is torn between his commitment to the revolution and his love for Cosette. He cannot imagine a life without her, yet many forces — political and personal — conspire to keep them apart.

Ensemble
 Convicts, factory workers, sailors, drinkers at the inn, people of Paris, student revolutionaries, National Guard

The Bishop of Digne
 The Bishop is the only person willing to see past Valjean's yellow parole papers and open his doors to the ex-convict. He gives Valjean the chance at a new life.

Jean Valjean – Ex-convict
 Released from prison, Jean Valjean bears the shameful mark of his prisoner number ("24601") that will haunt his every step. His attempts at a new life — first as mayor of a small town, then as adoptive father to Cosette in Paris — are successful but short-lived. Valjean faces the ultimate struggle of seeking the good in himself and others.

Cosette – Fantine's daughter
 Growing up in the clutches of the Thénardiens, who work her to the bone, young Cosette dreams of a happier life. Her life takes an unexpected turn when Valjean comes to save her and again, years later, when she meets the dashing Marius.

Monsieur and Madame Thénardier – Innkeepers, Thieves
 Brash, crude and thoughtless, the Thénardiens will go to any lengths to fulfill their greedy interests. They leave their bustling inn for the Paris underworld and a life of thieving, well-suited to their criminal instincts.

Gavroche – Street Orphan
 This young street urchin knows every nook and cranny of the city's underworld. Crafty and bursting with self-confidence, he is always looking to be where the action is.

Javert – Inspector
 There are no shades of grey in the Inspector's world, only black and white. Javert's unwavering conviction, that a man who has broken the law can never be redeemed, will ultimately lead to his own downfall.

Fantine – Factory worker, Cosette's mother
 Fantine works tirelessly at Valjean's factory in Montreuil-sur-Mer. Unable to care for her illegitimate daughter Cosette, she pays the Thénardiens to look after her. Fantine is wracked with guilt over the decision and sacrifices all she has to support her daughter.

Éponine – Thénardiens' daughter
 Éponine grew up in the Thénardiens household and never had the chance at a better life. A lonely spectator of Marius and Cosette's love story, she will do anything to see Marius happy — even if it means sacrificing herself.

The Man of *Mercy* Comes Again

and Talks of **JUSTICE.**

—Javert in *Les Misérables*

Inspector Javert sees only Valjean's criminal past and fervently believes that, "once a thief, always a thief." Only the Bishop sees beyond Valjean's criminal actions to the man he could become.

Do you believe that Jean Valjean should have gone to jail for stealing to feed his family? What punishment would you have given Valjean?

If your family was starving, what would you do to feed them?

If someone broke into your house to feed their family, what punishment would you want them to receive? Would you be able to forgive them?

Why do we have laws? Are laws to protect, to punish or to create order? Should the law be upheld no matter what? Should the reason behind the crime effect the punishment?

Is there a place for mercy within the law?

What does justice mean to you?

There is bread to make you strong, there's a bed to rest 'til morning, rest from pain and rest from wrong.

— The Bishop of Digne, *Les Misérables*

Do you believe that people can change? Does everyone deserve a second chance?

Is there someone who believes in you more than you believe in yourself? Who sees past labels or actions to the person inside? Does this challenge you? Has it opened up new possibilities for you? Does it give you hope?

Discovery Guide

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As long as one man on earth is suffering from hunger or misery, a book like this may not be useless.

—Victor Hugo, foreword to *Les Misérables*

VICTOR HUGO'S WORLD



To enter the epic world of *Les Misérables* is to see inside one of the great minds of the 19th century. Victor Hugo, the writer of the original French novel *Les Misérables*, was a beloved national figure in France during his lifetime and remains widely revered to this day.

Hugo was a master of many written forms — including poetry, essays, plays, and novels — as well as an accomplished visual artist, political figure, and defender of human rights.

Born in 1802, Hugo grew up during a time of astounding political change and turmoil in France. The French Revolution of 1789 had toppled centuries of royal rule and created France's First Republic,

with hopes of increased freedoms and social advances for the poor. But what followed instead were years of chaos (including the "Reign of Terror" when close to 40,000 people were beheaded) as moderate and radical activists battled each other for power.

In the first years of Hugo's life, France was governed by Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, who envisioned building a French empire that extended throughout Europe. Following Napoleon's exile in 1815, aristocratic forces restored the country to a monarchy. Though the subsequent kings that ruled France ranged from moderate to reactionary, they were all dominated by the special interests of the wealthy elite. The monarchy decreased voting rights, restricted

freedom of speech, censored the press, and did little to alleviate the widespread poverty that plagued the lower classes. Under the rule of Emperor Napoleon III, Hugo's discontent with the government reached a breaking point. In 1851, he fled into voluntary exile in the Channel Islands.

It was during this time that Hugo dove into his most political writing, including his masterpiece novel, *Les Misérables*. It wasn't until 1871, when France's Third Republic was established, that Hugo returned to France. He was welcomed back as a national hero.

Who are Les Misérables?

The "misérables" of 19th century France were just as the name implies — deeply miserable, poor and without hope of a brighter future.

Under France's revolving monarchies, the gap between the working poor and the country's rich aristocrats was huge. With limited voting rights and access to education, the majority of people had no say in how the country was governed and very few employment opportunities. Hard physical labor and factory work for women and children were common and often entire families toiled together in harsh and unsanitary conditions.

The lack of opportunities in education and employment created a proliferation of urban violence, with adults and children alike turning to crime for survival. For women, who were denied many basic legal rights, the situation could be particularly desperate. In the mid-19th century, it is estimated there were as many as 35,000 to 40,000 women working as prostitutes in Paris. The Paris depicted in *Les Misérables* was typical of European cities at the time. Its narrow streets housed a massive concentration of people, with the medieval center of the city holding one-third of the city's one million inhabitants.

REVOLUTION

WILL YOU JOIN IN OUR CRUSADE? WHO WILL BE STRONG AND STAND WITH ME? —Ensemble in *Les Misérables*

Who are the "misérables" in our world today? Are their stories being told?

Do today's "misérables" speak for themselves? If not, who speaks for them? Who needs to hear their stories?

The Role of the Artist

Hugo was writing at a time when there was not the instant access to information we enjoy today. In addition to their significant creative contributions, artists served an important role in society as eyewitnesses of history, chroniclers of change and, certainly in Hugo's case, a voice for the voiceless.

A staunch believer in human rights, Hugo used his writing to express outrage over France's inequalities. He spoke out passionately in favor of free speech, freedom of the press, universal suffrage, public education, and strongly criticized France's harsh and ineffective criminal justice system.

Hugo knew the power of the pen and envisioned that *Les Misérables* would be widely read and help fuel anti-government sentiment. Witnesses spoke of lines of people from all walks of life waiting in the narrow Paris streets to purchase their copies. Hugo had achieved the amazing feat of creating a work of art that spoke not only of the masses but to the masses.

What role do artists play in today's society?

How can an artist help create change in the world? Do they have a responsibility to do so?

Who is a contemporary artist that gives "voice to the voiceless" today?

The climactic event of *Les Misérables* is the 1832 Revolution led by intellectual members of secret societies in protest over the oppressive French government and desperately poor living conditions. Over two days in Paris, the revolutionaries held up against government forces, but they were no match for the National Guard's 25,000 soldiers. Eight hundred people were killed and wounded, and the revolution was suppressed.

The revolt depicted in *Les Misérables* is characteristic of the revolutionary activity sweeping across the world at the time. The 19th century saw the largest wave of revolutions in the history of the world in countries across Europe. The United States was also undergoing massive political changes. The American colonies fought for independence from England and became the United States in 1776, and the Civil War (1861 – 1865) was one of the bloodiest conflicts in U.S. history.

Of all these extraordinary revolutions, Hugo chose a relatively insignificant battle as the centerpiece of his novel, *Les Misérables*. Out of the devastating failure of the student revolutionaries, Hugo hoped to galvanize his audience with the message: though the work is far from over, every step against oppression is a step closer to freedom.

Hugo's message carries remarkable resonance today in 2011. Many countries in the Middle East have recently erupted in revolution — including Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain and Libya. The unifying force of all these revolutions, much like those of 19th century Europe, is young people. In a recent survey, young people in the Middle East said that their number one hope is to live in a free country. Using modern tools to organize their protests (satellite T.V., computers, mobile phones and social media) this "Miracle Generation" has successfully challenged, and in some cases overthrown, deeply entrenched governments.

Ghosh, Bobby, "Rage, Rap, and Revolution: Inside the Arab Youth Quake," Time, February 17, 2011. Zakaria, Fareed, "Why There's No Turning Back in the Middle East," Time, February 17, 2011.

“REVOLUTION” • A MOMENTOUS CHANGE IN A SITUATION • A SUDDEN POLITICAL OVERTHROW BROUGHT ABOUT WITHIN A GIVEN SYSTEM • FROM THE LATIN WORD “REVOLUTUS” MEANING TO “TURN OVER”

Do you believe that revolutions are primarily political or are there revolutions in technology, in thought, in art?

Is there a situation that you feel needs to be “turned over?” Globally? Locally? Personally?

Revolutions have occurred through history and continue throughout the world today. Why does revolution remain part of our human story? Do you believe past revolutions have brought us closer to freedom?

Will we ever reach a time when revolution is unnecessary?

Hugo's Paintings

While Hugo is celebrated as one of the most influential writers of the 19th century, he was also a prolific visual artist who created 4,000 or so works during his lifetime. As with his writing, Hugo pushed boundaries with his art. Working mostly in pen and ink on paper, he often used non-traditional materials such as soot, burnt paper or coffee grounds to create his paintings. The results are beautifully haunting — abstract landscapes and ghostly panoramas that are almost entirely devoid of color, yet manage to convey complex moods and forms. This 25th anniversary production of *Les Misérables* was redesigned by set designer Matthew Kinley using Hugo's paintings as inspiration. His original works have been combined with 19th century photography and painted cloths to create large-scale projections, and provide a deeply atmospheric backdrop to the musical.

Matthew Kinley (Set Designer) backdrop inspired by Victor Hugo's artwork

“DO YOU HEAR THE PEOPLE SING...?”

—Ensemble in *Les Misérables*

THE WORLD'S LONGEST RUNNING MUSICAL 25 YEARS OF “LES MIZ”

How do you go about adapting a 1,500-page 19th century French novel into a musical? And why in the world would anyone want to do it?

These were the questions that initially puzzled audiences and critics when *Les Misérables* premiered in London in 1985. 25 years and over 43,000 performances later, *Les Misérables* is the most successful musical of all time. Performed in 42 countries, translated into 21 languages and seen by nearly 60 million people, *Les Misérables*, or *Les Miz* as fans affectionately know it, has become a cultural phenomenon.

Les Miz was borne out of the creative risk-taking of two French artists — lyricist and bookwriter Alain Boublil, and composer Claude-Michel Schönberg. Boublil in particular was a fan of American musicals. After seeing the original Broadway production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, he realized that the musical form could be used to tell epic and universal stories. He contemplated bringing musical life to a pivotal period in France's history — the French Revolution.

It was when Boublil saw another Broadway musical — *Oliver!*, whose central character is an orphan much like Gavroche in *Les Misérables* — that inspiration struck. Victor Hugo's novel — with its sympathetic protagonist, colorful characters and universal themes of redemption and love — would make a stunning musical story. But how in the world could it be done?

Boublil teamed with composer Schönberg and over two years they created a French version of *Les Misérables*. Their vision was to compose a musical that would capture the sweeping and universal feel of the novel. When the English producer Cameron Mackintosh heard the recording, though the lyrics were in French, he was struck by the beauty and complexity of the musical score. He saw its potential for a London — and eventually, worldwide — audience and enlisted the revered Royal Shakespeare Company to direct and perform the work.

As the London cast rehearsed, each actor researched an area of 19th century French life — the church, the police, education, medicine — to familiarize themselves with the context of the show. This was a (truly!) foreign undertaking for all involved and not without a little risk. A new musical, with dark themes, a complicated story and whose climax was a bloody revolt set in 19th century France? Would audiences want to see this show?

The risk would turn out to be well worth it. The production's world premiere in 1985, though it received lukewarm reviews, enjoyed record-breaking ticket sales. Following a sold-out run at London's Barbican Theatre, *Les Miz* moved to the Palace Theatre, where it ran for 18 years. The U.S. premiere, at New York's Broadway Theatre in 1987, garnered eight Tony Awards*, including best musical, director, book and score. This 25th anniversary touring production celebrates the legacy of *Les Misérables*, bringing with it new staging, a redesigned set and updated orchestrations.

Les Misérables is the world's longest running musical. Why do you think people throughout the world continue to want to watch, listen to and share this story?

The Young Actors of *Les Misérables*

Interviewed by Center Theatre Group Teaching Artist Marcos Najera

We caught up with the five young actors in *Les Misérables* during their afternoon school break while on tour, performing at the Palace Theatre in Cleveland, Ohio. Here are a few highlights from our conversations with this talented troupe of young performers.



Aliya Victoriya (10 years old)

Marcos: You have a very special job for this show. You are an understudy for the tour. So you have that very important role of being able to fill in for other young actors on the show as well as being part of the main cast.

Aliya: Yes, but I don't really think of myself as an understudy because I love what I do every night as a member of the ensemble. I do still enjoy covering the other two girls (Little Cosette and Young Éponine) as well. So I am always ready to do whatever they ask of me.

Marcos: When you play Little Cosette, you get to sing “Castle on the Cloud.” Do you have a favorite line from that song?

Aliya: I love the whole thing because it makes me think of my dad.

Marcos: That's great. Tell us why the song makes you think of your dad.

Aliya: He used to be sick. He had a form of cancer called Hodgkin's Lymphoma. When he was in the hospital, he would ask me to sing that song for him. I would sing it to him in his room and he told me it made him very happy and it helped him get better.

Marcos: Would you mind singing a tiny part of the song that he loved most?

Aliya: Sure! (Makes buzzing noises with her lips to quickly warm up and then begins singing). “There is a Castle on a Cloud. I like to go there in my sleep. Nobody shouts or talks too loud. Not in my Castle on a Cloud.”

Marcos: You have a beautiful voice. I can see why your dad loves the song. Thank you so much for sharing a part of it and an important family story



Anastasia Korbal (11 years old)

Marcos: How do you manage school while you are performing on this tour?

Anastasia: The company provides a tutor and we have a choice to be home schooled or be taught by the tutor. And we do school from twelve to four o'clock usually. Sometimes school can be in the hotel. Or it's at the theater.

After school is over, we have about two hours. We eat dinner. Get all of our stuff together. Warm up if we have too. Then we go do the show! We usually have a little bit of a late night. So it's harder for us to get up in the morning.

Marcos: Wow, sounds like quite a packed day. What's hard about being a performer and what's easy about being a performer for you?

Anastasia: What's hard about being a performer is when you are not prepared for something to go wrong.

But what's really easy for me is really getting into the character. I love it so much that it just comes naturally for me.

Marcos: How do you prepare for each individual character?

Anastasia: For Little Éponine, I just really have to become the little brat. I don't have any lines or anything, it's just a little run on part. But I prepare by thinking about the show, then I think about who I am that night, and just go on that stage and I use what I'm thinking in my mind to become the character.

And for little Cosette, I imagine what it was like to be tortured every day by the Thénardiens. And how relieved I am when I see Valjean.

Marcos: Has there been some good advice that one of the actors from the cast has given you?

Anastasia: I think one of the people that helped us out the most is the man who plays M. Thénardier, Michael Kostroff. When we were rehearsing, he taught us about all old theatre kind of things. Like, it's not very good to whistle in a theatre, and it's not good to say “good luck.” And another one is, if you say “Macbeth” in the theatre — he taught us about of some things that happened when people actually said that in the theatre! He taught us a lot of old theatre traditions.

Marcos: Yes, because a lot of people think if you say “Macbeth” in the theatre then something will go wrong with the show.

Anastasia: Yes, and we don't say that now in the theatre because it's very serious to a lot of people!



Colin DePaula (12 years old)

Marcos: You play Gavroche in the show. How would you describe Gavroche to people who haven't seen the show yet?

Colin: Gavroche is a boy who's been toughened up over the years because he's been left on the streets, abandoned by his parents. He treats himself like a tough guy who's gonna tell everybody what to do and nobody is gonna boss him around.

“I just go on stage and use what I'm thinking in my mind to become the character.”

Marcos: One of the things I enjoyed reading is that you love video games, old movies and ghost stories. What do you like about these different kinds of stories?

Colin: I like video games because there's all types of genres and categories that you can play from. And they go from action, to adventure, to fantasy.

Marcos: Do you think there could ever be a *Les Misérables* video game?

Colin: I actually think that is actually possible. Where you could like walk around and take care of your *Les Miz* character. And then you could fight at the barricade. And be a beggar or beg for food. Or be a spy!

Marcos: Sounds fun. How would you “win” in the *Les Miz* video game? What would be the objective of the game?

Colin: The objective of the game would probably be fighting for the people and trying to get to a better day than what they had before.

Marcos: I know you like ghost stories. I noticed that a lot of ghosts appear in *Les Miz* too. Do you think that *Les Miz* is kind of a ghost story?

Colin: Yes, I actually do consider it a ghost story. Like everybody who dies becomes a ghost and you see them as a spirit.

Marcos: Do you think that it's important that we get to see those spirits come back to the stage?

Colin: Yes, I think it is very important because at the end of the show, when Jean Valjean finally goes to heaven, he's greeted by everybody who has died in the show. And that's actually a very key element. Because if they hadn't greeted him, he would have just died alone. But when you see Fantine and Éponine and all the other students take him to heaven, you just know that he is going to have a happy time in heaven.

Marcos: It's very beautiful idea. Do you think that idea will scare other kids when they come to see the show?

Colin: No, because it's just a moment of, of kind of like glory. It's actually inspiring. Very inspiring.



Josh Caggiano (10 years old)

Marcos: Josh, how did you get started as an actor?

Josh: I got started when I was five years old. I'm ten years old now. My first show was community theatre. I played Winnie the Pooh. But I forgot all my lines anyways. My vocal coach was standing at the side, and what happened was she was mouthing all the words to me and holding up cards that said the words!

Marcos: I noticed you keep an online blog about your travels on tour and you have quite a lot of interests on your blog: the poet Edgar Allen Poe, Broadway shows and baseball! What excites you about all those things?

Josh: Well, actually, I love *watching* baseball. But I love *playing* soccer. Soccer is one of my favorite sports. I was just on the travel team. And I had to leave that team because I got on this tour and everyone is missing me from that team. And I play left wing, or striker. We are called the Ringwood Rage.

Marcos: What is the responsibility of the striker or left wing position?

Josh: Striker? What it is, is that you are offense, but you are in front of offense. As the left wing, if the striker misses the ball you go up — it's sort of like a swing when you are acting, if another actor gets hurt or something.

Marcos: Oh, that's interesting. And why is a “left wing” position in soccer similar to being a “swing” actor in a musical?

Josh: 'Cause, whenever someone is out, you have to fill in for them. It's sort of like them missing the ball, you're going to have to get the ball.

Marcos: Oh, that's cool. I like this idea that one of the positions on your soccer team reminded you of a position on stage. Do you think there are similarities between sports and performing on stage?

Josh: Definitely. Like getting up and doing your best. Trying your best, doing your hardest you could do. And hopefully you will score a goal or do awesomely at a show.

Marcos: Would you say performing on stage with all the other actors is like being part of a sports team?

Josh: Yes, it is. Because you are a team on tour! You all have to cooperate on the same thing. Just like a soccer team.



Katherine Forrester (10 years old)

Marcos: Katherine, what do you do to prepare to go on stage?

Katherine: Well, my mother is a voice teacher, but she doesn't have her piano on tour. So before we left, she recorded on her computer — so now I just listen to that. I just sing to it to get ready for Cosette. And when I'm Éponine, I just practice spinning, cause that's really all I do when I'm Éponine.

Marcos: How do you know when to go on stage? Does somebody tell you?

Katherine: Well, we have monitors in our dressing room that play the show and we know when to go. And we also have a wrangler that brings us from our dressing room down to the stage. Also some of the stage managers wait down there and bring us where we need to go.

Marcos: And are you listening for a particular line or part of the song to stop on stage?

Katherine: We listen for this one part where Jean Valjean is in court telling everybody that he is Jean Valjean. And we wait till he sings “24601.”

Marcos: I noticed from your blog that you are a painter. Victor Hugo was also a painter. And some of the paintings in the show are inspired by his work. Is there a painting in the show that is a favorite of yours?

Katherine: Well, there is this one painting that they use in the show during this one scene where I have a bucket and Jean Valjean finds me in the forest. It's this really pretty picture of the forest. I really love nature. I see it every time on stage. It reminds me of being onstage and whenever I see it, it makes me very happy.”

“There is a life about to start when tomorrow comes.”

—Ensemble in *Les Misérables*

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Center Theatre Group's mission is to serve the diverse audiences of Los Angeles by producing and presenting theatre of the highest caliber, by nurturing new artists, by attracting new audiences, and by developing youth outreach and education programs. This mission is based on the belief that the art of theatre is a cultural force with the capacity to transform the lives of individuals and society at large.

Education and Community Partnerships

Theatre is an enduring and powerful tool for communicating ideas, stories, emotions and beliefs that fuel the intellect, imagination and creative spirit. Center Theatre Group believes that stimulating awareness, creativity, dialogue and an inquisitive mind is integral to the growth and well-being of the individual and the community; and that nurturing a life-long appreciation of the arts leads inextricably to an engaged and enlightened society.

Center Theatre Group's education and community partnership programs advance the organization's mission in three key ways:

Audiences: Inspiring current and future audiences to discover theatre and its connection to their lives;

Artists: Investing in the training, support and development of emerging young artists and young arts professionals who are the future of our field; and

Arts Education Leadership: Contributing to the community-wide efforts to improve the quality and scope of arts education in Los Angeles.



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