Direction of the Musical: Les Miserable School Edition

Mary B. Nickles

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Direction of the Play: Les Misérables School Edition

A Project Report
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
Theatre Production

by
Mary B. Nickles
July 2012
CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
Graduate Studies

We hereby approve the project report of

Mary B. Nickles

Candidate for the degree of Master of Arts:

Theatre Production

APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

Date of Signature
06/06/12
Associate Professor Elise Forier,
Committee Chair

Date of Signature
07/07/12
Professor Scott Robinson,
Committee Member

Date of Signature
09/18/13
Professor Dr. Terri Brown,
Committee Member

Please note:
The signatures have been redacted due to security reasons.
CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
Graduate Studies

Final Examination of
Mary B. Nickles
B.A. Coker College, 1985
for the Degree of
Master of Arts
Theatre Production

Committee in Charge
Assistant Professor Elise Forier
Professor Scott Robinson
Assistant Professor Dr. Terri L. Brown

Video Conference
Library 153
July 6th, 2012
4:00 pm
ABSTRACT

PROJECT REPORT

_Les Misérables School Edition_

Montessori School of Anderson

Directed by
Mary B. Nickles
October, 2011

This project entailed the selection, background research and documentation, musical analysis, casting, direction, vocal coaching, and post-production analysis of the Montessori School of Anderson and New Covenant School's production of Mary Nickles' _Les Misérables School Edition_ by Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schönberg. Documentation includes research and analysis and evaluation of the play as a production vehicle for the department of Theatre Arts at Central Washington University.
Mary Nickles

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Total Credit Requirements - 56
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Mary B. Nickles

Undergraduate Study:
  Goucher College, 1981 – 1982
  Eugene O’Neill Theatre Institute, fall of 1982
  Coker College, 1983-1985
  Kodaly workshop at Winthrop, summer of 2003 & 2004
  Kodaly Certification at Jacob School of Music, Indiana University,
    Summer of 2007 & 2008

Graduate Study:
  Central Washington University, 2009 - 2012

Professional Experience:
  Insurance Agent: 1985-1990
  Actress: 1991-1993
  Montessori Teacher’s Assistant 2002-2003
  Director of Music and Drama 2003 to present
Acknowledgements

I often tell the audience before a performance, “It takes a village to raise a child but it takes a city to produce a show!” And Les Misérables was no exception. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those that made this production possible.

First of all I would like to thank the faculty, staff, students and parents of the Montessori School of Anderson. They are so very supportive of the drama program and without their financial and emotional support, neither this production nor degree would have not been possible. I would also like to thank Lori Ramey and the community of New Covenant. Their participation was very important to the success of this production. They designed and produced all of the materials for marketing as well as the programs and T-shirts and they helped solicit sponsors as well as volunteers for the production. Their students were a wonderful addition to the cast and crew.

There are many others I would like to specifically thank. The MacDonald family provided many prayers and financial support. Bobby Shuler donated material, time and talents in the construction of the bridge. The show would have not gone on (nor would I have wanted it to) without my creative team, Debbie Culwell and Kris Yon. They volunteered countless hours working on this production. They helped me so much through the creative process, from the infant stages of brain storming to putting the cherry on top at the end. I know that a partnership like this comes along once in a lifetime and I am so very blessed to have them by my side.

Last but not least I would like to recognize my husband and soul mate, Will Nickles. He has been my partner in this journey, supporting me every step. He drove our family all the way
across the country for the beginning of this adventure and has been my editor, set builder, chef, motivator and the primary caretaker of our children for three summers. He has helped in any way possible to enable me to pursue this degree. His grace and generosity are overwhelming. As has been sung more famously on many a stage, “Somewhere in my youth or childhood, I must have done something good”.
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MASTER’S THESIS PROJECT 
PLAYSCRIPT APPROVAL FORM

(PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOU HAVE READ THE PLAY SELECTION CRITERIA SECTION IN YOUR GRADUATE HANDBOOK)

SCRIPT TITLE: Les Miserable School Edition

PLAYWRIGHTS: Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schönberg, Music by Claude-Michel Shomberg, Lyrics by Herbert Kretzmer – based on the novel by Victor Hugo

NUMBER OF ACTS: 2
APPROXIMATE TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 2 HOURS

CAST (fill in with the appropriate numbers)
MEN 25-30 WOMEN 20-25 CHILDREN 3-6 OVER 40

4 – However, MTI rules state that the show must be cast with students 19 years or younger

ROLES REQUIRING PEOPLE OF COLOR: 0
ROLES COULD DOUBLE: 15

TOTAL NUMBER OF CAST: 48-55

OTHER CASTING CONCERNS: Finding students who are mature enough vocally and emotionally to handle the main roles

ARTISTIC STAFF (check those needed for this play or production idea)
MUSICAL DIRECTOR X
DANCE CHOREOGRAPHER X
FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER X
DIETECT COACH X
SPECIALTY HIRE X - Vocal Coach and Lighting Designer

ORCHESTRA/BAND (specify what size) 5 - 9 pieces - definitely need 3 keyboards, bass & drums – may fill in with other instruments or am looking into the Orch-Extra possibility to fill in instruments, which will eliminate one of the keyboards

Will you be fulfilling any of the above? Yes If so, which? Choreographer, Fight Choreographer

Will a guest artist be fulfilling any of the above? Yes If so, which? Musical Director, Vocal Coach, Lighting Designer, Orchestra members

SCENERY/PROPS (check those needed for this play or your concept of the play)
UNIT SET? YES NO (CIRCLE ONE)
NUMBER OF SETTINGS: 18
HISTORICAL PERIOD: 1815-1832
GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: France – Toulan/Montreuil-sur-mer/Paris

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SET CONCERNS OR SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: The set will need to be versatile enough so that change in position, lighting, props and/or actors location on the set can indicate many different places and time. A large barricade needs to be constructed on stage. There needs to be something that implies a ‘bridge’ for the suicide scene.

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF PROPS: 100
PERIOD: France 1815-1832 — Just after Napoleon’s reign up until 1832
DIFFICULT OR UNUSUAL PROPS? YES NO (CIRCLE ONE)
DESCRIBE:

Need a large cart which runs over someone

WEAPONS OR FIREARMS? HOW MANY: 11 – 15
DESCRIBE: 8 – 10 flintlock single-shot muskets / 2-4 Single shot, flintlock pistols / 1 straight blade knife/dagger

COSTUMES (CHECK THOSE NEEDED FOR THIS PLAY OR YOUR CONCEPT OF THE PLAY)
APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF COSTUMES PER CHARACTER: 1
HISTORICAL PERIOD: Restoration through July Monarchy
SEASON: Fall – Winter – Summer
SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: Possible use of wigs and beards/mutton chops

JUSTIFICATION FOR CHOICE OF SCRIPT
HAVE YOU SEEN THIS SCRIPT PRODUCED? YES NO (CIRCLE ONE) I’ve seen the full length Broadway version
HAVE YOU DONE THIS PLAY BEFORE? BRIEFLY DESCRIBE YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE PRODUCTION: No

WHY SHOULD YOUR ORGANIZATION PRODUCE THIS SCRIPT? This will be a wonderful opportunity for the students to experience performing powerful roles and wrestle with the themes of social injustice and poverty. It will also serve as a vehicle to continue their learning in music and vocal production. This piece ties in with the upper school history and language curriculum. We will be using this production as a vehicle to join our students with students from two other learning institutions, New Covenant School and Home School Association. This gives our students the experience of being a part of a larger ensemble. Because it is such a well known and loved piece it will be a great exposure to the community at large and easy to market. It will also stimulate an open dialogue of grace and redemption.

WHAT ARE THE DRAWBACKS (IF ANY) TO DOING THIS PRODUCTION AT YOUR SCHOOL? It is vocally very challenging. There are some technical challenges; the barricade, the cart scene and the suicide scene. The space that I rent is a smaller space so it is not the typical space for a large production but I personally feel that it will work well.

PLEASE GIVE A BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE SCRIPT ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER AND ATTACH.

PLEASE INCLUDE A COPY OF THE SCRIPT FOR THE THESIS COMMITTEE TO REVIEW.

SUBMITTED BY: (Printed Name) Mary B. Nickles Date Submitted: 7/24/2011

(Signature) ________________________________________________________________

Thesis Chair Approval: Elise Forier Edie Date Approved: 7/25/11

Thesis Committee Members Approval: ________________________________________ Date Approved: __________

Graduate Coordinator Approval: ____________________________________________ Date Approved: __________

Please note:
The signatures have been redacted due to security reasons.
Brief Synopsis

The opening of the musical, *Les Misérables*, is set in a prison camp in 1815 in Toulan, France where a chain gang of convicts is working, one of whom is Jean Valjean, the play’s protagonist. Javert, one of the guards and the play’s main antagonist, calls Valjean forward, hands him his yellow papers and announces that his time has been served. Originally having been sentenced to 5 years for stealing a loaf of bread, Valjean’s sentence was extended by 14 years for his failed attempts to escape.

Valjean soon learns that his freedom from jail does not earn him freedom from his past. On the outside he is still treated like a criminal. Homeless and penniless, he seeks refuge in the home of a Bishop who welcomes him and offers him the only hospitality he has known in years. Unfortunately, Valjean’s embittered soul finds no comfort in the Bishop’s welcome, only an opportunity to steal from his host. He is captured by the police and returned to the Bishop who tells the police that he gave Valjean the candlesticks, thus “buying” his freedom from yet another long stay in the work camps. The bewildered Valjean is then commissioned by the Bishop to go forward and become an honest man, his soul having been “bought for God.” This event marks a significant turning point for Valjean, whose life will be forever changed by it. He vows to begin life again, but under a new identity, one marked by God’s grace.

The scene then shifts to a factory in the city of Montreuil-sur-Mer in 1823. Valjean has become a successful factory owner and Mayor of the town. During a disturbance on the factory floor we learn that Fantine has been supporting an illegitimate child, Cosette, who is being kept by the Thenardiers in a nearby town. Valjean witnesses the event, but allows the foreman to “work it out.” The foreman fires Fantine who then resorts to prostitution in order to continue
supporting her daughter. Eventually, her path and Valjean’s cross again as she is being arrested by Javert. Valjean intervenes on Fantine’s behalf urging Javert that she is in need of medical attention; the life of prostitution having taken its toll on her. Eventually, Valjean realizes that she had been fired from his factory and pangs of guilt wash over Valjean.

While the incident with Fantine brings the protagonist and antagonist back together after many years, Valjean’s true identity remained hidden from Javert. It would soon be revealed by an incident in the streets of Montreuil-sur-Mer where Valjean’s unusual strength would remind Javert of the prisoner who had once been under his charge, a prisoner who broke parole 10 years ago. His name was Jean Valjean. Javert explained, however, that Valjean had just been arrested. The real Valjean, not wanting an innocent man to be punished for his crime, goes to the court room and reveals his true identity.

Valjean escapes the courtroom and returns to Fantine’s side in the hospital where, at her deathbed, he promises to take care of Cosette. The next scene finds Valjean rescuing Cosette from the ill-intentioned Thenardiers.

Time shifts to the streets of Paris 1832. Enjolras, a student, begins to rally the other students against the nation’s leaders for ignoring the poor. Thenardier and his gang are prowling the streets to take advantage of the poor and rob whoever is available. He has also enlisted his daughter, Eponine, to help con people. She is, however, quite enamored with one of the revolutionary students whose name is Marius.

Cosette and Valjean enter the streets where Thenardier attempts to rob them. Javert comes on the scene to keep the peace allowing Valjean and Cosette escape. During the episode, Marius sees Cosette and immediately falls in love. Marius then convinces Eponine to
help him find Cosette.

The scene then shifts to the ABC Café, where the students have gathered to discuss their plans of an insurrection. This plan is given additional fuel when they learn of the death of Lamarque, one of Napoleon’s generals. Also at this meeting Marius, overwhelmed by his feelings for Cosette, demonstrates his conflict between love and war.

Meanwhile, Cosette is back at her home, dreaming of the man she saw earlier. Conversely, Valjean, disturbed by the presence of Javert, knows that they must leave. He is troubled with the life of exile he has forced on Cosette.

The ever-dutiful and hopelessly smitten Eponine selflessly leads Marius to Cosette where they meet, vowing love for one another. But Thenardier, having tracked them down lurks in the darkness and plots to rob Valjean. Putting herself at risk, Eponine screams alarming everyone to Thenardier and his gang. This close call with Thenardier’s thugs leads Valjean to decide that it is time to leave the country before it is too late.

Back on the streets, the students are planning to build a barricade. But still preoccupied with his new love, Marius pens a letter to Cosette which he gives to Eponine to deliver. Valjean receives the letter, reads it and learns of Marius’ love for Cosette. In the letter, Marius says goodbye to Cosette in case he should die at the barricade.

Back at the barricade the students are planning their strategy. Javert disguises himself as a student to try and find out their plan, but his identity as a policeman is revealed and he is then held as a prisoner. Meanwhile, Eponine returns to Marius to tell him that she has delivered the letter, but not before she is fatally shot. She dies in his arms.

Wanting to protect Marius, Jean Valjean comes to the barricade. Upon seeing Javert he
asks the students if he can have custody of the prisoner. After removing him from the group of revolutionaries, Valjean unexpectedly frees Javert. However, Javert vows that he will continue to hunt Valjean.

As the fighting begins, it soon becomes apparent that the French people are not coming to help the vastly outnumbered students. In the ensuing battle, most of the students are killed. Marius is seriously wounded, but is rescued by Valjean, who carries him to safety through the sewers under the streets with Javert close behind.

Javert confronts Valjean who begs Javert for time so that he can save Marius. He promises Javert that he will return. Javert lets him go. In the next scene Javert wrestles with his own rigid ideology. He cannot reconcile the fact that he has been forgiven by a thief, a man who, in his estimation, could never be anything other than a thief. This situation was utterly unacceptable to Javert, and ultimately prompts him to commit suicide by jumping off a bridge.

United again after the battle was over, Marius and Cosette plan their wedding. Before the wedding, Valjean shares his life story with Marius and says that he must leave to protect Cosette from his past. He makes Marius vow not to tell Cosette.

The wedding was a joyous celebration filled with guests from the upper class as well as Thenardier, representing the ubiquitous underbelly of French society. The Thenardiers try and blackmail Marius by threatening to reveal the truth about Valjean. In doing so, Marius learns that Valjean was the one who saved him from the barricade. Cosette and Marius run to find Valjean. They find him alone and dying. Marius tells Cosette that he realizes it was her father who saved him. Valjean then tells Cosette of her mother, Fantine. As Valjean dies, he is joined by the spirits of Fantine and Eponine, who together remind Cosette, “to love another person is
to see the face of God”.

The chorus joins together in the end giving hope to all that “even the darkest night will end and the sun will rise”.
Copy of Script

Please see Appendix D
Note: This form is to be completed as soon as the student has formed a committee and selected an option from the list below. Submit original to the Office of Graduate Studies in Barge 305.

Name: Mary B. Nickles
Address: [Redacted]
Birth Date: [Redacted]

Check option:
☐ Written Exam*
☐ Project
☐ Creative Project
☐ Studio Project
☐ Portfolio Review
☐ Thesis (standard)
☐ Thesis (journal-ready)
☐ Provide journal guidelines plus a recent article from that journal in student's field of study.

Students taking written exam option may omit items 1-5 below.

1. Proposed Title (and title of targeted journal if appropriate):
   Direction of the production of Les Misérables School Edition
   The direction of the middle and high school production of Les Misérables School Edition serves as the culminating experience in theatre arts graduate studies.

2. Purpose of Study:
   Documentation based upon the preparation of pre-production research and analysis, post-production evaluation, the direction of the production (including casting & rehearsal, preparation of the Director's Production Book and oral exam), shall benefit students, school community and myself as an educator and artist.

3. Scope of Study:
   Three phases of study shall be included: 1) Pre-production research and Thesis documentation in MLA style. 2) Rehearsal and direction of production 3) Post-Production Evaluation and Documentation.

4. Procedure to be used:
   Three phases of study shall be included: 1) Pre-production research and Thesis documentation in MLA style. 2) Rehearsal and direction of production 3) Post-Production Evaluation and Documentation.

5. Does the procedure involve collection of data obtained from Human Subjects (including use of surveys)? Yes** ☐ No ☑
   Use of Animals? Yes** ☐ No ☑
   ** If yes, your procedures must be approved in writing by the Human Subjects Committee or the Animal Care and Use Committee before you initiate your research.

**Committee Chair**
Signed: [Signature]
Date: [Date]

**Committee Member**
Signed: [Signature]
Date: [Date]

**Committee Member**
Signed: [Signature]
Date: [Date]

Approved by:
[Signature]
Date: [Date]

*In the case of interdisciplinary programs, this form should be signed by the relevant Program Director/Co-Director AND relevant Dept chair. In cases where they cannot agree to sign for approval, the approval will be made or denied by the relevant interdisciplinary program advisory committee. GS&R 04/10

Please note:
The signatures have been redacted due to security reasons.
July 8, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

Mary Nickles has administrative approval to continue with her planned production of *Les Miserables* on the weekends of October 21 and 28, 2011. I am also aware that this production is a part of her Master's Thesis Project for Central Washington University. This play will be performed at Electric City Playhouse, a space which has been rented for this purpose. Furthermore, Mrs. Nickles has permission to include activities for this project in the curriculum of her Drama classes at Montessori School of Anderson.

Respectfully,

Dr. Dana Hill
Administrator
Montessori School of Anderson

Please note:
This signature has been redacted due to security reasons.
Project Parameters

The proposed dates for *Les Misérables* are October 20, 21, 22, 23 and 27, 28, 29, 30 in the year of 2011. It is a joint production with several educational organizations in Anderson, South Carolina: The Montessori School of Anderson, New Covenant School and The Home School Association. Auditions will be the middle of August and rehearsals will start immediately after that, giving eight weeks of rehearsal, averaging four days a week, 3 hours a day, before tech week. Students are listening to the music and working with a vocal coach this summer in order to prepare for auditions and rehearsal. There is a strong group of students who are committed to participating in this production. The budget will be approximately $18,000. (See appendix I) There will be a live orchestra which will consist of five to eight volunteers and hired musicians. Due to the layout of the space, the orchestra will be located behind the set. Because of the location of the orchestra and the vocal demands of this production, microphones will be rented to support the actors vocally and to enable the orchestra to hear them. We will hire a sound engineer. There is a supportive group of staff and parent volunteers who will help with set and costume design and construction, publicity and concessions.

The venue for the production is Electric City Playhouse in Anderson, South Carolina. It is a modified thrust which seats 122. Electric City presently has 5 – Altman 6x9 spotlights, 8 - ETC 25-50 degree Source 4 Junior Zoom spotlights, 18 - Altman zoom spotlights (probably 25-50 degree), 6 - 6" Fresnels, 18 - 2.4Kw ETC SmartPack dimmers and an ETC Express 24/48 console. We will be renting 14 – ETC Source 4, 2 - ETC Revolution, 5 - Fresnels, 1 – ETC Ion Lighting Board, and 1 – unique hazer. There is a grid across the whole playing space as well as the audience from which lights can be hung. The ceiling is 16 feet high. The lighting board is located
up in a booth over the audience right.

The set will consist of two unit pieces which rotate, as well as individual pieces such as the bridge and gate which will move on and off the stage. Other scenery changes will be made with props and furniture. Set, furniture and prop construction will take place in a workshop off sight and in the theatre space. We will load into the theatre space on October 10, giving us ten days on the stage before opening night. The first week we are in the theatre is our fall break, which will enable us to spend all day constructing the set and hanging the lights. A theatre student from Clemson University will be the lighting designer. Her professor will be overseeing this project as part of her class work in Advance Lighting.

The costume designer will pull costumes from our stock as well as from several local theatres. Some period pieces will be constructed and perhaps rented, along with several wigs. There is a support network of mothers who will help with costume construction.
Project Schedule

We will be working 3:30 to 6:00 most days. There will be some rehearsals during the school day as well as off-site rehearsals with a vocal coach.

August 13  Workshop with Actors – breathe/ensemble bldg/rasaboxes
August 14  Workshop with Actors-breathe/ensemble/rasaboxes
August 16  Auditions
August 18  First Read Through/Table Talk

Every rehearsal will include a warm up concentrating on breath/resonators as well as ensemble building exercises with heavy movement - a continuation of the workshop – Also each principle will work with individually with a vocal coach.

August 18 through October 30th - Please see Appendix B for a detailed rehearsal schedule
Evaluation of *Les Misérables School Edition* as a Production Vehicle

Electric City is a small, intimate theatre which will hopefully showcase *Les Misérables* in a very different light than people have seen in the past. I'm looking forward to presenting a very gritty production and am excited for the challenges of the set and lighting design. This project will give me the opportunity to pull together all of the skills I have learned, not only at Central Washington, but in my own experiences. Having to research the historical background and apply it to a written analysis of this piece is going to stretch me as a director.

Montessori School of Anderson, located in South Carolina, has just recently developed a high school, graduating its first class in 2011. We are a private school surviving a recession. We are constantly trying to recruit and gain exposure for our school and the arts program, especially in our middle and high school. *Les Misérables* is a well known, memorable musical with a large following which will certainly gain the attention of the community. Because of the school's small size, we like to find ways to connect our students with other students. So this production is going to be used as a vehicle to join several educational communities together; Montessori, New Covenant School and the Home School Association. All three of these organizations are very excited about giving their students an opportunity to explore and perform the incredible dramatic characters and themes provided by this piece. I have also decided to include Montessori students who have moved on to the public schools. This is very exciting for our students to reunite with old friends and for alumni to once again have a performance opportunity offered by Montessori.

In the high school, this is their year to focus on World Literature and Global Studies. Victor Hugo's novel on which the musical is based is widely considered one of the greatest
novels of the 19th century in European Literature and an example of European Romanticism. Global Studies will pay specific attention to the 19th century in Europe and look at revolution throughout the world, contemplating the repeating themes in different times and different places such as poverty, nationalism, education, disease, revolutionaries become dictators and propaganda. Finally, our Peace Studies course will look at the correlations between the June Revolution seen in Les Misérables and the recent Arab/Middle Eastern revolutions. They will also look at the lasting effects of both violent revolutions (France in the 18th c.) and mostly non-violent ones (India).

Because every student at Montessori participates in music, which is a vocally based curriculum, and in drama, Les Misérables is a wonderful vehicle to help develop and expand both of these skills. The students will have to learn how to communicate and relate in a musical recitative style, which is very different from just singing or using regular dialogue. As for New Covenant, they do not have a music program at all and are very excited about having this opportunity for their students. The Home School Association does not have an organized program for music or drama, so this is a very exciting opportunity for them as well.

I hope to use this production to help build empathy in the students for oppression and social injustices, at the same time recognizing how their actions make a positive and/or negative effect on someone else. Participating in this production will strengthen the students as performers. They will be engaging in exercises and vocal training throughout the rehearsal process which will strengthen them vocally and physically. These exercises will include but are not limited to crossings, movement on the grid, breathing exercises concentrating on control and support, exploring the different vocal resonators, developing environments with vocal and
body percussion, vocal warm ups to help place the voice in the mask, visualization exercises and rasaboxes. Through these exercises I hope to develop a strong ensemble and a safe environment where the students can freely explore their characters and grow in confidence as performers. This experience will help give them techniques for future performance opportunities.

Because we are able to have an extended time in the theatre, I am excited to be able to involve the students in the technical aspects of theatre. They will help with the building of the set and props, hanging and focusing lights, running the lights, costume construction as well as make-up and hair application.

Even though this is a wonderful dramatic opportunity for the students there are certainly some daunting challenges with the piece. Firstly, the vocal demands are quite large for the soloists and the depth and breadth of the characters are very mature for this age. Casting adults in this production would be a challenge, much less students. Before totally committing to this, I put out a call to all of the interested parties to assess the vocal ability of the students. A total of fifty-four students came and I sang with them as a group and individually. After working with them I felt like it would indeed be ‘castable’, however, I am still cautiously aware of the incredible challenge ahead. To assist with this challenge I have hired a vocal coach from Anderson University to help the students with their vocal production and technique.

The musical director will help teach the music as well as conduct the orchestra. She will also be a wonderful person to help work with the students’ vocal sound and balance as well as making sure they are staying vocally healthy. We will have a rehearsal pianist who will also play
in the orchestra. The orchestra will consist of a minimum of five pieces. I don't want the orchestra to overpower the singers or the space so we will probably not go over 8 people. This will be a mix of volunteers and hired musicians.

While I understand that a high school student does not have the age or maturity to play many of these roles; I am excited to help them grow as performers. The characters in Les Misérables offer an amazing dramatic richness not typically found in musicals. I will use many of the techniques learned in rasaboxes, Directing Young Actors and Directing Musical Theatre and other classes to help lead the students through this process and connect them with their characters and each other. This will hopefully guide the students to discover a very honest portrayal of their character.

We will be performing at Electric City Playhouse in Anderson, SC. This space is a small, modified thrust with 122 seats, certainly not the typical size for Les Miserable. They store stock platforms and flats in the backstage area and have very limited dressing room area. We are using a moving truck to store all of the flats and platforms to help maximize the space. A platform will be built in the far back corner for the orchestra. This will create a space underneath it for backstage performers. The space created by moving the platforms will also be used as dressing rooms and a place for students sit while waiting to go on stage.

The set design is certainly a challenge and I am really excited to work closely with Marc Haniuk during Scenic Design to flesh it out. Once the set is designed, I have very capable people at home who can implement the building of the set. There are a couple of special effects involving the set that are going to be a particular challenge: the suicide, the barricade and the cart crash. Again, I am looking forward to working on these solutions under the tutelage of
Marc Haniuk.

Lighting is going to be an integral part of the show, helping to isolate areas, set moods and transition the action. I asked a lighting designer from Clemson University to come and look at the space. He took an inventory of the instruments and gave me recommendations on what instruments I would need to add in order to comfortably light the show. We agreed that one of his advance lighting students would design the show as a project for her class. I have contacted Productions Unlimited to begin negotiating equipment rental per the advice of the lighting designer.

This is probably the first play with adult themes that I have produced with my students. In the past, I have tried to pick material that would appeal to the whole family. *Les Misérables* certainly contains subject matter and language that could be a concern. Now that we have a high school, I am hoping to produce pieces that push the envelope a little and this is a nice way to begin to break the ice, especially since I have partners in crime with New Covenant and Home School. Because of this partnership, I have a much broader audience base and do not have to rely on just my young families for an audience. However, the partnership with New Covenant has presented a bit of a problem with the dialogue. After having approached me with the project, some of their board members raised concerns with the language of the play. They were concerned about the word ‘shit’ and the places where the Lord’s name was spoken in vain. I knew that we would not get permission from MTI to change these things so I didn’t even go down that road. After much discussion with many different people, I decided to adapt the language. It doesn’t change the storyline and it is not going to be changed in a lot of places. Either way they were behind the piece but if we couldn’t change it they were going to have to
take their name off of sponsoring the show. I decided that it was important for both of our communities to be involved with this project.

This is going to be an expensive show and because of the small house, it will be impossible to cover the cost with ticket sells. Therefore, we are going to sell ads in the playbill and find sponsors for each evening. There will be concessions sold at intermission as well to help with costs. I hope to gather a committee to help brainstorm other ways of raising money for the production.

I am so excited about directing a musical of this magnitude and know that the experience is going to make me a better director in so many areas. I will learn more about the technical aspects of musical theatre as well as have an opportunity to help students find the depth in some wonderfully rich characters.
Concept Statement

*Les Misérables* is a powerful story of redemption and grace. It is the journey of many characters looking for release from the different chains in life: the chain of poverty, the chain of hunger, the chain of sin, the chain of their past, the chain of the law. They are burdened with this heaviness and it is only through redemption and forgiveness that these chains are broken and the people are lifted from their personnel bondage.

The world of *Les Misérables* is a dark and gritty world where people are struggling to stay alive, a place where people are lucky to eat, sleep and work. Each new day is just a day closer to death. Death would be a relief from the chains of injustice and poverty presented in this world. The atmosphere of *Les Misérable* will be thick and heavy, representing the oppression of the time. There might be a hazer and dry ice machine to help create this heaviness and sculpt the light through the air. Area lighting will move one scene into another seamlessly. Perhaps there will be back and side lighting to help give areas color and depth. There will be times in the play where lighting will give the impression of breaking through from above supporting the act of forgiveness or kindness and representing a world beyond that of the actors. Gobos might be used to create patterns for water, street grates and other effects.

The set will need to be representative of many places. It is possible that it could be some sort of rotating piece or pieces and skeletal in nature. Or perhaps it could be heavy in nature representing the earthly chains that bind us. It would be useful to have several levels to accommodate many people. The barricade will be made of several pieces that will be put together on stage by the actors. All set pieces will be distressed, representing the burden of life and the struggles of that time.
The costumes will represent the period. They will range in grittiness depending on the character's station in life. The poor will have torn, tattered and dirty costumes. The uniforms of the police will be crisp, clean and sharp and will present a visual contrast to the poor. They will represent the very oppression that everyone is under; perhaps some implication of chains will be used in their costumes in textile patterns, braided embellishments or design. There will be a distinct costume difference from the poor to the wealth represented on the stage. The students, Valjean and Cosette will be representative of this wealthy class. Cosette, will add softness to the stage, representing the innocence of life. The students will be cleanly dressed. The Thenardier's dress will be a "distressed wealth", looking like they are trying to be something they are not.

There will be an orchestra consisting of at least five pieces, no more than eight. It is possible that a program will be rented which will adapt the sounds of the keyboard to the sounds of Les Misérables. It will be powerful, yet not overwhelming to the intimacy of the space. The orchestra will provide transition music to help quickly and smoothly move the action of the play.

The acting and staging will support the gritty nature of this production. It will be staged in a naturalistic manner hopefully producing an intimate portrayal of this story. Having this production produced in an intimate setting will help bring this story of grace and redemption into the audience's lap. The audience will feel the love, loss and struggle of the characters as they wrestle with their own personal chains of bondage.
## Conflict Analysis

### Event: Breaking the Chains that Bind

| Valjean begins a new life – new identity – so that he can be free – He breaks his chains from his past. | Reveals his identity to save someone else Breaking the chains of injustice – owning his past – breaking the chain of a ‘secret life’ | Promises to care for Cosette – enabling Fantine to break the chains of life in peace, knowing that her daughter will be cared for and loved He is also breaking the Thenardier’s hold on Cosette. | Valjean – forgives Javert ‘the law’ and offers to turn himself back in. By forgiving Javert, Valjean is breaking the chains of his own sin. But by doing this he breaks Javert’s chains of law and order, thus crushing Javert |

### MAJOR CHARACTER ACTIONS

Inciting event – Bishop gives Valjean the candlesticks, forgiving Valjean and buying his soul for God
Given Circumstances: Environmental facts

*Les Misérables* takes place in several locations in France over a period of 17 years from 1815 to 1832. France consists of several different regions; Mediterranean, Atlantic and English Channel coasts and the interior and mountainous areas. The climate varies with the region, from hot, dry summers and mild winters found in the Mediterranean region to cold winters found in the interior and mountainous regions to a moderate climate with abundant rainfall found on the north eastern coast (*The New Book of Knowledge* 409).

Geographical location and dates:

Act I, Scene i - 1815 Toulon, France – Outside in the heat of the sun in late September -

Toulon is located on the southeast coast of France, along the Mediterranean Sea. “The lowlands have hot, dry summers and mild winters with some rainfall” (*World Book Encyclopedia* 467). The opening scene finds a chain gang working in the heat of the day. One may conclude that the time is early-afternoon due to the stage directions, “*The Chain Gang, overseen by brutal wardens, work in the sun*” (Boublil 1). This is supported by a line in the opening song, “The sun is strong. It’s hot as hell below” (1). There is no indication of month, however, in Victor Hugo’s book, *Les Misérables*, he writes, “An hour before sunset, on the evening of a day in the beginning of October, 1815, a man traveling on foot entered the little town of Digne” (Hugo 59). This event was four days after the opening scene which places this scene in late September.

The geographical location changes three times in the opening prologue. Val Jean is in a chain gang in Toulon. After being released he moves north and works with laborers and finally he ends up at the bishop’s home. There are not any references in the script as to where these
second and third locations are however, Victor Hugo states that Monsieur Charles-Francois-Bienvenu Myriel was Bishop of Digne (1). In Hugo’s book, Valjean says, “Listen here! My name is Jean Valjean. I was a convict. I have spent nineteen years in prison. Four days ago I was freed and started out for Pontarlier. For four days I have been walking from Toulon. Today I walked thirty-five miles” (73). Hugo also describes an interaction with a foreman at an orange flower distillery in Grasse (96). As he travels north from Toulon, the temperature begins to drop due to the cold Alpine winds. It was in the evening that Valjean knocked on the Bishop’s door (67). These three transitions take place in the opening number over 12 pages of song. Not only does the time of day change but it will be important to show the passage of time as well during this prologue.

Scene ii - 1823, Montreuil-sur-Mer, France – Outside the factory owned by the Mayor Monsieur Madelaine (Boublil 13) - It is late afternoon toward the end of winter. Montreuil-sur-Mer is located in the Northern part of France. It is a cooler climate, temperatures ranging from zero degrees Celsius to 24 degrees Celsius (WorldBook 467). The song title, At the End of the Day, and the factory worker’s line, “At the end of the day you’re another day colder, and the shirt on your back doesn’t keep out the chill” (Boublil 14), implies that the time is at the end of their workday. This moves us on to evening for scene iii, Fantine’s song, I Dreamed A Dream. Having the lights slowly transition from dusk to evening during this song will dramatically support its emotional content. Hugo places the time of year late winter, “She had been fired toward the end of winter; summer passed, winter returned” (Hugo 182).

Scene iv - The docks at Montreuil, 1823, Early evening in the winter - This scene moves Fantine to the streets of Montreuil. One might conclude that it is winter based on the above
quote from Hugo. Montreuil is a port town and the song title places them at *The Docks*, which is described in the stage directions as, "a seedy part of town" (Boublil 28). The prostitutes indicate that it is evening when they sing, "waiting for the customers who only come at night" (28). *The World Book Encyclopedia* states that the temperature during the winter months in this area ranges from zero Celsius to 9 Celsius (467). The bitter winter is a physical manifestation of Fantine’s emotional state.

Scene v - Continues at the docks but then shifts to a courtroom towards the end of the song. There is no indication of where this courtroom is or time of day in the script. However, Hugo places the courtroom in Arras, France approximately 60 miles away from Montreuil at midnight (Hugo 207 & 215). Again, this helps in the mood set by the lighting as we enter a courtroom lit by candlelight.

Scene vi - the Hospital in Montreuil at dawn - Hugo writes that Valjean visited Fantine just at dawn and Javert was given the warrant to arrest Valjean just as he was waking up (282-283, 289).

Scene vii, viii & ix- Thenardier’s Inn in Montfermeil, France, Christmas Day late evening Montfermeil is located to the northeast of Paris (Northcutt 122). According to Hugo it is Christmas Day, 1823 (391 & 398). We can conclude that it is evening because Cosette is scared to go out in the dark singing, “Please do not send me out alone, not in the darkness on my own” (Boublil 52). We also know that Thenardier is welcoming in travelers and guests from a long day as he sings, “Enter M’sieur. Lay down your load, unlace your boots and rest from the road” (56). The days are short, getting dark by four thirty (Hugo 393). Knowing that it is Christmas day certainly adds to the festivity of the crowd and the poignancy of Cosette’s situation.
Scene x & xi- Filthy Streets of Paris, 1832, Slums of St. Michel – June 2nd at dusk, just before dark – The stage directions say, “The filthy streets of Paris, 1842” (67). This must be a typographical error. All research shows that the story Les Misérables is set during the Revolt of 1832. The June temperatures in Paris range from 13 degrees Celsius to 22 degrees Celsius, so the weather is warm (Worldbook 467). Gavroche sets them in the slums when he sings, “This is my school, my high society. Here in the slums of St. Michel” (68). It is the day General Lamarque dies, which is June 2, 1832. Marius sings, “Lamarque is ill and fading fast, Won’t last the week out, so they say” (69). Later in the evening Gavroche enters the scene and announces, “General Lamarque is dead” (87).

Scene xii – same day, June 2nd – same location (streets of Paris) - evening - Javert is in the streets singing about the stars of the night. The sky is free of clouds, the evening is probably balmy.

Scene xiii – The ABC Café – later that evening - Hugo places the usual meeting place of the friends of the ABC in the back room of the Café Musain, which is located near the Pantheon on the Place Saint-Michel (Hugo 664).

Scene xiv – the scene moves into the Streets of Paris – same day - evening

Scene xv, xvi & xvii – Rue Plummet – the garden outside of Cosette’s home in Paris–same evening

Scene xviii – starts at the Rue Plummet and transitions into the streets of Paris – The scene starts in the evening and then transitions into the morning of June 3rd. Having the scene move into the rising of the sun will be a nice visual support for the song, One Day More, representing a new life about to begin.
Act II, Scene i – June 5, 1832 – The scene begins in the streets of Paris – it transitions to the Rue Plummet and then back to the empty streets of Paris – it is evening. We can assume that it is evening, partly because it would make sense for the students to be plotting under the cover of night. But also when the scene transitions back to the streets Eponine is singing On My Own. In this song she sings, “The city goes to bed and I can live inside my head” (Boublil 121). It is the evening that the fighting begins; therefore it places the action on June 5th.

Act II, Scene ii, iii, iv, v, vi – Streets of Paris - The Barricade – The early evening into the late hours of the night of June 5th. The script is not specific about where the barricade is built, however, Hugo calls it “the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie”, which is a street in Paris (Hugo 1118).

Act II, Scene vii – The Sewers of Paris – It is still nighttime. Hugo describes the sewers of 1832 as the “intestinal canal of Paris” (1273). He goes on to say that “the sewer is the taint the city has in her blood. . . The trade of sewerman was formerly almost as perilous, and almost as repulsive to the people, as the trade of slaughterer, so long held in horror and left to the executioner” (1275). It is a dangerous place full of stink and disease. Sound effects, blue lights, fog and gobos of sewer grates will help establish the cold, sick feeling of the sewer.

Act II, Scene viii – above the sewers in the street, perhaps early morning but it is still dark – the scene shifts to the bridge, the lights will reflect the cool blues of the evening/early morning just before dawn – the scene than shifts to the street, the next morning has begun, June 6th – The stage directions state, “The scene transitions to a group of women doing their daily chores, discussing the events of the barricade” (Boublil 152). During their scene they are moving time forward, however the amount of time that passes is unknown. “Turning, turning,
turning through the years. Minutes into hours and the hours into years” (153). The lights will transition from nighttime blues to early morning ambers to help establish the new beginning of morning. Movement will be used to help show the passing of time.

Act II, Scene ix & x – ABC Café – daytime – the date is unknown and there is no indication as to exactly when this takes place. In Hugo’s book, Marius takes months to recoup from his injuries incurred at the barricade and he and Cosette are reunited in December, which is six months after the barricade (Hugo 1341-1342). The weather is now cold and even though it is morning, the lights will consist of cool colors to support Marius’s grief, guilt and aloneness.

Act II, Scene xi – The Wedding – evening – Hugo writes the wedding to be the night of February 16, 1833 (1364). The Wedding offers an opportunity to brighten and warm the lights to again support the idea of new beginnings.

Act II, Scene xii – Epilogue – Hugo indicates that Marius and Cosette meet Jean Valjean in his home, Rue de l’Homme-Armé, Number Seven (1452). There is no indication in the script of how much time has passed between the wedding and the epilogue. Hugo does write about Marius during the last months of spring and the first months of summer of 1833 (1426). However, because the transition is so quick, it logistically takes place directly after the wedding, leaving Marius and Cosette in their wedding clothes. The scene starts with Valjean alone and a pool of light could be used to isolate him, supporting his aloneness. Perhaps this will be the first time we actually see a stark white light to help represent God’s grace shining down on Valjean. This pool of light could possibly then expand to include the others as they enter, eventually encompassing the whole company by the end of the scene.
Given Circumstances: Political Environment

The musical *Les Misérables* is set in a politically turbulent time in France's history, 1815-1832. The play uses this tense and uncertain political backdrop to weave together numerous stories of human tragedy and triumph together. While the human stories within the play are compelling in and of themselves, they are made even more poignant when underscored by the drama of early nineteenth century French politics and social upheaval.

Frederic Artz describes the period of 1814 to 1815 in France to be “...one of the most striking reversals in modern history” (Artz 1). Napoleon had just lost his power in 1814 and was forced to give up the throne. The French government was restored to the Bourbon regime and Louis XVIII was crowned king. The country was exhausted from a series of revolutions and there was a “widespread desire for peace” (1). “The streets of Paris in 1814 and again in 1815 echoed to the cry of *Vive la paix!* far more frequently than to that of *Vive les Bourbons*” (1).

Louis XVIII began his reign of France with a brief 100 day interruption when Napoleon escaped from exile and tried to gain control again, losing at the Battle of Waterloo. Even though the story of *Les Misérables* begins in 1815 when Louis XVIII is on the throne, it is important to look at some of the political policies put in place prior to that time.

During the French revolution Napoleon Bonaparte quickly rose to a leadership position. In January of 1800 a new constitution was developed giving governing powers to three Consuls. Napoleon was designated as the First Consul. He went on to be crowned Emperor of France in 1804. There were several lasting contributions of Napoleon which have great significance on the political and social environment we find at the beginning of *Les Misérables*. The first is the Civil Codes that he instituted and enforced (Harvey 55-61). In *France Since the Revolution*,
Donald Harvey explains that with these Codes “the individual retained his recently won equality before the law, his liberty to choose his own profession, and his freedom of conscience” (59). He continues on to say, however, that “The worker, for example, was placed at a definite disadvantage by the Codes and enforcing laws. Despite some very real benefits for the individual, the Codes represented also a resurgence of strong authority – the man over the woman, the father over the family, the state over the individual” (59).

It is in this ‘state over the individual’ that we find the relationship of Javert and Jean Valjean, one of the main storylines of the play. Javert represents the state, the law. He stands in authority over Jean Valjean. No matter what the circumstances, the law is the law and Javert is there to enforce it. There is no reconciliation or compromise, no room for mediation; it is black and white. Javert reiterates this point when he sings, “I am the Law and the Law is not mocked” (Boublil 150). Valjean on the other hand, feels that the law should not be black and white. Even though he was caught stealing, the law should take into consideration the circumstances of his starving family. Hugo writes, “He asked himself whether human society could rightfully make its members submit equally.” Valjean goes on to say, “If it was not outrageous that society should treat with such rigid precision those of its members who were most poorly endowed in the chance distribution of wealth and were therefore most deserving of tolerance” (88).

Napoleon was very successful at securing and maintaining his regime by using local armies to crush domestic and foreign opponents. He also established police spies and used tools of propaganda to mold public opinion (Harvey 62). He was able to keep the bourgeoisie from taking a rightist position, with the royal family, by promoting them to civil and military posts alongside the aristocracy. Even though they were no longer policy makers, Napoleon was
able to keep the bourgeoisie satisfied with subsidies, bounties, tariffs and other aids. Harvey goes on to explain that the workingmen had the least reason to support Napoleon. However, due to lack of leadership, organization and repressive actions by the government, the working class found it impossible to manifest their hostility (62). This situation is clearly articulated in the musical and is characterized by the disgruntled lower income working class. This is the socio-political powder keg in which *Les Misérables* is set.

During this time, many members of the secret police, developed during Napoleon’s era, were employed as administrators in the new regime. This enabled the monarchs to be well-informed of what was happening within their borders. Because of the undercurrent fear of revolution it was a time of mistrust (Artz 7). Artz states, “Back of all this spying and despotic control was plain fear, the dread that the horrors of the revolution would suddenly begin again. Employers were afraid of their workmen, the nobles were afraid of the peasants and of the middle class, the governments acted as though they were afraid of everyone” (7).

The presence of fear and mistrust is prevalent throughout *Les Misérables*. Fantine has a fear of her past discretions being discovered and judged. Javert and Valjean can’t afford to trust anyone. Javert has to operate from a place of suspicion in order to fulfill his duties as a top officer. And as for Valjean, if his true identity is discovered he will not be able to continue to care for Cosette. He even hides it from the ‘daughter’ that he raises. Cosette spent her early years in fear of the Thenardiers and only knows her father to be trustworthy. This gives the love between she and Marius even more depth. He will be the only person besides her father that she would have befriended and loved. The Thenardiers are such crooks that they only operate out of mistrust and deception. And their daughter, Eponine, lives in fear of never being loved.
and never knowing a life different than the one she lives. The poor of *Les Misérables* fear starvation.

“Louis XVIII adopted the Charte Constitutionnelle on June 4, 1814, which provided for a bicameral Parliament whose upper house consisted of nominees of the King. The lower house was elected by a sharply limited number of citizens” (Harvey 69). In order to vote one had to own a large amount of property which limited the voting to roughly one hundred thousand Frenchmen and a “tenth of these could be deputies in the Chamber” (69). None of the characters in *Les Misérables*, then, would have been allowed to vote, since a land owner is not found among them.

Louis XVIII died in 1824 and was succeeded by his brother, the Conte’d’Artoise, as Charles X (Artz 5). Charles X did not have the diplomacy of his brother. There were several things that happened during his reign which led to a revolt in 1830. Firstly, he initiated a law which indemnified property back to the émigrés. The émigrés were aristocrats who fled during the revolution and lost their land to Napoleon’s government. This put financial stress on the bourgeoisie because they had to help fund this indemnification and they viewed it as undue favoritism (Harvey 73).

Secondly, he established a relationship with the church giving them “political favoritism, control over education and social functions” (74). This was offensive to the bourgeoisie and liberal Frenchmen. “Perfectly willing to re-embrace the Church as a spiritual guide and a guarantor of social peace, the liberals abhorred the privileges of the Church in politics and education” (74). The church and state lost the support of the liberal Romantics when they tried to repress their freedom of expression (74).
Finally, everything came to a head in 1829 when Charles X formed a new cabinet consisting of mostly Ultra-Royalists. This cabinet was voted against by “both Parliament and the propertied public” (75). Instead of making concessions to his Chamber, he issued the four ordinances. These ordinances established censorship of the press and dissolved the recalcitrant Chamber, throwing them into political oblivion. “Deprived of its right to choose representatives for a Chamber that had but limited power, curtailed in its ability to express its opinions in the public press, the bourgeoisie raised the standard of revolt” (75-76).

“In July 1830, Parisians took to the streets to overthrow Charles X, the last Bourbon monarch...” (Harsin 1). The July revolution was over very quickly. “Charles X abdicated on behalf of his grandson... the Chamber approved a hasty revision of the constitution... and the duc d’Orleans was installed as Louis-Philippe I, King of the French” (1). With a new King comes a new Constitution. Harvey states that,

It was inevitable that the new Constitution would limit the prerogatives of the King, reduce the powers of the aristocracy, and assure the position of the Church. It was inevitable, too, that the new Constitution would guarantee the civil and religious liberties of all Frenchmen and sure the political combination of the upper bourgeoisie over the lower idle class and workers... The Ultras and Legitimists were discredited; the lower-class companions of the barricades were powerless without a leader, an organization, or a coherent program. (Harvey 77)

In June of 1832, medical and law students used the death of Napoleon’s Marshall Lamarque to lead an insurrection in favor of the republic (Harsin 56). It is during this insurrection that the last two thirds of the musical *Les Misérables* take place. There is no relief
Given Circumstances: Social Environment

Much like the political situation underpinning *Les Misérables*, the social setting also informs much of the play and the interaction between characters. The early nineteenth century in France was a time when defined social strata determined a large part of peoples’ lives. At the top of the social pyramid were the aristocrats. These typically wealthy people received this position by virtue of their birth, rather than economic achievement. The bourgeoisie, on the other hand, were the wealthy upper class who earned their wealth and position in society. During Napoleon’s reign they were assigned to positions of authority alongside the aristocrats. At the bottom of the social pyramid were the working class, the laborers and the poor. Among the poor were beggars, criminals and prostitutes. The poor had to resort to whatever they could to stay alive and moving up in social strata was very difficult, if not impossible for most. This inability to change one’s position in life aids in the undercurrent turmoil of the musical *Les Misérables*.

Jean Valjean however was able to experience several different social levels during his journey. Through exposition in the opening number we find out that he became a convict when he stole a loaf of bread to feed his sister’s family. Hugo tells us that he was a laborer, a pruner, and worked many odd jobs in order to help feed his sister’s family. He was in prison for five years for stealing bread. This sentence was extended to nineteen years because of several attempts to escape (Hugo 82-84). After prison he started over and began a new life. We learn from the book that he quietly slipped into the town of Montreuil-sur-Mer, where he revolutionized the production of English jet beads and German black glass trinkets. His invention made him a lot of money, increased the wages of his employees and improved the
qualities of the goods. He became the owner of a factory and somewhat a member of the bourgeoisie, employing those of the working class. After several attempts by the King to appoint him Mayor, he finally accepted (158-159).

Jean Valjean did not begin life with the advantages of the wealthy; however, he was now able to experience life on the other side of poverty. He was not well educated but he was smart. He was able to prove that one can indeed make significant changes in one’s life when given the opportunity. This was the total opposite of Javert’s belief, who believed that one’s actions and choices reflected one’s soul. Thus, in Javert’s eyes, Valjean could be nothing other than a criminal. However Valjean, operating from an optimistic perspective, makes it a point to try and help others and give them the hand that they need to help set them on to a new life. His journey was not the social norm of the ‘people’ of Les Misérables. Most of the other characters were cemented in their social state from birth. Some however, did make choices that influenced their social outcome. Javert was one of these people.

Javert falls into the larger, less privileged working class. He was born in a prison and made a conscious choice to live a life enforcing the law. Hugo writes,

Javert was born in prison. His mother was a fortuneteller whose husband was in the galleys. He grew up thinking himself outside of society, and despaired of ever entering it. He noticed that society irrevocably closes its doors on two classes of men, those who attack it and those who guard it; he could choose between these two classes only; at the same time he felt that he had a powerful foundation of rectitude, order and honesty based on an irrepressible hatred for that gypsy race to which he belonged. He entered the police. He succeeded. At
In the musical, Javert stands apart from the rest of society represented on stage. He is a domineering presence, representing the laws and chains that bind the oppressed people.

Fantine is a member of the least fortunate and poor class of people presented in this musical. Hugo writes, “Sprung from the most unfathomable depths of social darkness, she bore on her brow the mark of the anonymous” (122). He goes on to say that she was born on the streets of Montreuil-sur-Mer. She didn’t know her mother or her father and was named by the whim of someone passing by. At age 10, she left to work among farmers and at fifteen she went to Paris to seek her fortune. It is implied that Fantine could never rise from the poverty of her birth. Given the financial responsibility and the social stigma of an illegitimate child, it was impossible for her to climb above her position in life. Her anonymous face was given a mask of shame by society.

Cosette is Fantine’s illegitimate child. Like her mother she was born into poverty, not knowing her parents. Jean Valjean saves her from the world of poverty and abuse. With Valjean, she becomes a member of the upper class. He educates and protects Cosette from the dark sides of society. She later solidifies her existence in the Bourgeoisie, when she marries Marius. Hugo explains that Marius was raised by his grandfather who is a member of the bourgeoisie; however because of his political differences with his grandfather, Marius chooses a life of poverty which he ultimately feels strengthens him (628-685). Even though he lived in poverty, refusing help from his grandfather, he is still not a true member of the poor because he has the advantage of education and family support if he chose to go back.

Eponine is the daughter of the Thenardiers. Her parents were basically con artists. As a
child, she was doted on by her mother, who sets up a very clear social difference between Eponine and Cosette when she sings, “Eponine, come here my dear, Eponine let me see you. You look very well in that little blue hat. There’s some little girls who know how to behave and they know what to wear and I’m saying ‘Thank heaven for that’” (Boublil 51). The next time we see Eponine is in the streets of Paris. She and her family have lost the inn and are making a living by conning and robbing others. It seems she has fallen from being the apple of her mother’s eye when Ms. Thenardier sings, “These bloody students on our street, Here they come slumming once again. Our Eponine would kiss their feet, She never had a scrap of brain” (71). She has had the taste of education and life with means and longs for a better life, one where she is respected and loved. Even though she has grown up with crooks, she doesn’t have the heart of a criminal. She protects Marius as well as Valjean and Cosette from her father and his gang. She loves Marius and longs to be loved. Stuck in the life of poverty into which she was thrown, she dreams of a world where her love is returned. Eponine dies in the arms of Marius, escaping her ill-fated life and the social barriers that surround her.

Mr. and Mrs. Thenardier, Eponine’s parents belong “to that bastard class composed of rough people who have risen and intelligent people who have fallen, which lies between the so-called middle and lower classes and unites some of the faults of the latter with nearly all the vices of the former, without possessing the generous impulses of the worker or the respectability of the bourgeois” (Hugo 153). They seem to land in social ‘no man’s land’. They do not have respect for the rich or the poor, nor do they elicit respect. They are out to help themselves and no one else.

There are many types of ‘poor’ represented in Les Misérables and the convicts seem to
Given Circumstances: Economic Environment

The economic environment during early nineteenth century France is very much intertwined with the political and social environments. They are a mirror of one another reflecting the state of France during this historical time. As a result of the Revolution there were many tax reforms passed to give relief to the common Frenchman. Unfortunately, this did not provide the much needed revenues for the government. In response to this the government sold the property of the Church. This acquisition did not benefit the peasant because much of the land was purchased by the bourgeoisie (Harvey 36-37).

Roger Price states in his book, *An Economic History of Modern France, 1730-1914*, that industrial development occurred very slowly in France during the early nineteenth century. Any growth mainly relied on extensions of existing methods rather than technical innovation. There were inadequate modes of transportation and poor communication (93-95). During the time of *Les Misérables*, France is just recovering from the Revolutionary period, where industrial activity had been disrupted “due to a lack of internal stability and the loss of overseas markets, and, more significantly in the long term, through the consolidation of the economic situation of the small peasant” (94). Price goes on to say that French industry and production were dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises, which continued to use “archaic techniques because of the protection assured to their local markets by transport difficulties” (95).

We find the people of *Les Misérables* floundering between two economical systems. They are in world that is financially drained from war and revolution. The leadership of the country is not stable and they are scrambling to take care of themselves much less help anyone less fortunate. They are not reaping the benefits of the Industrial Revolution which is sweeping
the rest of Europe. They are stuck in the ‘archaic techniques’ and not able to create ways to help themselves. They have very little control over their economic destiny. It is next to impossible for them to break out of the economic strife that they are experiencing, being swallowed by a black hole of poverty and starvation. For many, death is their only escape. Javert’s character directly reflects the mindset of the economy at the time, one that is reliant on existing methods and not open to change or invention. The Thenardiers who resort to theft and trickery for their livelihood are also representative of a class of people with few paths to upward mobility, stuck in their ways.

In contrast, Jean Valjean is the only one who is able to overcome his plight of poverty through technical innovation and became the owner of one of these small size enterprises mentioned. This innovative quality is a part of his character but is very much the exception rather than the rule for the people of Les Misérables.
Given Circumstances: Religious Environment

The religious landscape of nineteenth century France is fairly monolithic with the majority of the population being Roman Catholic. 1815 was especially a time of revival for the Church. Church attendance and support had waned during the age of Enlightenment and the clergy had grown bitter against French nationalism. “By 1815 they were everywhere proclaiming that the fall of the Napoleonic empire was not alone a political event, but also a victory of religion over free-thought” (Artz 11). The government pledged their support to the Church and it became a privileged institution once again (11). The Roman Catholic Church held the position that it is the intermediary between God and humanity. It was believed that any good that humans do is a product of divine goodness, a gift.

The Church’s doctrines of love, grace and forgiveness propel the action of Les Misérables forward. The priest represents this traditional view of the church: people’s lives are changed by grace - a grace that can only be mediated through the church. The Bishop sings, “But remember this, my brother. See in this some higher plan. You must use this precious silver To become an honest man. By the witness of the martyrs, By the Passion and the Blood- God has raised you out of darkness, I have bought your soul for God” (Boublil 10). The priest was the custodian of grace, entrusted by God. He then used his position to bestow grace on Valjean, who then passed that grace on to Fantine, offering to care for Cosette. It is through loving Cosette that Valjean’s life is changed again. Hugo writes, “Something new was entering his soul. . . . This was the second white vision he had met. The bishop had caused the dawn of virtue on his horizon; Cosette invoked the dawn of love” (Hugo 436).

The church teaches in John 15:12-13 “This is my commandment, that you love one
another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” *(The Bible 150)*. Valjean lives this scripture and goes on to save Marius out of his love for Cosette and then out of his love for humankind, forgives Javert, a man who has hunted him his whole life. Valjean has an opportunity to kill Javert, however releases him singing, “You are free, and there are no conditions, no bargains of petitions. There’s nothing that I blame you for: You’ve done your duty, nothing more” *(Boublil 135)*. This attitude of forgiveness is in stark contrast to that of Javert whose faith is based on the Laws of the Old Testament, and its stresses on ‘thou shalt nots’ and punishment, ‘an eye for an eye’. He seems unfamiliar with the grace that is offered through Jesus in the New Testament of the Bible. This inability to accept a world of forgiveness is the ultimate undoing of Javert.

Javert grounded his faith in ‘the law’, much like the Pharisees in the New Testament. The Pharisees did a masterful job of focusing squarely on the letter of the Law, the Torah, without giving any latitude to the human condition that sometimes made it impossible to fulfill that law. Jesus, on the other hand, pointed out on numerous occasions that the Law was God's "intent" for humanity, not intended to be an impossible, back-breaking curse. Javert’s law was his religion. The intent of the law - to protect people and guard against chaos - had been forgotten. It was only the letter of the law that mattered.

The Bishop’s actions set Valjean on a journey of faith and during this journey he discovers the ultimate message of the play which is sung at the end by the Fantine, Eponine and Valjean, “And remember the truth that once was spoken, To love another person is to see the face of God” *(173)*. 1 John 4:7-8 states, “Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know
God, for God is love” (The Bible 353). It is love and only love that can break through the barricades of the human condition.

Do you hear the people sing? Lost in the valley of the night? It is the music of a people who are climbing to the light. For the wretched of the earth there is a flame that never dies, Even the darkest night will end and the sun will rise. They will live again in freedom in the garden of the Lord, They will walk behind the ploughshare, They will put away the sword. The chain will be broken and all men will have their reward!! (Boublil 175)

While historically, the church in France can be seen as an authoritarian, even oppressive, institution, its message of grace, liberty and love shine brightly in the themes presented by Les Misérables. The characters in the play are buoyed by the hope that a de-institutionalized church could best present. In a sense, Les Misérables, posits a condition in which the very church itself is freed from the bondage of legalism and, thus has the ability to live the faith it has proffered for centuries.
Given Circumstance: Polar Attitudes

Jean Valjean:

I will never forgive them for robbing me of 19 years of my life. “They are the guilty, Ev’ryone” (5). (beginning)

I do not blame you for doing your duty. “You are free, and there are no conditions, no bargains or petitions, There’s nothing that I blame you for. You’ve done your duty, nothing more” (135). (end)

Javert:

“You will starve again unless you learn the meaning of the law” (3-4). “Honest work, just reward. That’s the way to please the Lord” (34). (beginning)

“And must I now begin to doubt, who never doubted all these years? . . . The world I have known is lost in shadow” (151). (end)

Fantine:

“I dreamed the God would be forgiving” (25). “Now life has killed the dream I dream” (27). (beginning)

“Good Monsieur, you come from God in heaven” (45). “To love another person is to see the face of God” (173) (end)

Cosette:

Cosette is alone and dreams of having a mother and being loved. “She says: ‘Cosette, I love you very much’” (49). “Please do not send me out alone. Not in the darkness on my own” (52). (beginning)

She is filled with love. “A Heart full of love, a night full of you” (157). (end)
Marius:

Unaware of ‘love’, very focused on being a student (beginning)

Life is put into perspective for him. Loving someone has taken total priority. “How the world may be changed, in just one burst of light, And what was right seems wrong, And what was wrong seems right” (85). “Life without Cosette means nothing at all” (138). (end)

Eponine:

Loves Marius but feels invisible to him. “Little he knows, Little he sees” (72). (beginning)

She dies knowing that she is close to Marius, and that he does indeed care about her.

Marius sings to her, “But you will live, ‘Ponine. Dear God above, if I could close your wounds with words of love.” She responds, “Just hold me now and let it be. Shelter me. Comfort me” (128). (end)

Enjolras:

“Where are the leaders of the land? Where are the swells who run this show” (69)? (beginning)

“Let others rise to take our place until the earth is free” (144-145)! (end)

Thenardiers:

“Master of the house, Doling out the charm. Ready with a handshake and an open palm. . .

Doesn’t cost me to be nice. But nothing gets you nothing, Ev’rything has got a little price” (54). (beginning)

“Beggar at the feast, Master of the dance, Life is easy pickings if you grab your chance. . .

. Watch the buggers dance, Watch ‘em till they drop, Keep your wits about you and you stand on top” (166-167). (end)

The Poor:
"At the end of the day you’re another day older, And that’s all you can say for the life of the poor. It’s a struggle, it’s a war, And there’s nothing that anyone’s giving, One more day standing about, What is it for? One day less to be living” (13-14). (Beginning)

“Do you hear the people sing, Say, do you hear the distant drums? It is the future that they bring when tomorrow comes” (175). (end)
Given Circumstances: Previous Action

- In the opening scene, we find Valjean working in a chain gang. We learn that he has been in prison for 19 years, 5 years for stealing a loaf of bread, the other 14 for trying to escape several times (Boublil 4).
- Valjean tells the Constables that the Bishop gave him the silver (9).
- Valjean has started a new life, becoming the owner of a factory and the Mayor of the town (12, 20).
- Fantine refuses to give into the Foreman’s sexual advances (17).
- Fantine has been abandoned by her child’s father. She is paying an innkeeper and his wife to take care of her child, Cosette (20, 21).
- Valjean is extremely strong and demonstrated his strength in prison (39-40).
- A man who is thought to be Jean Valjean has been arrested (40).
- Javert was born inside a jail (47C).
- The people are being oppressed and have no one to represent them or fight for them except General Lamarque (69).
- General Lamarque is ill and dying (69).
- Thenardier has lost his inn and he has a gang that he roams with in the streets of Paris (70).
- Javert has had a history with Thenardier and knows that he is a crook (75).
- The people of Paris are beginning to support the students and their ideas of revolution (82).
- Valjean has never told Cosette of his past and her mother (92).
• Marius writes a letter to Cosette telling about his love for her (118, 120).
• Eponine spends her nights dreaming of Marius (120-123).
• Eponine is shot coming to the barricades (127).
• Marius and Cosette get married (162).
Analysis of Dialogue

The musical *Les Misérables* shares much in common with an opera since all its dialogue is sung. Boublil, Schönberg and Kretzmer tell the story through repeated musical motifs and themes. Because the dialogue is sung throughout the play much of it is in verse and alternates between an aria and recitative style.

The beginning theme is a strong minor cadence which soulfully creates the harsh conditions of the 'miserables'. This theme is introduced with the chain gang, continued with the beggars and is finally repeated when Valjean beckons Javert to let him go. All three times the musical theme is accompanied with the words, “Look down, look down”, reiterating the lowliness of the people’s plight. During the prologue, we are quickly introduced to the main characters of the play as they banter back and forth about law and justice. The rhythm of their banter is a series of sixteenth and triplets, which is repeated each time Javert confronts Valjean. This pattern often starts on the upbeat and is a perfect fourth interval. The syncopation used in this pattern adds to the height of Valjean’s plight and supports his sense of urgency and distress.

Valjean’s language is simple, that of the common man. Sometimes he emphasizes his point with similes, “like a cur I walk the street, the dirt beneath their feet” (6). But for the most part, his language is very simple and accessible helping the audience see life through his lens. In the beginning of the play, his words are resentful and bitter, “never forget the years the waste, nor forgive them for what they’ve done. They are the guilty, everyone” (5). After the Bishop buys Valjean’s soul for God, Valjean’s language becomes more gracious. “I look to you to sort
this out and be as patient as you can” (20). His words begin to reflect the grace he had received.

Schönberg solidifies, completes and weaves the relationships between the characters with his musical themes. For instance, Valjean and Fantine share several motifs. When Valjean sees Fantine at the docks he sings, “I’ve seen your face before” in the exact melody that we hear as Fantine is dying and singing to her imaginary Cosette, “Cosette, it’s turned so cold” (35 & 44). We hear it once again when Fantine beckons Valjean at the end of the play, “M’sieur, I bless your name. M’sieur, lay down your burden” (167). When Fantine is dying, she also sings the iconic “On my Own” tune that Eponine sings later in the show. Both singing of a life and a dream that will never be, this musical motif links their tragic stories. They both sing this same melody as they lead Valjean into salvation at the end. This theme seems to represent escape. When on earth this escape is that of dreams; once dead this theme is that of salvation. In a way dreams are the only salvation in this world of the ‘miserable’.

Like Valjean, Fantine and Eponine’s speech is very plain and common. However when they are singing of their love, hopes and dreams their language is flowered with metaphors and similes “But the tigers come at night. With their voices soft as thunder” or “In the rain, the pavement shines like silver” (26 & 121).

Marius and Cosette have two musical themes that wed them together, ‘In My Life’ and ‘A Heart Full of Love’. Both of these are in a major key and have a sense of new life and new beginnings. They have a waltz/triplet feel which creates a feeling of light movement and dancing. Eponine sings both of these themes along with Cosette and Marius but it is always as an outsider. After having established their love with ‘A Heart Full of Love’ in Act I, Marius and Cosette repeat this theme in Act II when Cosette reminds Marius of the things he has to live for
beyond the tragedy of the barricade. This supports an important theme of the show that we can be transformed through loving another person.

Javert’s language is a little more formal than any of the other characters. His vocabulary is more extensive, using words such as, “protestations” (34). His formality lifts him above the ‘worms and maggets’ and gives a nice contrast to the poor. It also helps him represent and reiterate the oppression that ‘the people’ are under him. His language is very condescending to anyone that he views below the law calling them things such as “whores and vipers” or “worms and maggots” (33 & 75). When he enters a scene his musical motifs have strong cadences and rhythms. Ironically, the first melody he sings when he enters the docks, a time where he is trying to keep law and order, is also the very same melody he sings at the end of his suicide song, a time when law and order has turned upside down.

The less honorable characters such as the Thenardier’s, foreman, Bamatabois, thugs, sailors and prostitutes dialogue is more vulgar and crass than that of the other characters. They use slang such as bastard, whore, bitch, and “hungry for a poke” (28). They represent the underbelly of the world. Even Fantine adopts this language when she enters into this underworld, “I’ll kill you, you bastard, try any of that. Even a whore who has gone to the bad won’t be had by a rat!” (32).

The Thenardiers speak with little respect for anyone. We are first introduced to them with an upbeat “Master of the House” (53-60). Their language is crude including lots of slang and disrespect for God. They do however refer to comforters and philosophers, such as Voltaire. This contradiction of language is a wonderful mirror image of who they are. They are people striving to be something they are not. They are somewhat educated but have little
moral or conscience. They truly are the underbelly of society, robbing and conning their way through life. Whenever they try to deceive someone, they enter into a repeated waltz tune, dancing their thread of deceit. Both the waltz and "Master of the House" tunes are repeated throughout the play and in both of these melodies the Thenardiers are not showing their true colors. It is not until Thenardier is in the sewer that we are exposed to his true self. In the sewer he sings a dissonant tune very different from his other musical numbers. The beginning of his sewer song is melodically harsh and its rhythm fights against the accompaniment, creating an unsettled feeling about Thenardier and the underworld he represents. He then enters an aria of "It's a world where the dog eats the dog. Where they kill for the bones in the street and God in his heaven he don't interfere for he's dead as the stiffs at my feet" (147A-147B). These lines were cut out of the high school edition but I put them back in because I thought that it was not only an important insight into Thenardier's character but to the message of the play. He represents a world without 'love and forgiveness'. He represents a world where people don't believe in a higher power beyond themselves. This is in total opposition of the grace and love that is demonstrated in the other characters of the play. After Thenardier robs the soldiers in the sewers, we see him restored to the life that he feels he deserves. This is made apparent by the two original musical themes which are reintroduced.

The composer uses syncopation to help emphasize different voices in the crowd. For instance in "The Beggars", the poor sing accompanied by a strong down beat on one and three. Gavroche, Enjolras and Marius enter and begin their dialogue with syncopation. The syncopation and lyrics add to the urgency of their fight for justice and relief for the people of Les Misérables. We also find this same syncopation when the students are planning in the ABC
Café. Enjolras leads the students with the lyrics and melody, “Red the blood of angry men. Black, the dark of ages past” (85). This melody is the battle cry for the students and one that is repeated by the orchestra at the barricades when they are being pummeled by the French army. Enjolras’ songs are very militant and support his leadership role in the play. They are uplifting and evoke action from the students around.

It is truly amazing how the composer and lyricist weave melodies and words throughout this musical. They introduce a motif with one character and finish it with another, completely tying the story of the miserable people of France into a larger story of love and redemption.
Analysis of Dramatic Action – Script and Unit Breakdown – see appendix E
Analysis of Dramatic Action

Unit 1 – Chain Gang working in hot sun
Action – men dodging the stares of authority – Authority glaring at men

Unit 2 – Javert releases Valjean from prison
Action – Javert degrades and strips Valjean – Valjean defies Javert – Valjean grabs his identity

Unit 3 – Valjean is free
Action – Valjean relishes freedom

Unit 4 – Valjean is turned away by farmer
Action – Farmer and Laborers dismiss and demoralize Valjean – Valjean strikes out at them

Unit 5 – Valjean is frustrated about being treated as a criminal
Action – Valjean curses society

Unit 6 – Valjean is taken in by Bishop
Action – Bishop welcomes Valjean – Valjean deceives Bishop

Unit 7 – Constables return Valjean to the Bishop
Action – Constables present/smear Valjean’s story – Bishop affirms Valjean’s story and releases the Constables

Unit 8 – Bishop commissions Valjean
Action – Bishop commissions Valjean

Unit 9 – Valjean struggles with Bishop’s gift
Action – Valjean wrestles with his dark side

Unit 10 – The Poor speak
Action – The Poor cry out about their plight-They claw to stay alive

Unit 11 – Foreman and Workers tell about their plight

Action – Foreman defends hard work – women express their gratitude for work

Unit 12 - Ladies talk about Fantine and the Foreman

Action – Ladies gossip with each other

Unit 13 – The workers speak

Action – The workers cry out about their plight

Unit 14- Women interrogate Fantine

Action – Women needle Fantine – Fantine pushes back

Unit 15 – Valjean breaks up fight

Action – Valjean interrupts fight and delegates to foreman

Unit 16 – Fantine is fired

Action – Women manipulate Foreman – Foreman fires Fantine

Unit 17 – Fantine reminisces about her life

Action – Life crushes Fantine

Unit 18 – Prostitutes on the Docks

Action – Sailors breathe in Prostitutes – Prostitutes hawk themselves

Unit 19 – Fantine sells hair

Action – Old woman accosts Fantine – Fantine relinquishes

Unit 20 – Sailors and Prostitutes

Action – Sailors drool over prostitutes – prostitutes flaunt their wares and mock sailors

Unit 21 – Fantine becomes a prostitute
Action – Pimp and prostitutes persuade Fantine – Fantine surrenders

Unit 22 – Fantine is a prostitute

Action – Fantine beckons the captain

Unit 23 – Bamatbois attacks Fantine

Action – Bamatbois attacks Fantine – Fantine scratches Bamatbois

Unit 24 – Javert breaks up the disturbance

Action – Javert probes – Bamatbois accuses Fantine – Fantine begs Javert – Javert crushes Fantine

Unit 25 – Valjean stops Fantine’s arrest


Unit 26 – Valjean saves Fantine

Action – Valjean promises to help Fantine – Javert disagrees with Valjean

Unit 27 – The Cart Crash

Action – Cart runs over Fauchelevant – Valjean beseeches bystanders – Bystanders warn Valjean

Unit 28 – Valjean saves Fauchelevant


Unit 29 – Javert reveals the arrest of the ‘Valjean’


Unit 30 – Valjean decides to expose himself

Action – Valjean wrestles with himself – Valjean weighs the situation – Valjean glorifies God
Valjean gives himself to God’s will

Unit 31 – Valjean exposes his true identity
Action – Valjean unveils his tattoo

Unit 32 – Fantine hallucinates
Action – Fantine caresses and cuddles Cosette

Unit 33 – Valjean vows to Fantine
Action – Nurse takes Fantine back to bed – Fantine gives Cosette to Valjean – Valjean vows to Fantine – Valjean warms Fantine – Fantine dies

Unit 34 – Javert confronts Valjean

Unit 35 – Little Cosette dreams
Action – Little Cosette reaches for her mother

Unit 36 – Mm. Thenardier sends Cosette away
Action – Mm. Thenardier belittles Cosette – Cosette cowers from Mm Thenardier – Mm Thenardier brags on Eponine – Eponine flaunts herself – Cosette cries – Mm Thenardier shoves Cosette

Unit 37 – Thenardiers welcome guests
Action – Thenardier lures people in – Guests drink and eat – Thenardier charms them – Mm Thenardier and Thenardier steal from their guests

Unit 38 – Valjean pays off Cosette’s dept and takes her
Action – Valjean rescues Cosette – The Thenardier’s bamboozle Valjean – Valjean pays them –
Valjean takes Cosette

Unit 39 – Beggars beg in the street

Action – Beggars beg – Gavroche introduces and boosts his people

Unit 40 – Enjolras questions leaders

Action – Enjolras questions leaders – Marius boosts Lamarque – Beggars plead – Marius urges

Enjolras – Enjolras incites Marius

Unit 41 – Gavroche warns people

Action – Gavroche warns people – Gavroche lifts people – Beggars demand

Unit 42 – Marius talks to Eponine

Action – Mm. Thenardier cheapens Eponine – Marius stops Eponine – Eponine flirts with Marius

– Marius cushions Eponine – Eponine strokes Marius – Marius pets Eponine

Unit 43 – Setting up for the Robbery

Action – Valjean and Cosette give money to the beggars - Mm. Thenardier commands thugs –

Eponine warns/pushes Marius – Marius pulls/questions Eponine – Marius bumps Cosette

Unit 44 – The Robbery

Action – Thenardier entreats Valjean – Mm. Thenardier rocks bread – Thenardier detects

Valjean’s identity – Thenardier grabs Valjean – Valjean repels - Thenardier tears Valjean’s shirt

Unit 45 – Javert interrupts the robbery

Action – Javert drills people – Javert warns Valjean – Javert curses and threatens Thenardier

Unit 46 – Thenardier reveals Valjean’s identity

Action – Thenardier tiptoes around Javert – Javert uneartths Valjean’s identity – Thenardier

flatters Javert – Javert pledges to keep hunting – Javert dismisses people
Unit 47 – Stars
Action – Javert admires stars – Javert venerates stars – Javert prays to God

Unit 48 – Gavroche mocks Javert
Action – Gavroche dismisses Javert – Gavroche invites audience

Unit 49 – Eponine and Marius meet
Action – Eponine reflects – Eponine avoids Marius – Marius presses Eponine – Eponine deflects
Marius – Marius probes Eponine – Eponine flirts with Marius – Marius beseeches Eponine

Unit 50 – Students plot about the Revolution
Action – Combeferre debriefs – Feuilly counsels – Courfeyrac informs – Enjolras inspires and sparks

Unit 51 – Marius tells his friends about Cosette

Unit 52 – Enjolras commissions students

Unit 53 – Lamarque is dead
Action – Gavroche interrupts – Enjolras sinks and challenges students

Unit 54 – The People’s Song
Action – Enjolras inspirits the people – Combeferre vitalizes – Courfeyrac emboldens – Students enliven – Feuilly inspires – Chorus heartens
Unit 55 – Rue Plummet
Action – Cosette reflects and questions – Cosette invigorates

Unit 56 – Valjean comforts Cosette
Action – Valjean comforts/enwraps Cosette – Cosette presses Valjean – Valjean appeases

Cosette

Unit 57 – Marius discovers Cosette
Action – Marius sees Cosette – Marius thanks Eponine – Marius invigorates – Eponine
sinks/melts

Unit 58 – A Heart Full of Love
Action – Marius climbs wall – Marius activates – Cosette reaches – Marius holds – Cosette
softens and quiets – Marius commits – Cosette commits

Unit 59 – Eponine looks on
Action – Eponine sinks – Marius and Cosette possess – Eponine saddens – Marius and Cosette
discover

Unit 60 – The Attack on Rue Plummet
Action – Thugs plot – Brujon grabs Thenardier – Thenardier pokes Brujon –

Unit 61 – Thugs discover Eponine
Action – Brujon discovers Eponine – Babet pushes Eponine – Thenardier patronizes Eponine –
Eponine protects Valjean – Thenardier rejects Eponine – Thugs scorn Eponine – Eponine
threatens them – Eponine screams – Thenardier threatens Eponine

Unit 62 – Marius discovers Eponine
Action – Marius extols Eponine – Marius and Eponine hide
Unit 63 – Valjean protects Cosette

Action – Valjean alarms Cosette – Cosette soothes Valjean – Cosette informs – Valjean alerts

Unit 64 – Valjean decides to leave

Action – Valjean frets about past – Valjean beckons and urges Cosette

Unit 65 – One Day More

Character Analysis

Jean Valjean:

Desire: Jean Valjean desires to be free. He wants to live the life of an honorable man.

Will: Strong, determined - His will to live helps him survive nineteen years in prison. His determined nature helps him follow through with his promise to Fantine.

Moral Stance: Valjean is a man of integrity. When the bishop shows him forgiveness and saves him from jail, Valjean’s attitude and heart begins to change. He recognizes that he has gone to a very dark place, “What have I done, sweet Jesus, what have I done? Become a thief in the night, become a dog on the run And have I fallen so far and is the hour so late That nothing remains but the cry of my hate” (10-11). His righteous indignation turns to shame and cuts him like a knife. He recognizes his soul and feels a spirit moving within him. “What spirit comes to move my life, Is there another way to go” (12)? At this point he disowns Jean Valjean, a man full of hate and darkness and claims a new beginning. He now recognizes his soul. He feels a duty to God, the God that he was introduced to through the bishop’s grace. This was a God of forgiveness and love. He becomes responsible for his fellow man. He carries this responsibility throughout the musical, displaying honorable behavior in very difficult situations. Valjean becomes a man of love and forgiveness. Once he is forgiven by the bishop he too is able to forgive and once he feels love for Cosette, the meaning of life becomes clear to him.

Decorum: Extremely strong and very agile – Hugo wrote that in prison he took on the role of “jack”, lifting and holding up enormous weights on his back. This gained him the nickname Jean the Jack (Hugo 91). He is very serious, rarely laughing. He is intelligent and skilled, yet
uneducated (96). He walks with his eyes downcast as not to draw attention to himself. He has a soft but commanding voice. He can be a bit rough around the edges in his social graces and comes off as aloof and distant.

Javert:

Desire: To keep the law. He does not want anyone to escape under his watch. He is there to catch criminals and see that justice is done.

Will: He is strong, determined and stubborn. He is very persistent, never tiring and steady.

Moral Stance: "Honest work, just reward. That's the way to please the Lord" (Boublil 34). Javert is a man of integrity and incapable of telling a lie. His job is to keep order and protect the citizens. He sees himself as a beacon in the sky as described when he compares himself to the stars keeping watch in the night. He is there to catch those who fall and make sure they pay the price. "And so it has been, and so it is written on the doorway to Paradise. That those who falter and those who fall must pay the price" (79). Not paying the price is not an option in his world. He demands order; everything has its place and time. Order and law are more important than human life. "One more day to revolution, We will nip it in the bud, We’ll be ready for these schoolboys. They will wet themselves with blood" (109). He is the law. Javert keeps this attitude up until Valjean releases him. Even as he is being released he says to Valjean, "Once a thief, forever a thief. What you want, you will always steal" (134). When he meets Valjean again, he agrees to let him go but he promises that he will be waiting for him and he calls him, "2 4 6 0 1" (149). At this point, Valjean forgives him and Javert’s whole life is turned upside down. The idea of being washed of his sins is too much, especially when it is a thief doing the washing. "It was his hour at last to put a seal on my fate, Wipe out the past and wash me clean of the slate"
This thought of grace is a mockery of everything he believes in. "I am the Law and the Law is not mocked. I'll spit his pity right back in his face" (150). He is unwilling to believe that he and Valjean could remotely be in the same realm of value as human beings. His ideals and world are crumbling before his eyes and he would rather die than face this. "The world I have known is lost in shadow. Is he from heaven or from hell? And does he know that granting me my life today this man has killed me even so" (151)? His world is caving in. He does not want to live in a world that is not ordered. "I am reaching but I fall, And the stars are black and cold as I stare into the void of a world that cannot hold. I'll escape now from that world, from the world of Jean Valjean. There is nowhere I can turn. There is no way to go on" (152)!

Decorum: He is physically big and overpowering, a very large presence. His features are dark and brooding. He has dark mutton chops on his cheeks. He is fit and has a low and commanding voice. He walks with great purpose and immediately draws attention to himself when he enters a room. He shows everything that goes through his mind on his face.

Fantine:

Desire: She desires to be with her daughter. She longs to have her daughter's father back in her life so that they can be a respectable family.

Will: She is very strong, courageous and self-sacrificing.

Moral Stance: Fantine is an honest, faithful and wise woman. She has great integrity and tries to do what she thinks is right.

Decorum: Even though she comes from a very neglected and humble background, she carries herself with great confidence and dignity. Hugo describes her as,

A brilliant face, delicate profile, eyes of a deep blue, heavy eyelashes, small,
arching feet, wrists and ankles neatly turned, the white skin here and there showing the azure aborescence of veins; a cheek small and fresh, a neck robust as that of Aegean Juno; the nape firm and supple, shoulders modeled as if by Coustou, with a voluptuous dimple in the center, just visible through the muslin; a gaiety tempered with dreaminess; sculptured and exquisite – this was Fantine.

. . . (Hugo 126)

She has pearly white teeth and golden hair. “She possessed both types of beauty-style and rhythm. Style is the force of the ideal, rhythm its movement” (126). Hugo goes on to call her joy and yet modest. She loves to a fault and yet is the “innocence floating upon the surface of this fault” (127).

Thenardier:

Desire: To be rich and a part of the ‘upper crust’. To be respected and admired

Will: He is bold and confident. He is persistent and determined.

Moral Stance: He is dishonest. Hugo describes him and his wife, “There are souls that, crablike, crawl continually toward darkness, going backward in life rather than advancing, using their experience to increase their deformity, growing continually worse, and becoming steeped more and more thoroughly in an intensifying viciousness” (152).

Decorum: He is able to camouflage himself into many different situations. He is disheveled, sleazy and dirty. He tries to put on airs and look wealthier than he is but he never quite pulls it off.

Mm. Thenardier:

Desire: To be wealthy and be married to a king. She lives vicariously through her romantic
novels. This feeds her soul and helps her escape her own reality.

Will: She is not very strong willed letting herself be governed by her husband.

Moral Stance: She is dishonest and has a heart of stone. She has the ability to love one of her own and throw away another of her own. She discards her son, Gavroche, leaving him to the mercy of the streets. She is cruel to Cosette and assists her husband in conning and robbing. Decorum: She is a large gaudy woman. Reads just well enough to ingest tons of romance novels.

Eponine:

Desire: To be loved by Marius. To not be alone

Will: She is bold, strong willed and brave. She is selfless. She goes against her father to protect Valjean and Cosette.

Moral Stance: She is honest and has a sense of right and wrong. Even though she has been raised by crooks, she allows herself to go against her parents to protect others. She allows herself to truly love Marius and is willing to sacrifice her life to help him. Even though he does not return this love, she is still willing to do anything for him.

Decorum: She is street wise and tough, but also sensitive and lonely. She has dark hair and is somewhat disheveled from living on the streets. She is petite and pretty.

Cosette:

Desire: To find out the truth about her past. To be with Marius

Will: She is strong willed and loving.

Moral Stance: She is honest, generous and willing to help others. She has been protected and doesn’t know a lot of the world, and yet there is a quiet eagerness to learn of the world she
doesn’t know.

Decorum: She is pretty, inquiring and personable. When she was young, Valjean dressed her in black out of respect for her mother’s death; therefore she is seen wearing black.

Marius:

Desire: To know his purpose in life. Marius struggles with knowing what to believe in. He was raised by his grandfather who was a member of the Bourgeois. His father was disowned by his grandfather because he fought with Napoleon. He was a student but wrestled between the politics of his father and his grandfather, trying to find a cause of his own. It is not until he falls in love with Cosette that he feels a purpose for his life.

Will: He is willful, headstrong, passionate and impulsive.

Moral Stance: He is honest. Before he meets Cosette, he has a hard time committing to a higher cause. Once he finds love, life is changed and he has a reason to live and a reason to die. It is the thought of living without Cosette that gives him the final push to be willing to fight.

Decorum: He is handsome and well-dressed. He is well educated and carries himself as if he has had a privileged life.

Enjolras:

Desire: To fight for the rights of the people. To see the leaders of France take responsibility for the poor.

Will: He is strong willed and courageous.

Moral Stance: He is very wise and a strong leader. He is cautious yet brave. He is very genuine and is interested in helping others. He is willing to give up his life for another person’s life.

Decorum: He is very handsome and charismatic, a natural leader.
Gavroche:

Desire: To be ‘in’ with the students. To protect ‘his people’, the people of the streets.

Will: He is strong willed and very courageous.

Moral Stance: He is a gamín. He lives on the street and yet he has found a way to live an honest life, despite his parents and other cons on the street. He feels like he is there to protect the other poor. He takes pride in being a part of a community. He has a very giving spirit.

Decorum: His clothes are worn and torn. He is small and very agile. He is dirty from living on the street.
Ideas of the Play

The musical *Les Misérables* is a story set in the middle of the social and political unrest of France in early 19th century. The title reflects the people who are steeped in the misery of the time and place. This was a time where only a few had rights or power; a time where it was nearly impossible to rise from one’s position of birth; a time where very few had a voice. Each character from the beggars to the protagonist, Jean Valjean, is stuck in their own misery and struggle to break the chains that bind them. This theme of freedom is at the heart of the story *Les Misérables*.

In *Les Misérables* the fight for freedom comes in many forms. In the beginning, we see a chain gang which is physically bound. The chains are the outward representation of the bondage that we later see with the other characters. The chain gang struggles for freedom from a harsh and unforgiving judicial system. Valjean fights for freedom from the law. “And now I know how freedom feels, the jailer always at your heels, it is the law! This piece of paper in my hand that makes me cursed throughout the land, it is the law” (Boublil 6)! The people are fighting for freedom from poverty, oppression and starvation. “There are children back at home, and the children have got to be fed, and you’re lucky to be in a job. And in a bed” (16). The students become the voice of the people and rally to change the social and political conditions. Even though their life is a little more privileged they choose to be the voice that the people do not have. “Will you join in our crusade? Who will be strong and stand with me? Beyond the barricade is there a world you long to see? Then join in the fight that will give you the right to be free” (88)! It is through this struggle for freedom that the theme of grace and
forgiveness evolve.

The dark and oppressive world of *Les Misérables* is a perfect setting to unveil grace and forgiveness. The bishop is the catalyst for this when he forgives Valjean and introduces a ‘higher plan and power’ to Valjean. “But remember this, my brother. See in this some higher plan. You must use this precious silver to become an honest man. By the witness of the martyrs, by the Passion and the Blood, God has raised you out of darkness, I have bought your soul for God” (9-10). This one action changes Valjean and allows him to start over, an opportunity that not many others are given. With this new beginning he extends grace and forgiveness to others. He forgives Javert for pursuing him. “There’s nothing that I blame you for: You’ve done your duty, nothing more” (135). He saves Fantine from being arrested and promises to care for her child. It is through this action that Valjean feels love for the first time which leads him to his ultimate discovery of freedom: through loving another person.

“To love another person is to see the face of God” (173). Love is an undercurrent theme throughout the play that ties the characters together. Valjean and Cosette’s love for each other is their salvation. Marius and Cosette find their purpose in life once they have experienced love for each other. After meeting Marius, Cosette sings, “How strange, this feeling that my life’s begun at last. This change: can people really fall in love so fast” (90)? Marius sings, “I did not live until today.... I was born to be with you” (107). It is out of love for France and her people that the students ultimately give up their lives.

In stark contrast to this idea is the loveless life of Thenardier, who only believes in a ‘dog eat dog’ world. In such a world view, when one looks heavenward, God’s face cannot be seen and “only the moon looks down” (147B). This is the antithesis of the theme of the play: that life
begins with love. Love, given and received, leads to the ability to forgive which proves to be the ultimate agent of freedom.
VI - Moods and Tempo

Unit 1 - Chain Gang working in hot sun

Touch - gritty, Taste - dusty, salty, Smell - body odor, Hear - heavy breathing and metal hitting rock, See - the ground, bright reflection off the land

Unit is like a pig roasting over a fire

Unit 2 - Javert releases Valjean from prison

Touch - cold metal, Taste - sour candy, Smell - bad breath, Hear - footsteps, See - Yellow Paper, Uniform

Unit is bitter sweet

Unit 3 - Valjean is free

Touch - fresh clean sheets, Taste - refreshing water, Smell - fresh air, Hear - wind, See - blue skies

Unit is a crisp first day of fall

Unit 4 - Valjean is turned away by farmer

Touch - sand paper, Taste - bitter, Smell - rotten food, Hear - condescending whispers, See - blackness

Unit is like a knife piercing a heart

Unit 5 - Valjean is frustrated about being treated as a criminal
Touch – sharp, Taste – aspirin, Smell – decomposing bodies, Hear – shrill, See – fire

Unit is like a dragon breathing fire

Unit 6 – Valjean is taken in by Bishop

Touch – warm, soft, Taste – warm potatoes, Smell – old library, Hear – prayers, See – wood paneling

Unit is like a warm bath after a long cold day.

Unit 7 – Constables return Valjean to the Bishop

Touch – cold stone, Taste – persimmon, Smell – dirty boots, Hear – heart beat, See – floor

Unit is like doors slamming all around

Unit 8 – Bishop commissions Valjean

Touch – soft, warm blanket, Taste – smooth wine, Smell – sweet perfume, Hear – soft words, See – golden light

Unit is a wash of warm light

Unit 9 – Valjean struggles with Bishop’s gift

Touch – hot coals, Taste – jalapeño, Smell – burning trash, Hear – many past voices, See – fire

Unit is like chills running down your spin

Unit 10 – ‘The Poor’ speak
Touch – ice, Taste – dirt, Smell – urine, Hear – babies crying, See – decay

Unit is like sinking in quicksand.

Unit 11 – Foreman and Workers tell about their plight

Touch – hot wax, Taste – rotten apples, Smell – factory smoke, Hear – machines, See – wheels turning,

Unit is like a steam engine

Unit 12 – Ladies talk about Fantine and the Foreman

Touch – rough beard, Taste – strong perfume, Smell – body odor, Hear – witches laugh, See – women huddled together

Unit is like hens pecking at each other

Unit 13 – The workers speak

Touch – washboard, Taste – broth, Smell – factory smoke, Hear – machines, See – tunnel collapsing

Unit is like walking through deep mud

Unit 14- Women interrogate Fantine

Touch – sharp, Taste – sour, lemon, Smell – rotting teeth, Hear – glass shattering, See – distorted faces

Unit is like vipers circling
Unit 15 – Valjean breaks up fight


Unit is like a referee at a rugby match

Unit 16 – Fantine is fired

Touch – cold blade, Taste – bitter, Smell – blood, Hear – void, See – darkness

Unit is like crabs in a bucket, pulling each other down

Unit 17 – Fantine reminisces about her life

Touch – sheepskin rug, Taste – sweet wine, Smell – ivory soap, Hear – laughter, See – happy families

Unit is like a beautiful sunset before a storm

Unit 18 – Prostitutes on the Docks

Touch – rough skin, Taste – salt air, Smell – fish, Hear – ocean, See – large ropes on docks

Unit looks like rough, tattered boat

Unit 19 – Fantine sells hair

Touch – razor blade, Taste – sweat, Smell – old age, Hear – doors slamming, See – doors slamming

Unit looks like rusty scissors
Unit 20 – Sailors and Prostitutes


Unit looks like fat men in a bathhouse

Unit 21 – Fantine becomes a prostitute

Touch – skin rash, Taste – dirt, Smell – semen and saliva, Hear – women wailing, See – pasty skin

Unit is like a lone heart breaking

Unit 22 – Fantine is a prostitute

Touch – clammy skin, Taste – sweat, Smell – semen, Hear – mumbled voices, See – rotten teeth

Unit is like a soul dying

Unit 23 – Bamatbois attacks Fantine

Touch – sharp knife, Taste – metal, Smell – alcohol, Hear – heavy breathing, See – large hands

Unit is like an animal stalking its prey

Unit 24 – Javert breaks up the disturbance

Touch – cold stone, Taste – rocks, Smell – heavy cologne, Hear – heavy footsteps, See – black uniform
Unit is like a horse standing on your chest

Unit 25 – Valjean stops Fantine’s arrest

Touch – cold water, Taste – sour apple, Smell – mixed colognes, Hear – soft singing, See – top hat

Unit is like a storm brewing on the horizon

Unit 26 – Valjean saves Fantine

Touch – warm blanket, Taste – tears, Smell – sea air, Hear – forgiving words, See – soft light

Unit is like a warm embrace

Unit 27 – The Cart Crash

Touch – muddy street, Taste – mud, Smell – horse manure, Hear – horses whinnying and hooves,
See – large horse cart

Unit is like an avalanche

Unit 28 – Valjean saves Fauchelevant


Unit is like the sun breaking through the clouds

Unit 29 – Javert reveals the arrest of the false ‘Valjean’
Touch – sharp nails, Taste – cotton, Smell – burning wood, Hear – high pitched ringing, See – blackness

Unit is like seeing your life come to an end

Unit 30 – Valjean decides to expose himself

Touch – smooth metal, Taste – brandy, Smell – incense, Hear – God’s voice, See – the face of God

Unit is like recovering from having your breath knocked out of you

Unit 31 – Valjean exposes his true identity


Unit is like being naked in front of a crowd

Unit 32 – Fantine hallucinates


Unit is like nursing your child

Unit 33 – Valjean vows to Fantine

Touch – warm cup, Taste – warm tea, Smell – fragrant tea, Hear – loving voice, See – forgiving face
Unit is like being washed away in a warm bath

Unit 34 – Javert confronts Valjean
Touch – bee stinger, Taste – burning coffee, Smell – burning coffee, Hear – heavy footsteps, See – black uniform
Unit is like being run over by a herd of cattle

Unit 35 – Little Cosette dreams
Unit is like walking on clouds

Unit 36 – Mm. Thenardier sends Cosette away
Touch – wet rags, Taste – dirty rags, Smell – cold, night air, Hear – monsters, See – shadows in the darkness
Unit is like walking up the stairs in a dark house full of monsters

Unit 37 – Thenardier welcome guests
Touch – wooden tables, Taste – beer, Smell – food cooking, Hear – people laughing, See – fellowship
Unit is like a party with small snakes slowly creeping into the room
Unit 38 – Valjean pays off Cosette’s dept and takes her

Touch – warm hand, Taste – fresh rain, Smell – stale beer, Hear – hissing, See – snakes winding around

Unit is like a hero coming into save his damsel

Unit 39 – Beggars beg in the street


Unit is like maggots on rotten food

Unit 40 – Enjolras questions the leaders


Unit is like a lighthouse in a storm

Unit 41 – Gavroche warns the people


The unit is like snakes crawling over its prey

Unit 42 – Marius talks to Eponine


Unit is like two small children playing peek-a-boo
Unit 43 – Setting up the for Robbery

Touch – brick, Taste – sour milk, Smell – putrefying flesh, Hear – fire crackling, See – wasp swarming

Unit is like a bee hive

Unit 44 - The Robbery

Touch – pulling taffy, Taste – bitter, Smell – sickening sweet, Hear – cats screaming, See – snake eating his prey

Unit is like a snake squeezing its prey

Unit 45 – Javert interrupts the robbery

Touch – cold metal, Taste – steel, Smell – leather, Hear – heavy footsteps, See – snorting bull

Unit is like a bull charging

Unit 46 – Thenardier reveals Valjean’s identity

Touch – chain, Taste – sweet, Smell – rose, Hear – locking of a shackle, See – justice

Unit is like a light at the end of a tunnel

Unit 47 – Stars

Touch – cool night air, Taste – dark chocolate, Smell – cool night air, Hear – water fall, See – stars on a clear night
Unit is like a cool breeze on a warm summer night

Unit 48 – Gavroche mocks Javert

Touch – rubber ball, Taste – lemon drops, Smell – popcorn, Hear – applause, See – boy taking a bow

Unit is like a small mouse mocking a lion

Unit 49 – Eponine and Marius meet

Touch – skin, Taste – tonic water, Smell – wet hair, Hear – birds singing, See – children wrestling

Unit is like small children on a playground

Unit 50 – Students plot about the Revolution


Unit is like little boys playing army

Unit 51 – Marius shares of love


Unit is like walking on clouds

Unit 52 – Enjolras commissions students


Unit is like a match being struck
Unit 53 – Lamarque is dead

Touch – ice, Taste – brandy, Smell – musty room, Hear – void, See – dark clouds

Unit is like water being poured on a fire

Unit 54 – The People’s Song

Touch – warm coals, Taste – saliva, Smell – camp fire, Hear – strong voices, See – people in unison

Unit is like a large wave washing onto the shore

Unit 55 – Rue Plummet

Touch – iron gate, Taste – sweet licorice, Smell – night air, Hear – birds singing, See – dreams

Unit is like coming out of a coma

Unit 56 – Valjean comforts Cosette

Touch – soft, Taste – warm potatoes, Smell – soap, Hear – soft voice, See – beautiful hair

Unit is like being wrapped in a warm blanket on a hot day

Unit 57 – Marius discovers Cosette


Unit is like opening a beautiful present
Unit 58 – A Heart Full of Love

Touch - silky hair, Taste – hot chocolate, Smell – roses, Hear – heart beat, See – beautiful face

Unit is like falling off of a cliff into a beautiful pool of fresh water

Unit 59 – Eponine looks on

Touch – sharp knife, Taste – mouth ulcer, Smell – moist air, Hear – crying, See – dreams crushed

Unit is like watching your dreams being dashed against the cliffs

Unit 60 – The Attach on the Rue Plummet

Touch – a rough beard, Taste – liquor, Smell – coins, Hear – whispering, See – stone wall

Unit is like sharks circling their prey

Unit 61 – Thugs discover Eponine


Unit is like a whistle piercing the silence

Unit 62 – Marius discovers Eponine


Unit is like seeing a friendly face in a crowd of strangers
Unit 63 – Valjean protects Cosette

Touch – rough tweed, Taste – coke, Smell – fire, Hear – warning alarm, See – faces from the past

Unit is like being haunted by spirits of the past

Unit 64 – Valjean decides to leave

Touch – suitcase, Taste – medicine, Smell – old suitcase, Hear – glass shattering, See – sand running through an hour glass

Unit is like sinking in quick sand

Unit 65 – One Day More

Touch – skin, Taste – fresh water, Smell – freshly washed cloths, Hear – doors opening, See – butterfly emerging from a cocoon

Unit is like a butterfly emerging from a cocoon
Mount Pleasant High School's LES MISERABLES Triumphs

By Jack Shaw
– March 27, 2011

I was definitely moved by the Wilmington, Delaware high school's outstanding production of LES MISERABLES. Let me say at the beginning that I have never seen the play before and my expectations were high. I was pleasantly (no pun intended) surprised not only with some very
talented individual performances, but I thought Mount Pleasant High School Director Chris Turner’s noteworthy ensemble cast turned out a remarkable theatrical performance—one all involved in the production should be proud of.

This particular “School Edition” version, as it says in the program, was “abridged to a running time of just over two hours, while carefully maintaining the integrity of one of the greatest musicals ever written.” LES MISERABLES is indeed an epic musical with a depth of thought so great I am thrilled to see it even attempted by a high school production. This group did a superb job.

The Broadway production of LES MISERABLES opened 12 March 1987, and ran until 18 May 2003, closing after 6,680 performances. It was nominated for twelve Tony’s and won eight, including Best Musical and Best Original Score.

Its source is based on Victor Hugo’s 1500-page novel of various struggles of adversity in 19th century France, of proving worth, of redemption and of revising attitudes so strongly imprinted changing them seems impossible.

Jean Valjean, imprisoned for stealing a loaf of bread and, after several escape attempts that add to his sentence, is finally released from prison after 19 years. A modern version would say he tries to go straight but can’t. Valjean is befriended by a Bishop who takes him in and feeds him, then defends him when police bring him back with silver he has taken from his house. Now, committed to making a decent life for himself and others, he is pursued relentlessly by Inspector Javert. Valjean isn’t the only one in the play in need of redemption.

This show’s triumph was in part due to Chris Turner’s leadership, with outstanding musical direction by Alexis Droke and wonderful choreography by Patricia Ignudo. Although there was truly an excellent ensemble cast, there were also standouts among the leads. Donald Coggin was simply amazing as “Jean Valjean.” Emily Ozer did a great job as “Eponine.” Christine Kirk’s ever so sweet singing “Fantine” was critical to the first act and again memorable when she came back as a ghost. Ian Miller as “Marius” and Josie Beichner as “Cosette” made a fine duet. Miller has a very pleasant soft voice that complemented Beichner’s also soft soprano. Aaron Gerler did a fine job singing “Javert,” although at times he seemed less comfortable on stage.

And how could I miss the interesting and entertaining pair, the Thenardiers? I thought their characters were very interestingly portrayed. Kevin Chan’s character seemed to have a bit of Johnnie Depp thrown in and Emily Spiegel’s coarser way of speaking was consistent but seemed a bit of the cockney. In France?

When a show is not so together, the comedy relief can steal the show; this is one time they didn’t, and it was a good thing. Audience’s like to laugh so we notice the comic relief. As it happens, comic relief should fade into the ensemble especially when the whole show comes together so well.

The costumes were some of the best I’ve seen anywhere—even professional shows; I honestly thought they were rented. And, the set, especially the barricade, was phenomenal. I haven’t seen anything that intricate as “barricades” or “trash heaps” since CATS that could actually work on stage. The ensemble cast maneuvered around the stage in union when needed and moved smartly individually as if they owned it at other times. I don’t like too many dancers on stage at any given moment. Too many dancers mean less room for variety in choreography, but this wasn’t a problem here. A cast this size could easily fill the stage should everyone come out at once.

To be fair, there is not a lot of dancing, but a lot of movement to be choreographed rather than blocked as one would in a straight play. What dancing there was (the waltz, for example) could have been smoother. In the waltz scene, it appeared the girls were dancing and the boys were just walking around. I loved that the area surrounding the orchestra was used as an additional acting area and not just a way to get the singers more out front; there seemed to be a definite purpose in mind. But I didn’t love Javert’s death scene. I grant you it was creative, but I think I would rather have just heard his voice and a sound effect. I think it would have been as dramatic.

Emily Spiegel and Kevin Chan as M. and Mme. Thenardier in the Mount Pleasant High School

Les Miserables School Edition

A thrilling performance of the much-loved musical by our Advanced Students - a real treat!

Les Miserables is, first and foremost, about the music. It stands and falls on its ability to rouse, move and inspire the crowd. So it was with delight that I found Stagecoach's efforts standing high and proud, waving their red flag defiantly at anyone who dares sneer at amateur productions. It does help that I like Les Mis in general, but ladies and gentlemen, the music was good.

The chorus all sang together and all managed to maintain passion and focus, the solos and duets were moving, the marches were rousing and the crescendos inspired. As well should they be with any production of Les Mis. For me, Les Mis is all about the powerful songs, and the young cast certainly did not spare the passion in their first night's performance. All the lead cast sang way above their years, but special mention must be made of Gerard Smith (playing Javert) and Rebecca Goldie (playing Fantine): Both had wonderfully full and controlled voices, and both seem to hit the tone of their respective characters perfectly. And who could forget Tomas Wolstenholme (Jean Valjean), who reached and held the most incredible notes without a waver. Whoever cast them; good choice!

I should take this opportunity to point out that the whole production was cast and rehearsed in a mere seven days. Seven days! That is really something. Not the single misstep or missed line, only one hesitation and a relaxed (as much as possible) atmosphere belied this ridiculously short prep time.

The only real problem was constant difficulties with microphones, which was such a shame given the range of high quality voices present. With so many people on stage it proved difficult to get the individual mic volumes right. Some really decent voices were completely drowned out by the music and some were made too loud. Of course, in everybody's defence, it should be noted that singing into an attached microphone is completely different to singing unenhanced, and I highly doubt they had time for more than one or two rehearsals with the mics. It should also be noted that as the only criticism for a seven-day rehearsed amateur production this comment should rightly be seen as high praise rather than censure.

All in all, I was genuinely impressed. I was moved when I should have been moved, roused when I should have been roused, and left with the songs still on my lips. Good, good stuff.

Matty Czaczkes (DI Reviewer), 31/07/09

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Theater review: Les Miserables School Edition

by Gina Robertson of John Garcia's The Column

As grim and gritty as any adult presentation, this adaptation loses nothing in using children to tell the tale.

Children on Stage ... School Edition ... Such phrases seem so contradictory to everything that makes Les Miserables one of the most profound works of performance art ever to grace the stage on Broadway. I was expecting to find Garland Civic Theatre's production (now playing at the Granville Arts Center) to be horrifyingly innocent, watered down, and cheerful.

Thanks to director Clayton Younkin's vision and a cast of breathtakingly talented kids, I was in for a chilling surprise. As grim and gritty as any adult presentation, this adaptation loses nothing in using children to tell the tale. In fact, the youth may deliver a stronger emotional punch because they bring so much energy and spirit to a show that has become a relic. Younkin set out to revive the original feeling and meaning of the story, going all the way back to Victor Hugo’s book, which he required everyone in the cast to read. You’d have to see the show half a dozen times to catch all of the symbolism.

What a spectacular payoff these kids earned for a bit of heavy reading. What subtle things are added to each character when a talented teenager actually knows and understands the story!

Gorgeous set design, creative special effects, beautifully detailed costumes, and live musical accompaniment combine to enhance the startlingly complex performances delivered by kids aged 8 to 18. They will leave you in awe if not in tears, as I was at the end of Friday night’s performance.

Les Mis is really the last Broadway musical you’d expect someone to adapt for children to perform. In conservative places like Texas, we generally prefer to deliver moral lessons to our kids in simple shades of good/bad, yes/no.
right/wrong. Few would expect even young adults to grasp the deep, complex adult moral themes of this story much less teenagers and adolescents!

It is the story of Jean Valjean, a man who goes to a prison work yard for stealing bread to feed his sister's ailing son. After twenty years, he is released but finds himself shunned and cast out as a convict by the decent folk. Resentful and desperate, he steals from a kindly bishop who takes him in for a night. The bishop's generosity and forgiveness shame Valjean into devoting himself to being a good man and succeeding by honest means. Hunted by prison guard Javert, Valjean hides his past and rises to the top of bourgeois society. Javert won't let him forget, though — once a criminal, always thus, and Valjean is haunted by the question, "Who am I?" Is he the thief, the prisoner, the convict, the mayor, the wealthy business owner, the adoptive father to a girl left orphaned by one of his workers? Set against the backdrop of the French revolution, class morality provides another layer of meaning.

Never were these themes, along with sex, despair, prostitution, child murder, suicide, prison, slavery, revenge, betrayal, and young love performed more brilliantly than in this "school edition."

When Carolyn Baker as Fantine turns to prostitution to save her daughter, her anguished cry, "Don't they know they're making love to one already dead?" conveys every bit of her shame, determination, fear, and loathing.

Alex Gilbert doesn't portray Javert as simply the villain. Understanding the motivation of this character allows him to shade Javert with many facets. He is not evil but rather sees himself in earnest as the good guy. In his arrogance, he fails to see that he has lost his humanity in his overzealous pursuit of Valjean. Because all of this is so well played, his suicide is the most chilling thing I have ever seen performed on stage.

Musical numbers range from heart-wrenching to hilarious. Braden Herndon and Jayci VanCleave (Monsieur and Madame Thenardier) are masters of comedic timing. The moment when they peer at the ceiling after dropping stolen silver from her skirts is priceless.

The laughter evoked by the innkeeper and his wife is matched by the tears that flow when Valjean prays to God to let Marius live. I don't believe any live performance has ever gotten to

me the way Cole Ragsdale's Jean Valjean did. His vocal range is incredible, and though nothing was done to make him appear old, he thoroughly sells himself as the aging Valjean throughout the show.

Cassidy Cocke is poignant and sweet as little Cosette. She and Mary Faith La Prade (young Eponine) hold their own as the smallest members of the cast. Lindsay Haden is memorable as the spunky Gavroche, who wins hearts with "Little People." Alexis Henderson gives a touching performance as the ill-fated Eponine suffering from unrequited love for Marius. Henderson's voice blends notably well with those of Emily Hawkins (Cosette) and Trey Orman (Marius).

Don't let my failure not to mention the others take away from them in the least. Not a single performance was less than spectacular in this show. If Friday night's audience appreciation was an indication, tickets will go fast, so get yours today.

10:17am Thursday 22nd April 2010

AS THE smash-hit Broadway phenomenon reaches its 25th anniversary, Cameron Mackintosh's superb West End interpretation of Les Misérables has been brought to York with style and pizzazz.

Bev Jones has created another breathtaking production which had the audience laughing and whooping until the very end.

The play opens in recognisable Les Misérables fashion, as Joseph Rowntree's stage is transformed into the austere and desperate streets of tumultuous 19th-century France. The production team's hard work is showcased through the authenticity of the prisoners' costumes and the starkness of the props, as we are taken through the tale of Jean Valjean, who – after being imprisoned for 19 years – decides to start his life anew. Christian Lunn's dramatic tenor voice carries the audience through Valjean's life-affirming tale with confidence, and introduces an avuncular dimension to the role.

The pinnacle of Act One, however, is undoubtedly the tragic Fantine's striking performance of I Dreamed A Dream. Siobhan Stanley encapsulates Fantine's charming melancholy to full effect, and executes her dark closing scene with Valjean flawlessly.

At times it can be difficult to discern individual voices, but collective numbers, such as At The End Of The Day, are robust and powerful.

Act Two provides a platform for the stunning mezzo-soprano voice of Emily Ramsden, as she poignantly depicts Eponine's unrequited love for Marius, who falls in love with female protagonist Cosette, the daughter of fateful prostitute Fantine.

Both the younger and older Corsette, played by Grace Brown and Beth Organ respectively, are perfectly sweet and elegant, especially when the young Corsette's suffering is displayed at the hands of the magnificently evil Madame Thenardier. Some of the individual voices find it hard to emanate above the impressive musical score, which never wavers through the epic two-and-a-half hour performance, but Lisa Lawrence's wonderfully grotesque interpretation of Thenardier remains intense and persuasive, culminating in the uproarious gaudiness of Master Of The House in Act One.

The orchestra's strengths are used effectively and comically, as the prostitutes and their customers provide a bawdy backdrop to the pub's seedy reality. Act Two also makes full use of other interesting gimmicks, such as a masked white screen during Marius' Empty Chairs At Empty Tables number.

http://www.yorkpress.co.uk/leisure/theatre/8113832.print/
The finale lavishly crashes to a climax, ending in the classic Les Misérables combination of romance and tragedy, as Cosette and Marius finally marry and Valjean uncovers her history. This show was put together in only two weeks. Bev Jones and his production team should be uncommonly proud of their achievement.


Review by Laura Connor

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http://www.yorkpress.co.uk
Victor Hugo and French Romantic Drama

The tumultuous years of 19th century France gave rise to a new literary and dramatic expression called French Romanticism. One of the primary leaders of this expression was Victor Hugo, whose works includes the epic novel, Les Misérables, considered by many as one of the finest French Romantic novels ever written. Hugo’s novel has been adapted to both film and stage and continues to exemplify the qualities of the Romantic Movement.

Victor Hugo was born in 1802 and died in 1885. Through the span of his life he saw the rise and fall of the Napoleonic Empire, the reign of Louis XVIII, Charles X, King Louis Philippe and Emperor Napoleon III. Hugo’s political writings were instrumental in the final demise of Napoleon III and after 19 years of exile he returned to France to become a Member of the Parliament, which began to build a new republic. Hugo was a great poet, novelist, playwright, and politician. He was a key player in bringing the Romantic Movement to the theatre in France, first with his writing of Cromwell and then with his production of Hernani. In 1830, Hugo’s production of Hernani brought “to a close the history of the French theatre during the Restoration. . . . The battle on the opening night signaled the triumph of romanticism over classicism” (Daniels 17).

The Romantic Movement ushered in some major changes to art and theatre. One of these changes was the relationship between art and society. Hugo explains this, in his preface to Cromwell, by comparing the evolution of poetry to that of society. The beginning stage is what he calls the ‘primitive period’. Man has just been created and he is awakened by poetry. He dreams and sings as he breathes. “His lyre has only three strings: God, the soul, creation” (Hugo 154). Each race exists comfortably. There is no conflict or war. There is time for
contemplation. “Such is the first man, such is the first poet. He is young, he is lyrical. Prayer is his sole religion, the ode his sole form of poetry. This poem, this ode of the primitive period is called Genesis” (154).

In the middle stage, individual men begin to form tribes; tribes evolve into nations and nations into kingdoms. People begin to put down roots, there becomes a formality to religion and prayer is governed by rites. There are leaders and laws. Nations become crowded and begin to collide. Wars begin. “Poetry reflects these momentous events; from ideas it passes to things. It sings of ages, of nations, of empires. It becomes epic, it gives birth to Homer” (154).

But like the society it represents, epic poetry becomes exhausted and expires (154).

“Another era is about to begin for the world and for poetry. A spiritual religion, . . . This religion is complete because it is true; . . . it teaches man that he has two lives to live, one transitory, the other immortal; one on earth, the other in heaven. It shows him his duality, like his destiny, that he possesses an animal nature and an intelligence, a body and a soul” (156).

This third phase is the modern and is referred to by Hugo as the drame. “Primitive periods are lyrical, ancient times are epic, modern times are dramatic. The ode sings of eternity, the epic solemnizes history, the drame paints life” (164).

Les Misérables is a wonderful example of this third phase, the drame, which begins to define the Romantic’s work. Valjean’s discovery and recognition of his soul and immortal life color every decision he makes throughout the play and it is his journey that drives the plot forward. Like Valjean, the hope of immortal life, a better life than that on this earth, drives many of the characters in Les Misérables. It is this interest in man’s spiritual awakening which leads the Romantics to “emphasize character over the classical importance of plot” (Daniels
In emphasizing character, Romantics were interested in the oppositional forces of man's being; the good and the evil. Hugo believed "'everything that exists in nature exists in art.' This is a radical break with the past and with the classical concept of ideal beauty" (21). The classicist eliminated everything in art that did not conform to a certain conception of beauty. However Hugo believed that within nature resides a "harmony of opposites . . . the sublime and the grotesque" (21). In his preface to Cromwell he writes, "Christianity leads poetry to truth. Like it, the modern muse will view things from a higher and broader vantage point. She will see that everything in creation is not humanly beautiful, that the ugly exists beside the beautiful, deformity beside gracefulness, the grotesque on the reverse side of the sublime, evil with good, light with shadow" (Hugo 158). The drame incorporates these opposites and all the opposing qualities found in life. Thus, it is "both full of depth and rich in surface, philosophical and picturesque" (Daniels 21).

The storyline of Les Misérables is dependent not only upon the development of each character and his or her own struggle with oppositional forces within themselves but the dichotomy of societal tensions. Hugo paints a tangible picture of life in discord and each character is molded by that discord. The physical beauty of Fantine lives alongside the bawdy grotesque nature of the Thenardier. Cosette, innocent and graceful, floats along the seedy, dirty streets of Paris. Not only is the environment extreme, but each character's situation is determined by the good or evil deeds of another character. It is in the complexities of human nature where we find the heart of the story Les Misérables and the romantic hero, "split; the grotesque and the sublime are mixed in his soul and in his deeds; villainy and virtue, vice and
purity form an inseparable blend” (Vinaver 107).

A silent character which gains significant importance in the Romantic drama is the setting itself. “Scenery for the romantics becomes a necessary element in the production, an environment for the action, which conveys important information as well as contributing to the atmosphere of the scene” (Daniels 25). Hugo consistently weaves local color into the action, costumes and settings (Cooper 232). He places the story of Les Misérables during a time of great unrest in France. This time of revolution provides a physical backdrop of turmoil which reflects the inner struggle of man.

The setting becomes even more important in the musical edition of Les Misérables. It physically mirrors the emotional state of different characters. The factory represents the fact that true humanity has been removed from society replaced by an industrialized abstraction. Each person is merely a tool, a means to an end. The seediness of the docks mirrors Fantine’s emotional death as she gives up on life and her dreams. The barricades become a physical barrier between the common man and the people in power. It also becomes a fence keeping them away from a better life in this world. The sewers parallel Thenardier’s true character, representing the bowels of society. The bridge lifts Javert to a place so that his plunge into darkness is not only emotional but physical. The wedding represents new life, new beginnings and the bonding of mankind. These silent characters of setting are very important for the musical because of Romanticism’s absolute rejection of the unities of time and place, which became a hallmark of the Romantic Dramatist. Hugo argued that “more time is needed in the plays themselves to develop the richness and depth of characterization” (Daniels 25). Constant notes that by rejecting the unities of time and place a drama can unfold with “the truth of
gradation and the delicacy of nuance" (24-25). "Vigny predicts that 'in the future, the dramatic poet . . . will take in his broad hand a lengthy period of time and move whole lifetimes through it. He will create men, not types, but individuals’” (25). This is certainly true for the musical edition of Les Misérables which Boublil and Schönberg present individuals and follow their lives over a seventeen year period, traveling between fifteen different locations.

With this creation of individuals the Romantic Drama began to reflect more flexible and accessible language. Many dramatists began exploring the world of prose instead of verse. Basically, the Romantics were fighting for “freedom against the constraints of the neo-classical theory of art” (25). Hugo continued to work in verse however metrically freer. “Hugo believed that verse, provided it was freed from the constraints of lexical and metrical tradition, was fully compatible with modern tragic expression” (Cooper 227). Certainly the lyrics of Les Misérables are very accessible, reflecting the local color and status of each character.

Perhaps the Romantic Movement in France was born as a natural expression of the difficulties of the 19th Century, a voice for those caught in changing times. But of those voices, Hugo’s rings clear and true as the hero for French Romanticism, helping to usher in new perspectives in literature, art and ultimately stage.
Alain Boublil (Book, Lyrics and Original French Lyrics) and Claude-Michel Schönberg (Music and Book)

The information in this article was taken from an interview of Boublil and Schönberg on May 4, 2007. This interview was broadcasted on the American Theatre Wing, Downstage Center.

Boublil and Schönberg have been collaborating for almost 40 years. Boublil was first introduced to Schönberg when he was working for a music publishing company and heard one of Schönberg’s songs on the radio in the early 70’s. He was struck by the theatrical nature of the song and knew that he wanted to work with Schönberg. Through his business connections he was able to contact Schönberg and introduce himself. At the time Schönberg was writing pop songs and working for a radio station.

After seeing Jesus Christ Superstar in New York, Boublil was inspired to write a musical himself. At that time in France, there was not a musical theatre industry. When he saw Jesus Christ Superstar, the word ‘musical theatre’ made sense to him for the first time. He imagined the French Revolution and how it would fit this young rock and roll style of Superstar. He contacted Schönberg and they began to collaborate on La Revolution Française. Within six months they had twenty songs which became an overnight success. Taking advantage of their songs popularity, they transformed the now twenty-four songs which explained the story of the French Revolution into a show. La Revolution Française opened in 1973 and played to a sold out crowd for three months. It was through this collaboration that they realized their gift of storytelling and sense of being able to turn their songs into a proper dramatic evening.

Working together, Boublil and Schönberg wrote stories about ordinary people in
extraordinary times who become extraordinary in their own right. They write about simple universal themes, relatable to everyone. Even in their own experience, they work hard to put life first. In *La Revolution Française*, they wrote a love story and placed the simple people's story in the turmoil of the French Revolution. Being the first musical ever produced in France, *La Revolution Française* was in itself a revolution. Little did they know it was to become a very good draft for *Les Misérable*.

In 1978, they began to write *Les Misérables* for a French production. Their friends thought they were crazy to stop writing pop songs. They thought that this genre of music irrelevant. In 1980 *Les Misérables* premiered in France. In 1983 Cameron McIntosh heard the album at a friend’s house and wanted to produce it in London. He contacted the pair and in 1984 they began to work with Cameron to adapt it for the English stage. Cameron hired Herbert Kretzmer to help translate it into English and in 1985 it premiered at the Royal Shakespeare Company. This production was very different than the French version. Seventy percent of the songs were the same but the structure of the show was drastically different. Cameron's knowledge and expertise was invaluable in this process. However, the show received terrible reviews when it opened in London. Ironically, it is now the longest musical running in the west end of London and the third longest in the United States and has won multiple awards in both London and New York.

Through this collaboration Schönberg and Boublil found their home in the musical theatre world. It was a wonderful time in their lives and they both agree that no matter what the success of the production, it was an invaluable time of life both professionally and personally. Working in another language was a total discovery for them. Each day they were
collaborating with people that felt what they were doing was invaluable. They treasured this mutual respect and were overcome with the amount that they learned in the process. Even if it had failed what they had experienced was an extraordinary experience.

At the end of 1986, Cameron approached them with the concept of Miss Saigon. They quickly laid out the first act on a storyboard. Schönberg wrote the music and then Boublil wrote the lyrics. (This was typically how they work.) When they approached Cameron with the first act, he was amazed at how much of the structure was complete. They had learned the rules of writing and began to accept the idea that they were becoming playwrights. Before they were writing songs with theatrical quality but now they were becoming storytellers. Since then they have written Martin Guerre and Pirate Queen. Each time one of their shows is produced they take the opportunity to revisit, rethink and update it.
Herbert Kretsmer (Lyricist)

Kretsmer was born in South Africa. He moved to London in 1954 to pursue two careers; a newspaperman and a song writer. He worked for the Daily Sketch as a feature writer and the Sunday Dispatch as a profile writer. In 1960 he joined the Daily Express where he later became its drama critic for 18 years. Since 1979 he has been writing TV criticism for the Daily Mail. He has written the books and lyrics for *Our Man Crichton* and the lyrics for *The Four Musketeers* and *Can Heironymous Merkin Ever Forget Mercy Humppe And Find True Happiness?* In 1987, he won a Tony Award for Best Score for *Les Misérables* (Royston 17).
Students Learning Goals:

Due to the nature of being in a production the cast and crew of *Les Misérables* will gain many skills that it takes to perform in a musical. As a director, I hope that these gained skills will be transferable to future experiences in each of the participant's lives. The learning goals are as follows:

- Develops Skills and Techniques for performing –
  - Each student will learn vocal and breathing exercises to help with vocal production and breath support. They will be able to analyze and apply choices of vocal production, articulation and expression when creating a performance to suit the given circumstances.

- Analyzes a script to identify a character’s objectives, obstacles and tactics.
  - They will be directed to discover what their characters objectives are and find tactics to obtain their objective. They will be given active verbs to help support these tactics and obstacles. The ensemble will be guided through a visualization to help begin to relate to the poverty and oppression the time. They will have to identify something that is physically wrong with them and develop a background story for their characters. Many students are playing several different roles. They will be encouraged to identify the physical and emotional differences between the characters they are playing.

- Develop character through researching given circumstances
  - Each student will research and understand their given circumstances to help
them develop their character. They will analyze the given circumstances to discover the physical, emotional, and social dimensions of characters found in a variety of dramatic texts.

- Apply acting strategies to the development of a role for a performance –
  - Several acting strategies will be used when working with the students. They will be introduced to rasaboxes and Viewpoints, particularly movement on the grid. They will be taken through character walks and visualization. The main focus will be that of relationships, listening and responding. Helping the students respond from an honest place as they are developing their character and performing will be one of the main goals for me as a director.

- Students will learn and demonstrate an understanding of vocabulary relating to the theatre and performing.
  - Vocabulary will include but is not limited to: up stage, down stage, center stage, cross stage, proscenium, thrust, blocking, objectives, tactics

- Analyze how sound, lighting, set, properties, costumes, make-up and special effects are used safely in a production.

- Students will learn a sense of professionalism on and off stage
  - They will be expected to stay in character while on stage and to be engaged in the action of the play as well as maintain professional behavior backstage.

- Students will be engaged in critical discussions about the themes of the play
  - Montessori students will read be required to read the novel and will lead discussions in their English class as well as in their History class. Other students will participate in discussions at rehearsal.

- Students will begin to develop skills needed for ensemble work.
These skills will include but are not limited to building on other people’s ideas, listening and responding, building tableaus, developing scenes and pictures with each other, developing relationships.
Journal

Today is August 27th and I am playing catch up on my journaling. I have been journaling in my head for several weeks now but for some reason have been hesitant to put pen to paper. I guess it’s hard for me to be so vulnerable, especially if I have made some poor decisions but here it goes.

I returned from the summer quite overwhelmed with the task at hand. Not only was I directing the biggest musical of my life, I was also helping pack my oldest up to send to college. So basically I was saying goodbye to one baby and giving birth to another. Holy Cow! I also had to relocate my room at school. Whew!!! So one day at a time, one bite at a time I began to chip away at the several elephants I faced.

August 4 - I held a production meeting with my team, Debbie, Kris and Will and New Covenant’s team, Debbie Smith, Lori and Court. We went over the budget. After they recovered from the sticker shock we began to talk about ways to raise money. Debbie Smith is acting as the producer and she is all on board for spearheading the fundraising! Yah! She is going to try and get a $1000 sponsor for each night which will raise $8000. Ticket sales should bring in $9000 to $11,000 and with the sponsors, plus ad sells we should cover the cost. The budget is sitting at $18,200 at the moment. So on a wing and prayer we go forward. Lori is handling a lot of the flyers, posters, t-shirts and tickets and setting up a general website for both schools to access while selling tickets. We are all very excited! Nervous but excited.

August 5 - I met with Kelsey, the lighting designer. I really liked her a lot. We talked about my concept and bounced around different ideas regarding the night scenes. She asked about a cyc and I said that I felt we may be able to do this show without one. ECP doesn’t have
a load of space for one, although I have used one before. I told her the idea about bringing color in with the banners and she loved that idea. I wasn’t sure if we had enough instruments but she said that she felt she could borrow some special equipment from Clemson that would do it. She also gave me some names of some sound engineer friends at Clemson.

August 9 – Mandy, my music director, talked to me about the job and said that she really wanted to do it but was worried that she was stretching herself too thin. We looked at her schedule and she said she could be available most Tuesday afternoons and some Fridays and/or Sunday afternoons. She would also be able to conduct every performance. I agreed to this, knowing that I could help teach the music as well. I was just worried that if I totally lost her, I would be up shit-creek without a paddle. I also told her that I really needed her help to make decisions about the orchestra – if live – what instruments do we want – or do we want to go with OrchExtra. She said that she would help with that. We agreed on a price of $1,000 for her and $400 for each of the musicians, if we decided to go with live music.

August 14 - I gathered all the people who had expressed interest in being a part of the production before the summer began. Not everyone could come but it was a pretty big group. I did a lot of viewpoints and began to introduce rasaboxes. It was interesting. I think the group was a little big for what I wanted to do and we had a lot of younger middle school kids. At the end of this session, I was freaking out because I felt that the overall age was too young!!! I asked for the kids to start keeping a journal and to email me their thoughts. I asked for them to tell me why they thought the play was called Les Misérables.

I followed up this session with a call back on Monday. I feel good about my choice for Valjean and Javert but I’m worried about Marius. I really don’t have a strong Marius. I’m
thinking about Jordan for Enjolras. It is high for him but I think he can really strengthen his falsetto to make it work. Joseph, Matt and Logan are my candidates for Marius. JT could be a possible candidate but he is playing football and will have to miss a performance. I’m really not sure how strong a possibility he would be but I haven’t really given him another thought since he has to miss a performance. Joseph has a great look/presence for it but his voice is not strong. He was a beautiful boy soprano before his voice changed but he has not been singing a lot since. Matt has a clear tenor voice but has a lot of tension in his neck and is a bit stiff for Marius. I love his voice for the Bishop and I think he’ll bring great energy to the students. Logan has a buttery voice but he just can’t handle the top end notes. AGH! As far as acting goes, I think they’re all in the same boat. I’m hoping Mandy will have a good feel for what to do vocally. Today was the first time she has seen or heard any of the students. I talked with her over the summer about being the musical director and she agreed but she had not met any of the kids involved yet. She was pleased with what she heard and we pretty much came to an agreement on all of the main roles except Eponine and Mm. Thenardier. She felt like Joseph was the right choice for Marius and that he would become stronger. She also thought that Jordan could handle Enjolras.

I met with the ensemble on Tuesday to begin to teach the choral numbers and Mandy pulled the different candidates for Eponine and Mm. Thenardier to see if she could finalize the decision. I knew both girls very well that were up for Mm. Thenardier, one of which was my daughter, Callie. I know that Callie would be great in this role but I would probably go with Kelly, the other girl. Even though Kelly doesn’t audition well because she is not willing to put herself out there – she really comes through during the rehearsal process and performance.
Anyway, once Mandy worked with the different girls, she agreed on Kelly for Mme. Thenardier and she decided on Meg Spearman for Eponine. I was really torn about Eponine and didn’t have a gut feeling about which way to go. I was hesitant about Meg because she was younger than what I wanted for this role and didn’t know if she could get even close to the depth of what was needed. Mandy felt that she could do it. She felt like she would be stronger than the other girls when the different leads sang together at the end of Act I. Having the leads decided, I sat down and cast all of the other parts. Holy Cow! This was the hardest thing I had ever cast....woman 1, woman 2, convict 3..etc...there are so many bit parts. I must have done 3 different types of charts to try and figure out the casting and where different people were when...etc.... Finally, I got it together, although it is still evolving because I have a revolving door happening on my boys. Several boys had committed and then dropped. We have some new guys at MSA that have joined. I have 2 guys committed but they can’t be at one of the performances. Never in my life have I done that before but I really need that testosterone on stage. Ahyayaya.....The guys are playing a ton of roles. I just hope it doesn’t get so confusing for the audience!!!! I asked for the kids to email me their thoughts on the following, “To love another person is to see the face of God”. We also talked about the 1st line of the poor and then the last line of the people – “What do you think has happened? “ It was a pretty interesting conversation.

I then had to take a 2 day break to take my daughter to college. What an awesome experience. Her roommate is a perfect match and the school is a perfect match! Will and I felt so comfortable leaving her there. I spent all Saturday working on the schedule...Hello...another blooming nightmare! A ton of different groups of characters, 55 kids from 6 different schools
plus homeschoolers and a part-time musical director, and possibly 2 different locations – MSA and Central Pres (where Mandy works)! What 'da world! Anyway, I took a stab at it.

August 21 – I met with just the high school boys! Yah! I love these guys! We worked on the chain gang and the ABC café. Oh...I feel much better....I followed this rehearsal with a meeting with the parents. We had a sign up list for volunteer opportunities and I handed out the tentative schedule. We also talked about sponsorships and raising money for the production. We decided to charge a $25 production fee per kid and they would get a t-shirt or $35 and they would get a dvd and t-shirt. I told them that I was not allowed to sell the dvd but they suggested to charge a production fee in the beginning and that would cover the dvd. So I thought that was a good idea. I did pay for the video licensing right. I had never seen that so I was surprised that they MTI offered that. Debbie Smith left the meeting feeling like she probably had 6 leads on $1000 sponsors. It was a very upbeat meeting and everyone is so excited. (Meanwhile, my stomach is in knots – I think I’m going to have this feeling until November 1) I asked Lori if she would help me put the rehearsal schedule in an understandable format. After the meeting we worked together until midnight getting it all sorted out!

August 22 – Met with Valjean – we began to discuss his character and I asked him to see how his character changes from the beginning to the end. We had a great conversation about Valjean but I was a little disappointed when I discovered that Alex didn’t know the full story. I had spoken to him about this role at the beginning of the summer. I was shocked that he had not done his homework over the summer. My MSA chorus members had done work over the summer. I didn’t say anything to him because I didn’t want to freak him out but I was a little
pissed. We also went through some of his beginning numbers and I gave him some verbs to think about. He spoke them. We talked about diction. He is really going to have to work on that.

I then worked with Javert. We talked a lot about Javert and his duty to God. Johnny had really thought a lot about Javert. He had just watched a version of Les Miserables and Javert was played really evil. We both agreed that this was not the direction we wanted to go. I asked him questions such as, “Does he know who 2-4-6-0-1 is before he calls him up” — How does he feel when Valjean claims his name? When he says, ‘you will .....if you don’t learn the meaning of the law” Is he warning him to learn the meaning of the law or is he saying you’re never going to learn the meaning of the law – you will always be a criminal. We had a good discussion and worked on some of his music. Johnny talked about feeling Bibhasta when he enters the docks.

Later that afternoon I worked with Marius/Cosette and Eponine – We basically learned notes and began to talk about character. I shared some of the story from Hugo’s novel and spoke to Cosette about her living in a closed shell and once she meets Marius it is opened for the first time. She is feeling things that she has never felt before. We talked about Marius struggling with his relationship with his father and grandfather and never really feeling fully committed to anything until he falls in love with Cosette. We talked about Eponine and her relationship with her parents. I ended the session with them playing keep away, putting Eponine in the middle. Mandy and I touched base and agreed that we would both research OrchExtra and try and make a decision about whether or not to go w/a track or live. Marc had also told me about a group in Utah that makes tracks. We talked about some of the pros and cons. I just really like the idea of a live orchestra but am not sure about the instruments we need, etc... MTI said that you could do it with 3 keyboards, a bass and a drum. They also told
me about a program called RealTimes Solution that changes the keyboard sounds to sound like that show. Some of the cons with a track is I have no idea what I’m going to need for my transitions. Also, I may want to add a section or two from the full length play and this would not be possible if I go with a track. Mandy and I agreed that we would both try and find out as much as we could about the track record of OrchExtra.

August 23 – Worked with Thenardier – we talked a lot about his core and what was underneath his mask. We talked about all of the masks of Thenardier. I asked Ben to track his lines throughout and see if Thenardier changes and if so where. I also asked for him to start thinking of the masks and decide on the many different faces Thenardier wears and does the audience ever see the real Thenardier. If so, when? I talked to him about Thenardier always having that evil, darkness running beneath everything – we talked about what rasa that might be – was it bibhasta or raudra?

Later that afternoon, Mandy worked with the Chorus at Central Presbyterian. This went well, although I’m worried that we may have really lost some time getting everyone over there. However, it was nice hearing the group in a room with better acoustics. The group really fills up her space, physically and vocally. This is nice for them as they are finding their sound together. It was also nice to be able and let someone else teach for a while. I’m afraid the time was just short though. By the time people really got settled it was 4:15 to 4:20 and she had to have them out of there by 5:50 because she was rehearsing the church bells. Hmmm..if we meet at MSA kids can get there closer to 3:45/4:00 and we can keep working after she leaves. My space is not as nice acoustically. It’s a big round space and totally dead! Decisions, Decisions
August 24 - I began to teach Gavroche his songs! And then I worked with Enjolras. I wanted to have some alone time with Enjolras because I’m really worried that I have cast him out of his vocal range. Jordan was with me through 9th grade and then went on to Hanna. He is a wonderful person and absolutely delightful to watch on stage. He was my Charlie Brown and one of my princes in *Into the Woods*. He is probably not a typical Enjolras because he is not gorgeous but he is quite charming. He has a strong voice but it is nasally and he has to flip into his falsetto on the f and g. He is really good at manipulating his voice; I just need to help him learn how to support. He seems to speak from his throat and do kind of a vocal fry so we talked about that and the placement of his speaking voice as well as his singing voice. I really love him and he is so willing to do anything. I told him I really wanted to keep his voice safe and that he needed to work hard on getting that support and placement. I’m going to try and come up with exercises to give him along the way. I keep hearing Terri’s warning about Enjolras in my head so I hope that I haven’t stepped in one of the pitfalls she warned me about. “Doing *Les Mis* without strong, strong tenors”. Agh! And should I transpose this stuff!!!! Yiks a rooby! I keep asking Mandy how she feels about us transposing some of the numbers but she doesn’t really seem to want to make a call on that. I’m not comfortable making that call by myself. Agh!

August 25 – I had a great session with the students. We worked through their music and it was a lot of fun. I had another guy join us who has a very strong tenor voice. He is not available for all of our rehearsals but I think he will really help fill out the chorus. Unfortunately he will not be able to be at one of the Sunday performances due to a concert. He is a very accomplished violinist. I have two guys that are actually going to miss a performance. Holy Cow! I have never done that before but I really need males so that’s what I’m doing. I know, I know, I
crazy!!! But we already know that! HA! The biggest thing about actually allowing someone miss a performance is that I don’t want it to send a message that the show is not important!!! This has to be a priority to the students. My students get that but I’m hoping this is not sending a wrong message to those who have not worked with me before!

August 26 – Mandy had a last minute conflict and was unable to come to make rehearsal but fortunately, one of the mothers of a cast member connected me with another vocal coach in Seneca. She came and worked with Eponine, Fantine and Marius while I worked with the Chorus, Valjean, Javert and the Thenardiers. I really liked her a lot so I’m trying to see if she will be available to work with individuals and small groups. I spoke with her about the placement of the voice and bringing the head voice down and she was totally on board with that. I asked her to really help me and the kids with support and any exercises she could send my way, I would really appreciate. She had Marius push against the wall to help connect his stomach muscles and something just clicked for him. So we’ll see. Eponine is struggling with the harmony – This may be a big problem. She also doesn’t read music which floored me when I first worked with her. Don’t ask me how I went through auditions with her and did not make this discovery. Big lesson!!!! I hate auditioning. No matter how thorough I am….it is never thorough enough. Anyway, Lori, this vocal coach, is a personal friend of Eponine’s family so she is pretty invested in helping Meg (Eponine) get there. Meg is younger than what I really wanted so she is not as mature as the others and her self-confidence is lacking. I have very little patience with people pulling a ‘shy’ card or a ‘I’m sorry card’ when learning a role, especially when it is a role that they have fought very hard for. So I basically said to Meg that the rubber meets the road here and she can so do this and she needs to believe it and own it and NO
EXCUSES! She was apologizing to much for my taste and I told her we were all learning and growing but if she spent all her time being self-conscious about her work and choices in the rehearsal process it was going to make this time a lot harder. She seemed to respond to my talk so we’ll see. I’m so happy to find Lori. This summer I had many of the kids work with a vocal coach at Anderson University. She helped them a lot but she believes in bringing the chest voice up and she also has studied a belt technique extensively. I really do not want the students to belt because I do not think that they have the technique to support that. Deedy, the teacher that worked with them this summer, is absolutely slammed and can’t work with them now that school as started. So having Lori really works out better.

August 27 – Saturday – my day of rest and trying to get my act together. I sat down with Will, my husband, to get the finalization on the set done so that he can map out how he is going to build it. We’re really not there yet. I came up with a rough design over the summer but we’re trying to tweak it. I’m getting a little nervous because he seems to be preoccupied with his job! HA! Imagine...not realizing there is no other thing more important than Les Mis! I also, laid out some of the blocking for tomorrow.

August 28 – Blocked Scene 1, 2, & 4. Very roughly blocked it – just a skeleton. I’m not real clear on how I want to present the poor – I’m still mulling that around. I know that I want to show a sick and desperate picture but I’m just not sure how to stage it. We tried different things. I taught them Terri’s formula for ‘picturization’ – no two levels the same – no two people on the same plane and no two same distances between people. Some of them caught on but I still have a lot not quite getting it. I am really liking my leads...it’s just the general public that have me a little concerned. I’m beginning to regret the “everybody on board for Les Mis
attitude.” Anyway, I’ll whip them in shape! If not……we’ll see. I also gave them lots of questions to answer about their character while waiting on being blocked.

- How long has it been since you have eaten?
- Do you have a family? Spouse? Children?
- Find something that is physically wrong with you? Toothache, stomach ulcer, lice etc.
- If you are a part of the poor, how do you make money to stay alive?
- Where did you sleep last night? What kind of surface did you sleep on bed, floor, ground, etc.? 
- If you’re a prostitute, how long have you been a prostitute? Have you ever been pregnant? If so, did you have the baby? Did he/she live? If so, where is he/she now?
- Factory workers...what is your job? How long have you worked there? Do you have any friends at the factory? Do you have any enemies at the factory? How long are your shifts? What will you do when you get off work?
- Sailors – How long has it been since you have been on land? What kind of jobs do you do on the boat? What do you do when you are at port? How long do you have before you set sail again? What is your relationship with the other sailors?

And I asked them to ponder Hugo’s quote, “

August 29 – Boys dropping out right and left. Our little Chinese exchange student has decided he is too busy to be in the play. Also, the two fellows that joined us late now realize that they have major conflicts and need to drop. On a lighter note, I had a great rehearsal with Valjean. We talked through his first few scenes and when we were working on the scene where he is reacting to the Bishop’s gift, I asked Alex to try it in each of the rasas. So he went through
it – speaking it with each of the rasa’s in mind. It was really cool. Each time there were new
discoveries. I asked him if he had any discoveries and he said that Raudra didn’t work as well as
he thought it would. And I said, “YES! Which one did you connect with?” He said Byhanaka – I
said absolutely – I do think Valjean is scared to death of the dark side he possesses and the dark
person he is capable of being. The other one he connected with was Bybatsa. He was right on
as far as I was concerned. It was cool. Later I worked with Javert and we talked through several
scenes and began exploring at what point does Javert really know who Valjean is. This
afternoon I blocked Scene 5 and some of 6. I also worked Scene 2 and quickly revisited Scene 1
and 4. It was a good rehearsal. I choreographed the fight scene between Fantine and Girl 5 and
we ran it in slow motion a good bit as well. I really love working with the smaller groups of kids
and individuals. One thing that is pretty hysterical, I have a group of middle schoolers who are
the laborers and the farmer and my Valjean looks like the Jolly Green Giant among the workers.
Oh my what a bone-head I am.....I have to see if that’s really going to bother me and if I need to
throw a few big people in there. The things that make you go hmmm. I’ll probably throw
some taller people in there. Oh I have so much to do...mail my money for the guns, see if I can
find a few more guns, line up an audio person, meet with my lighting designer, the list goes on
and on. I settled the schedule for Lori, the vocal coach today. She is going to work with Eponine,
Fantine and Valjean at her home in Seneca and then come to Anderson once a week and work
with the other kids. I’m determined to keep these kids vocally safe. I’m not doing such a hot job
with myself. I am so hoarse! Kris is really doing a great job with the costumes. She is working
hard researching, gathering, lining up sewers and figuring out what she wants to rent! My
husband, Will, is swamped with school so the set pieces are moving a little slower. Hopefully,
we can get rolling on that soon. Debbie and Kris and I are brainstorming about the cart. I got to get Will in on that conversation. Agh! So much to do. Mandy is working with a small group tomorrow and I am going to block the Innkeeper scene. Yiks!

August 30 – Worked with Mme Thenardier and Thenardier. We sang through the Innkeeper song and roughed out blocking. Met again later in the afternoon with the chorus and worked them into the blocking. It went well. I may be moving Thenardier too much so we’ll see. We’re trying to come up with fun ways to move him in the wheelchair. I know that Terri warned me about walking backwards on stage….but what about rolling backwards? HA! Anyway, I think that number will come together. I want a table far downstage so I have to make sure it doesn’t mess up the sightline for Thenardier for when he goes upstage – since he is low to the ground. This is a fun number.

August 31 – Worked with Eponine – we mapped out On My Own – I asked her to map out Eponine’s dialogue throughout the play and find out how and where she changes. We concluded that Eponine really grows up in On My Own – She goes from dreaming about how life could be to knowing that life will never be different for her. We talked about Eponine always being alone in a crowd and about her coming from chaos. That the only time she has peace and time to escape is late at night, when she’s alone. My Eponine is young so it will take a while to get some of these deeper concepts. But I think she is going to work out. I then worked with Cosette, Marius, Gavroche, Eponine, Valjean and Javert. We blocked a couple of scenes and began to map out the fight between Javert and Valjean. I need to figure out how to do a breakaway chair for the conflict between Valjean and Javert...Things that make you go hmmm..... Kris went to Clemson Little Theatre and borrowed a bunch of costumes. She is
really rocking and rolling. I am so excited. Rynde is acting as a Stage Manager and I’m so excited. She typed up the prop list today and is going to add things to the list as they come up when we’re blocking. Oh my goodness it is so great to have someone do this. I have never had this. She sits during rehearsals and takes notes. Yah!!! A long time ago, I use to always map out my blocking before rehearsal and that is how I would prefer it. But since I have been directing in a school situation, many times I have to block during rehearsal because I just don’t have time while teaching to get it all done before hand. Anyway, sometimes when I block during rehearsal I don’t write it down so it is amazing to have someone do it for me. I had another boy show up today. He use to come to Montessori and we have a new high school student joining us tomorrow at school so maybe he will be interested in jumping in. No I do not usually allow people to join so late in the process but I need the guys.

September 1st – Blocked scene 9, 10 & 11. Agh!!! What to do with the poor. How do we create a city filled with sickness and poverty? The blocking is rough but at least it is a beginning. Spoke with Mandy and we are going to go with a live orchestra. Both of us are skeptical of OrchExtra. We found different cites that talked about the program going down in the middle of the show, etc...and that scared us. We both like the idea of a live orchestra. I asked Mandy to really consider what instruments she would like to go with and do we in fact want to transpose some of the music. She seems very skeptical about transposing and would like to stay away from it if at all possible.

September 2nd through 4th – Labor Day Weekend. Okay, I really do not feel like I can afford to NOT rehearse this weekend, but I had promised my mother in law a long time ago that I would keep my schedule clear for a family weekend in the mountains. OH crap! Hopefully, it
will be a nice break and we will all come back refreshed. But I’m really worried. At least I will have some down time to rest my voice and live with the script and work out some blocking as well as get my binder ready to send to Elise. She wants it by the first of October. So I definitely have a lot to do besides rehearse. Hopefully I can slip away from family to do a little on my long list! 😊

September 7th, Holy Crap, it’s September. I have so much to do. I’m trying hard not to panic. I’ve missed a couple of days of journaling. Lori worked with some of the leads Friday evening. It felt good to just sit and listen while someone else worked with the kids. But it really made me panic! There is so much to do and oh how I wish I had a full time music person! She does such a good job helping the kids with their voice and connecting to the song. I wish she could be around to help all of the kids all of the time. Oh well...I’ll take what I can get. We had a long weekend and it was a nice break, although I had a hard time relaxing. I really did not feel like I could afford to NOT rehearse this past weekend, but I had promised my mother in law a long time ago that I would keep my schedule clear Labor Day for a family weekend in the mountains. OH crap! At least I had some down time to rest my voice and live with the script and work out some blocking as well as get my binder ready to send to Elise. She wants it by the first of October. So I definitely had a lot to do besides rehearse. I had rehearsal Tuesday with the chorus and students – we worked some musical numbers and then worked on the Innkeeper’s scene and the docks. I need to come up with a move that doesn’t look to ‘dancey’ for the sailors to move across stage. I’m just brain dead right now. I really do not enjoy the big choral rehearsals right now. Partly because I don’t have my set yet so it is hard to visualize the pictures without the levels and secondly because I myself don’t have a clear picture. I hate going into
rehearsal without a clear picture. I know, I know...a recipe for disaster!

September 8 - Will and I sat down last night and reworked the set pieces. We played in sketch-up and I think came up with a cool solution. He’s building me a little model right now so that I can have something to manipulate. We have come up with two sets of platforms that have 3 levels and rotate. Similar to my original design except both units are exactly the same. This will give me a little more room on the levels. My original design had a one smaller than the other. I have to get a ground plan of each scene for my lighting designer and having a model is going to help so much!!!! Yah! I had a long talk with Kelsey, my lighting designer, tonight. She’s a student at Clemson. Her professors are being so cool about this project and helping her a lot! We’re going to meet Monday evening at the theatre so that she can get some more measurements. She has a question about hanging the revolutions, since they are so heavy. I’m looking forward to meeting with her. I want to have all of the ground plans ready to give her by Monday. I rehearsed with the students today. I love my boys but I am worried about this being too high. AGH! I need someone to talk to about this. Mandy is finally back in town and will be at rehearsal on Friday so hopefully we can talk about it. We worked on the ABC Café – It was a good rehearsal. I dropped the instrumental scores off to her tonight so that she could begin to make a call on whether we’ll need 2 or 3 keyboards. I’m praying that she will begin to jump on board a little more aggressively now. Rynde checked into firearms today. I’ve already rented some non-firing ones but wanted to check out firing ones. Too expensive....I’m going to check out the sound effects cd from MTI and use smoke etc....I do not trust having firing guns in this small space with kids around....Now I’m just trying to decide about a starting pistol for the sound effect for Gavroche getting shot. OK I am so slaughtering these names. Really, I need an
expert to follow me around. Tomorrow is another group rehearsal; I better stop writing and start figuring out what the bleep I’m going to do.

September 10 – Oh my gosh where is the time going! Had my first rehearsal with the musical director playing the piano yesterday! Holy Cow – so much easier!!!! I do not like the Rehearsal score that we’ve been using. Now I have it set up that Mandy will be there on Tuesdays and Sundays and Lori will be there on Fridays. So that just leaves Mondays and Thursdays without a rehearsal pianist and I think that is much more doable. I know that this is not ideal. It would be better to have a rehearsal pianist so that the musical director and vocal coach have the total attention on the singers. Unfortunately I don’t have anyone else available to play during rehearsal. When I decided to do Les Mis, Lori Ramey from New Covenant said that she could be the rehearsal pianist some of the time. Well she really got bogged down with her school work and the poster design, etc... so I had ordered the rehearsal score to use when she was not able to be there. Unfortunately, we have been using it pretty much the whole time. The New Covenant teachers have not darkened the doors of rehearsal yet.

I am so worried about my Marius. I think I’ve cast him above his vocal capabilities now. Oh my goodness. I’ve got to sit down and come up with a plan B quick. I want to look at some of the songs and think about transposing them and I am going to have all the students be very familiar with Marius and Enjolras. I really don’t know what to do about transposing. It is expensive from MTI and I’m not sure what to order, since I haven’t really gotten a call from Mandy as to the instruments that we’re going to have. I know that sounds crazy but ahhhhhh...I’m really nervous. I have Matt definitely understudying Marius but I don’t know. This is really hard and I have absolutely fallen into the trap that Terri told me about. Do not do
this show unless you have a bunch of strong tenors. So what do I do??????? I do this show without a bunch of strong tenors! Unfortunately, it’s like being pregnant...once you’re there you’re a little stuck and I don’t think aborting is an option at this point. And aborting at the beginning of the year was not an option as well. We’re having this baby and it might not be pretty when it’s born but it is going to be born. I am praying a lot these days! I’m going to try and get my Marius and Enjolras some more working time with the vocal coach. She lives 45 minutes away, which makes it a bit hard but hopefully we can work something out.

On a brighter note, Kris is cooking on the costumes. I’ve found another keyboardist for the orchestra and Will is committed to getting my two rotating units done by September 24th. Yah! I’m hoping to have a big working rehearsal that Saturday and really want to work on the platforms. My voice is really struggling through this whole process. I need to take my own advice and speak up in my head and drink lots of water.

Okay...it’s been a week since I have written in the journal. So much happens so quickly. We’ve been cracking through Act II. I’ve made a decision to add 2 sections back in from the musical. One is the confrontation between Javert and Valjean at Fantine’s death bed. It was really cut short and I just love the dramatic climax that it offers between Javert and Valjean. The other is in Act II and it is when Thenardier is in the sewers and he says that, “God is dead” and “When I look at the sky all I see is the moon”. We will work on Act II this week and then run it on Friday with Lori at the piano. I love her! She has been such a Godsend! I am figuring that I am going to need at least 16 mics for this show! YIKS! I really need to trade them around so that even the one-liners have mics. I still haven’t found a sound guy. This is really worrying me. The kids are coming right along. I worked with Marius today on Empty Chairs – I told Joseph that he
needed to figure out why Marius was singing this song. How did Marius change from the beginning to the end? We talked through it some and then worked through it and then it finally dawned on me when he was singing, “oh my friends forgive me” – that Marius was asking for forgiveness...not only for surviving but for not being with them when he was alive. He was in the room with them when they were planning for the revolution but he really wasn’t present. He was too busy floating around in love with Cosette. It was a cool discovery but it was really painful for me to direct because I just kept thinking of my own remorse over my brother who died unexpectedly 10 months ago. We’re still looking for a drummer and a bass player! I have to find a wig for Fantine. Will Ragland put me on to a wig shop in Greenville so I’m going to run up there this week. There is so much to do! My Will is working on the 2 rotating units and will probably have them done within the next few days. Bobby Shuler, a parent who has a metal business, is going to build the bridge. Will met with him today and he felt like it would be easy. It’s so nice to have architects and engineers on my team!!! I still need some tables and benches built and am still trying to figure out the cart. Bobby is also looking for a gate and going to come up with some type of grid to put on the platforms to build the barricade with. We are a month away....YIKSSSSSSSSSS!!! I ebb and flow between excitement and a nervous breakdown!

Tomorrow I am going to get some answers on the sound situation. This is making me super nervous. Debbie Culwell is working on the props and we’re trying to get a list of things that we need out to the school communities. Lori Ramey, from New Covenant, is really frustrated that her principle is not giving them or their students a break as far as lightening the academic load during Les Mis. She’s really frustrated that New Covenant is not holding up their end of the bargain to this production. I’m not sure what is going on over there but I’m too knee deep in
directing to really worry about their politics. I did tell her that I would talk to Joey and try and drum up some support from their families, etc... I did tell Lori that I was concerned about he sponsorships and ads, etc... I had not heard anything about them since the meeting with the parents and wondered if they had received anything. I emailed Debbie Smith from New Covenant to follow-up, since this was her piece of the puzzle. She emailed me and said that she was on it and not to worry. Ummm...I’m still worried but have to trust. Meanwhile, I have to finish up section two and get it in the mail. I so appreciate the extension that I was given due to my short time frame and due to the fact that Elise is at a writing conference in September but I can totally kick myself for not finishing it this summer. Anyway, it will get done. I just have to work every day for the next 2 weeks so that I can get it in the mail so that Elise has it the first part of October. Agh! So much! I have an 8th grader making a dry ice machine. He should be bringing it in this week, can’t wait to see it. One thing that I had totally intended to do that I have not done and that is start each week with quotes from the play and Hugo to discuss. I need to try and pick that up. Maybe, I’ll try a food for thought email so that I’m not taking up loads of rehearsal time.

September 11th - I’m really struggling with the crowd numbers. I finally decided for the opening scene that I really want to establish life of the people. Want them to have specific menial jobs and chores that they are doing for the song, “At the End of the Day”. We have the factory workers and I know that I want some type of spinning something for them to do to represent the making of something but also the monotony of the work. I want the others to have menial tasks as well. Actions to be doing, not just standing there singing. I brainstorm with Debbie and the students on what they can do, reminding them of their previous work with who
they are etc.... and trying to tap in on some of their answers. Do we mime the actions? Do we add props to help? I decide to add simple props to help relay this to the audience so that the poor have actual props as well as the factory workers. Debbie begins to make a list of props to collect. We have a lot of things in stock but will need to fill in with other things. This helps dictate the blocking but it is so hard to see without the levels.

September 12th – what a busy day! Mandy worked with Cosette this am and I worked with Javert and then worked on the music and blocked scenes 19, 20, 21. The blocking of this is very rough because without the platforms and the barricades it is difficult to map out so we just began the process. I then rushed over to the theatre to meet Kelsey, the lighting designer. She wants to look at the space again. She wants to make sure there is proper structure to hang the moving lights. I also gave her the ground plan and movement of the platforms for each scene. We talked through some different things and I really can’t wait to see what she comes up with. She is going to be working a huge show at Clemson right before Les Mis so she is a bit under the gun but her professors are being really supportive and understanding! One of them met us at the theatre to help her assess the situation. I asked him advice about the sound and if he had any students that could do it. He said that he would put some feelers out. Kelsey also has a friend that might be able to run sound. So hopefully something will pan out!

September 13th – Worked with Thenardier on the sewers. We talked about this being the one place where he is alone and all of his masks are off. Ben is struggling with wanting to have an explanation for why Thenardier has made the choices he has made. Is it possible for him to just be that dark without any real redeemable qualities? Ben wants Thenardier to curse God because he is angry and mad. I am suggesting that Thenardier is really putting himself
above all the idiots in the world who even believe in a God. Everyone is starving and miserable! Where is God?!? There is no God. It’s a dog eat dog world and only the dog who plays the game right will win. It has nothing to do with God. Or does it? Lots of fun conversations. I really enjoy working one on one and having time to explore. Ben is really coming along. This is going to be such a great role for him. This afternoon I worked with Fantine while Mandy worked with everyone else on the Act II’s music. I really like Bethany. She is so very solid. We work on Dreamed a Dream, looking at what point in the song does she die. Once she is dead inside it is a quick spiral down to her physical death.

        September 16th - Lori worked with the principles and I worked with a larger group on Act II. We’re plugging along.

        September 17th – Ran up to Greenville to look at wigs. She didn’t have anything that I liked in stock. Everything was a little too platinum blond. She said that she really wanted to add some blonde wigs to her stock so she would order some and I could choose which one I liked. We talked length and style. She said she should have some in within the week. So I agreed to come back next weekend to pick one up.

        September 19th, found a 3rd pianist! YAH!!!! Hallelujah! Had a great rehearsal yesterday and then today with Javert and then later with the students, Valjean, Javert, Eponine, Gavroche and Revolutionaries. It went well, although it’s hard to really set the blocking and movement until we have the levels. I love working with the guys, they’re such a hoot. I hope to meet with Draisen-Edwards to see how they can help me with sound. I talked to the Clemson professor about his students and he hasn’t gotten any responses. I asked him to give them a little nudge. Hopefully something will pull through within the next few days. Sound is really my number one
concern right now. If the orchestra can’t hear them and if the audience can’t hear them then there is really no point!!!! And the orchestra will not be able to hear them without amplification. That’s the sad truth. Mandy and I are going to look at the keyboard that the theatre has. Unfortunately it is incredibly heavy and Will and I are not sure how we’re going to get it up on the platform. I have asked Mandy to check out the real-time program to see if we want to buy the sounds that are *Les Mis* sounds. She is thinking we don’t need it but I have asked her to look into it because they have a free sample that you can download. I think she just hasn’t taken the time to look into it. That’s a little frustrating. Anyway, hopefully she’ll look into it so that she can make an educated decision. I may try and do it but I’m so technically challenged. That may be Mandy’s fear/issue as well. Will is almost finished with the 2 turning units. The casters came in and they look great!!! I’m tackling the Wedding Scene tomorrow....I’m not enjoying the big crowd scenes – hopefully that will change. I think I’m just not prepared enough for them. I’ve got to be more prepared for my rehearsals!!!

September 20 – Mandy said that she downloaded the Real Times Solutions and she thinks that it will be a good idea. She was skeptical at first but has changed her mind. The thing she likes about it is that you can play one instrument in the bass clef and then a different instrument in the treble clef. It seems to be pretty user friendly. I told her that my biggest concern is that it will sound ‘tinny’. She said that she didn’t think it would.

September 22 – Oh I am so worried about the sound situation, I could just throw-up! I have been searching all over for a top-notch sound engineer. Nothing has come through. I am trying to beg and borrow wireless mics and am also getting quotes from several vendors for renting as well as purchasing. If I end up purchasing I am going to try and hit up some parents
so that they will be Montessori’s equipment and not go through the Les Mis budget. Borrowing is iffy because people are very protective of their equipment, as they should be AND I’m nervous about piecing together equipment. I have to have high-end mics in order to run as many as I need at one time. Oh this is so technically over my head. I know that the sound will make or break this show and the kids have worked toooooooo hard for it to break it! Oh I need a sound person to drop from heaven!!!!!!! I will keep making phone calls! I think I may have a percussionist. Keeping my fingers crossed. I love directing this!!!! Holy Cow! I don’t enjoy the big group scenes but I am so enjoying working with the smaller groups! I didn’t think I would enjoy the park and bark songs but there is so much meat to this piece. I am really having a great time. Act II is smaller groups and that’s what I’ve been doing the last 2 weeks. We’ve revisited some of Act I but not the big numbers so much. I hope that everyone hasn’t forgotten Act I. Tomorrow we’re going through Act II and on Sunday we’re working through Act I and putting it on the platforms! Will is almost done with those! They look great! Lori is going to play at both rehearsals which is a HUGE help!!! I have to get a list together of very specific volunteer opportunities to put out to both school communities. So much to do!!! Tomorrow, I’m going to try and call New Springs, a local mega church, and ask about a sound engineer. Pray! Pray! Pray! Will’s folks are coming tomorrow and my house is a wreck and I really don’t want to clean. I don’t have time for real life right now! We’re in the middle of F & N theatre. Just use your imagination as to what that stands for. Hmmmm... I need to figure out how to age Valjean and how much to do. I think I’ll make a date with him. I was hoping Will Ragland would come over and help me but he’s too busy chopping up people in Greenville (Sweeney Todd). I may ask him again. Ha! Also, I have to find 3 computers to dedicate to the keyboards for the real sounds that
we’re going to download. I do hope that they are not hokey sounding. Agh!!! Really, why did I choose a big ass musical?????? So much to worry about, that’s why I make the Big Bucks! Lol

NOT!

September 25 – Ran up to Greenville yesterday and picked up the wig. She had a lot of choices but the one I went with was more of a reddish blonde – It said honey blonde but it has a lot of red in it. I had really wanted more of a blonde but this wig is really pretty. My Fantine has blonde hair that she wears in a bob and I’ve asked if she would be willing to have a short bob cut for the show. She said that she would. When Bethany saw the wig today, she absolutely loved it and said that she was going to dye her hair to match. She said she had wanted her hair that color for a long time. Cool!

October 1 – OK, I really wish that I had a way just to record everything that is going through my head. I journal in my head all the flippin’ time, 24/7. I mean if that could happen my journal would seriously be as long as Hugo’s novel. Ha! So much is happening...so fast.

Rehearsal is moving along. Still struggling with my group numbers. I’ve guided them through visualizations to help them find their place in the group and help them find ways to relate to each other. I told the kids Terri’s rules of making pictures and it’s so funny, I’ll look up and their hunching over trying to change the levels. Oh my! But they’re still lining up. I know I have to place them on the stage but I can’t really get the blocking totally final until I’m in the space. I did work on The People Sing and I think that blocking is going to work well. YAH! I took Valjean and Javert over to Will Ragland’s and we played with their makeup. That was cool. We played with some facial hair for Valjean. I’m not sure that I’m going to worry about it though. I don’t really want to put anything on his face that is going to bug him. He will have enough to worry
about. I also don’t want to use anything that is going to remotely look fake, especially in our small performance space. I worked with the Principles Thursday. They are so pumped, it’s crazy. I’m not sure that I’ve worked on a show where the kids actually felt the excitement this much before getting into the theatre. I think it’s because the music is just so powerful. One more week of rehearsals before we’re in the theatre. Everyone is pretty much off book. The blocking is fairly set – of course it will change some once we’re in the theatre. I have a student from Clemson doing the sound and am hoping that a local church is going to let me borrow 8 or 9 mics. We rehearsed Friday and then went to the homeschoolers football game and sang the National Anthem. We wore our t-shirts. They look great!!! The guns came in. I think they’re going to work. Bobby is working on the bridge but we’re having a hard time finding a gate. So I’m putting my feelers out for that. My drummer called today and has to back out. His wife is going to be out of town our opening week and he has to take care of his child. I told him that I would find him a babysitter. ☺ It has been really hard finding a drummer. Yiks! I’ve had some good private sessions with Fantine, Eponine and Thenardier this week. I need to find some private time with the other principles. Costumes are coming right along and we’ve been gathering props. Still working out the cart and the barricade. I think I have a good plan for the barricade we just need to figure out how to execute it. Ticket sales are going pretty well, we’re opening them up to the general public now so we’ll see. I have to come up with some more ways to get my chorus really engaged in what is going on. I’m hoping once we really start running it they will begin to bring more to the table but I know I need to help them as well. I think that Debbie Smith is struggling with the getting sponsors. I think the economy has everybody worried. We’ll see. I’m not rehearsing this weekend. I hope the 2 days will give
everyone the rest they need before we hit our final stretch!!!!!

2 days off was nice but I feel pretty behind. I can’t turn my mind off so I don’t ever feel fully rested. Worked with the boys Monday – It went pretty well, I gave them a big lecture about being leaders in the cast especially back stage. The talking during rehearsal is ridiculous and I’m really struggling hearing as we are working so we’ll see if they rise to the occasion! We worked with the guns tonight and it went fairly well. Oh lots to do. Alex is really struggling with Bring Him Home. I’m not sure why. He sounds fine, I think he just has a lot of preconceived ideas for that song and is putting a lot of pressure on himself. I need to find some alone time with him.

Tuesday, we worked on the Inn scenes and the wedding. I have no idea if they’re working. It may be too much movement....I don’t know.....I just can’t tell in this space so there will be a lot of tweaking once we hit the theatre. I am so-o-o-o ready to be in the theatre. Oh man! My room is a mess and I’m ready to move everything out and expand into a bigger space with better acoustics. We are really having a hard time finding a drummer. I’ve made several calls, our band person has put out lots of feelers and our musical director and vocal coach. Crazy!!!!!!!! I’m lining up people to help move stuff out of the theatre Monday morning. And then we’ll start moving stuff in. Oh man, this is going to be so much work....the world is going to hate me by the end....especially my husband. 😊 I’m going to hate me by the end! Ha! Just kidding! We’re obviously not afraid of work. Keyboards, keyboards, keyboards – I’m looking for 3 decent keyboards – The theatre has one – and I think I can use Chris Coles and Holt Ivey’s but I need to pick them up so that we have them for the run through on Sunday. So much to do...also have to find out about midi connectors.....Lori has printed posters and flyers so we
need to get those out and all of the yard signs are getting ready to be put out. I think Debbie is struggling with finding sponsors but hopefully that is coming along. I think she has 3 $1000 and 4 $250 so far. We need 4 more $1000 and we’ll be set. The t-shirts look great. People want us to sell them but Lori wants to save them for the cast so that they have something special....I don’t really care...I’m just trying to have an awesome product!!! I really want this to be a powerful production!

Wednesday off, Thursday worked with principles. I always like the days when I have principles. I’m having issues with the chorus. Lack of commitment from some, they just really have no idea how much work is involved with this. Friday we busted through the whole play. It went pretty well. Maren, one of the violinist, has been dropping by and playing with us some throughout rehearsal. Tonight she was there as well as Jenny, who is playing 2nd violin. Both are on staff. Jenny is the history teacher and Maren is our new strings teacher. Oh my goodness they really do not sound good. Maren has been ok here and there but adding Jenny and its bad. I don’t think she plays enough to be able to and handle this music. Unfortunately Mandy was not here to hear but Lori really agreed with me that they were rough. I told Jenny that unless she felt that she could really put the time in to practice, I didn’t think it would be a good idea for her to play. I also told Maren that Mandy may decide to not have a violin since it is just one, I kind of used Jenny as an excuse. Maren agreed that Jenny was really off but I’m not sure she realizes how off she is. She has really been practicing and I appreciate her help. Lori really agreed with me about the no violin thing. She said if the violins are not really good it is really bad. Well I called Mandy later and told her that I felt like we should just scrap the violins since I really didn’t think Jenny could do it and Maren was off just enough to make it bad. She totally
disagreed with me and said that she really needed Maren. This is so weird because Mandy has perfect pitch.

I really laid down the law about backstage behavior, etc.... this is a very social and talkative group. I’m afraid I’m going to have to be such a bitch! I’m actually going to talk to a few individuals who seem to be stirring it up behind the scenes and if that doesn’t work, I believe that I’m going to ask them to leave the show. There’s too much to do to have to deal with foolishness.

October 9 - Today we sang through it with the keyboards. YIKS! There are parts that are not in the keyboards. When I called MTI this summer and asked what was the minimum I needed to do the show, they said 3 keyboards, drums and a bass. Well guess what, the keyboards DO NOT cover all of the parts!!!! So we have to go back and fill in with the piano/conductors score. I’m a little frustrated that MTI doesn’t send a conductors score so that you can look at it and see what is covered and not. AND I’m frustrated because I had asked Mandy a long time ago to look through the parts and see what we needed. I know that it’s hard to do but anyway she had said that she thought it would be covered with 3 keyboards. But it is not. I’m also frustrated because I really think that the orchestra should have had a rehearsal before they met with us. Mandy is just so busy and doesn’t have much time so I really should have looked for musical director who could have dedicated more time. Anyway....It will be fine. Also, we did not have the real times solutions for this rehearsal. Mandy and I had talked earlier and decided that it would be best to have the keyboardist first with just the keyboards and then the next time with the solutions program. I’m not sure if this was a good idea but it is what it is. Mandy also had to leave before we made it through the show. We limped on without her but it
was really hard. We finally stopped because another player had a church commitment. I have not scheduled enough time for this to happen. I’m not sure how we got into a habit of having Sunday afternoon rehearsals instead of Saturday. I think it was because of all of the sporting conflicts. AGH!!! The keyboardists want to get together to work on their own and are trying to schedule that. The only time they have that they can all do it is Friday afternoon evening. Mandy is suppose to be with me in the theatre during that time but I told her it was more important for her to work with the keyboardist and also they needed to work with the real times solutions. I quickly get on the computer and order several more Conductors’ Scores so that each player will have one and will be able to fill in where they need to fill in. I’m not sure how that is going to work but it really needs to. Oh man...just lots of bumps to get over before we get there. We went to the theatre tonight to help Electric City break down their set. We began to move some things around and move our platforms in. We are getting up bright and early to clean the theatre up and work on the set. I’m not having rehearsal because I need time to be in the theatre and work on the set. I just hope we get a lot done tomorrow. Oh man.... Here we go! Labor! Just breathe!!!!

Monday, October 10th – We started early and basically it was a day about shifting shit. We moved Electric City’s stuff around reorganizing it – deciding what we would need to move out and what we could keep. We moved everything down from the platform backstage to make room for the orchestra. Originally I was going to build a platform for the orchestra in the far back corner of the space. This would put the orchestra directly behind the actors and we could use the space under the platform to store props and people. But there is already a platform back stage to the audience’s left. It is a good size and we decided that it would save us a whole
lot of money and time to use it for the orchestra. This set up is not ideal but the platform is a permanent fixture and it is very sturdy and sound and I’m really praying that the balance with the orchestra will be ok. This decision actually happened a few weeks ago, when Will and I were looking at the space again. I also ran it by Mandy when we came down to look at the keyboard and she thought it would be ok as well. We moved our platforms in and moved curtains. We worked all day and into the evening. Several students and parents helped. Tomorrow the movers are coming to move out Electric City’s stuff. Pat and her husband drove to North Carolina to pick up the cart. We had such a hard time finding a cart that would work and not look fake. Debby finally found a theatre company in NC about 3 ½ hours away. The rental is only $40 but we’re going to pay $200 in gas just getting it there and back!!!! There was a little concern about the cart actually fitting in the trailer but we all held our breath and it did fit. They got back this afternoon and the cart is HUGE!!!! It is perfect but HUGE!!!! We’re only going to use half of it because it is so big! Oh my goodness maneuvering this bad boy around and finding storage for it back stage is going to be interesting. We put the half that we’re not using back in the trailer and will leave it there for the run. What a hoot! This is hysterically insane!

Tuesday – the movers came and they were very inefficient. They had a huge moving truck but didn’t think through the packing of the truck, therefore didn’t get everything. Agh so frustrating! Debbie Smith (our producer) had arranged a free storage unit for the duration of the play which is awesome. I had called the storage unit to see if I could pay some of their movers to help. They said that it would be a minimum of $200. What I really wanted was just to pay them for their time and the use of a large truck to help transport stuff but I don’t think she understood because at the end of the move the mover looked to me for a tip. Really? I told him
I was thinking this money was going straight into their pocket but he said no. Needless to say I didn’t have any money for a tip and I was pretty ticked at the shoddy job they did anyway. I’m still left with a bunch of crap in the backstage area! We spent more of the day rearranging what was left making room back stage. Matt came with his horse trailer and we moved out the rest of flats. Now most of the stuff is out but a wall of doors and smaller flats and a grand piano!!! Really we have to work around this grand piano! Yee Haw! We moved over costumes and props and began to set up prop tables. Kids came at 4:00 and we began to adapt Act I to the stage. It was pretty rough. The first day in the theatre space is always tough. We assigned seats for the kids because they are so flippin’ social and we have a pretty touchy feely group. There’s one girl from New Covenant who can’t keep her hands off the boys so we have to monitor her constantly! There are a couple of kids I would like to kick out because they are just fooling around but they’re not Montessori kids and I don’t want to have a big political blow up. I did yank a knot in Lauren and told her that she could not touch any of the boys. She was making them uncomfortable and it was totally inappropriate. I told her that this was her warning and that she would be asked to leave the production if there was any more touching. Ah! Hormones! I’m so grateful for Rynde and Debbie who are helping with crowd control. Lori accompanied tonight. She was really late because she got lost. Mandy was there for a while and able to fill in until Lori got there. It was nice to have both of them there at the same time. We made it through Act I but barely. Oh me...this is going to be rough. The transitions of the platforms are really going to take a lot of work and time, which I totally knew. But the reality of it is now hitting. I really hate not having rehearsal tomorrow but hopefully we will get a lot done on the set. Why are we not having rehearsal tomorrow? I know it is Wednesday and there
is a lot of church stuff but really I should have rethought that! We’ve spent a lot of time today moving crap and trying to make the backstage workable.

Wednesday – we got a truck from one of the parents who owns a furniture company and moved out the rest of the doors and flats. Fortunately, we can leave them in the truck until Saturday, when more people can move them into ECP’s storage. Whew!!! Things are looking clearer. I haven’t heard from Bobby about the bridge. It was suppose to be here by now. I really need it by tomorrow so that we have it when we work Act II. Agh me. Bobby has also agreed to bring me some pipes for the lampposts which I want to add to the units. Will is trying to figure out how we attach them when we get them. He is coming up with some sort of sleeve design. I know he is ready to quit shifting shit so that he can get to the actual set issues. This has really taken up more time than I had imagined. Debby went to the dentist today to have a tooth filled and it totally cracked off so now she has to have a root canal. This is really putting her behind. She’ll have the root canal tomorrow morning so hopefully she’ll be back in the swing of things that afternoon but who knows. We’ve been brainstorming about the barricade all along but really sat down and problem solved with the actual platforms today. I really want to be able to work the movement of building it and transitioning it tomorrow night. Will is beginning to add brackets and pieces to the platforms to hook the barricade stuff onto. We want to use furniture from the play etc.... We also need a place for Gavroche and Enjolras to die. Debbie and Will got a base coat of paint on the platforms. Debbie is still trying to figure out how she is going to paint the platforms and the floor. We know that we want the floors cobblestone and the platforms stone but she is just mulling over the designs and colors of each. She really is a brilliant colorist. I ran to Greer to pick up all of the lighting and sound equipment that we are
renting. It is about 40 minutes away. Holy Cow!!! My car was full. 2 moving lights – they are HUGE!!!!! I hope they don’t over power this space. I don’t want the audience watching the lights the whole time. One sound board, a lighting board, 4 led units and about 20 other ellipsoids and fresnels. I called Eric (who works at the place we rented from and is familiar with ECP) and asked if he thought these moving lights were too big for the space. He thought they would disappear and not be too distracting to the audience. I did call Kelsey, just to let her know that I was a bit concerned about that. We filled the lobby with the equipment. Oh my goodness. This is crazy. I also picked up the mics from Boulevard Baptist. Man, this is so very nice of them! What an absolute life-saver they are being. Letting my borrow their mics! Ah! I owe them!!!

Thursday – oh where is the time going? We’re still waiting on the bridge....I’ve been trying to get Bobby. I hate to bug him too badly because he does have a job and he is donating his time, energy and materials to this. Finally, I get him and he said that he will have it to me that evening. OK...I need to not plan on having it for rehearsal. We work on the barricade. Kris has been bringing costumes over bit by bit and is organizing as she goes. She seems overwhelmed but is holding it together. This is just a deer in the headlights time. She has had moms along the way helping with sewing and gathering etc... but it is a boat load of work. I am so very grateful for my Will, Debbie and Kris team!!!! But we are all under the gun and this extra week in the theatre hasn’t been as productive as I was hoping. It’s just a lot to do in a short amount of time. We’re use to that so we all thought having an extra week would seem like such a luxury. I went through the movement of the platforms and taped off the floors to help with the placement of them. I’m really not sure how else to do this. I’m trying to adjust
their movement so that they don’t have so many different positions....Ah – what a mess. We adjusted Act II to the set and worked the blocking of the building of the barricade. It was slow and messy. This week is our Fall Break so I’m missing my Gavroche. They had a big family wedding in Texas that they had to go to. I’m also missing Frantisek and Meg, 2 of my chorus members and just found out that Erin is going to take off for the weekend. Really!!! I knew about everyone else well in advance but just heard through the grapevine that she was not going to be there. Agh!!! She is one of my drama students and actually wants to go to the Governor School for drama. I pulled her aside and talked to her about the importance of communicating to me etc.... Whatever!!!! I think she and her mom were just scared to tell me straight up. Bobby (who happens to be Erin’s father) finally showed up in the middle of rehearsal with the bridge. I really didn’t have time to stop and see it during rehearsal but he and Will played with it back stage. We worked through Act II and pulled it out for the suicide scene. We didn’t use it because it needs a platform added so that Javert can stand on it, etc...

Agh!!! Is this going to work? Is it over-kill? If it is over-kill, what do I do? It was a lot of work for me to just say, “Thanks for all of your hard work but we’re not going to use it”. I really love the idea of Javert falling, slowly to the ground, and the audience taking that slow plummet with him. Ayayayaya Bobby also brought some metal lamp post. He and Will talked about the metal bracket design and how to attach them. Bobby thought he could easily make those. The pipes are really heavy and I’m worried about how to store them backstage because if they fall they will make a HUGE noise. Will isn’t worried about their weight...but that’s because he is so strong. I’m wondering if we should use pvc pipe for the lampposts. Bobby said that he was going to take the battery back with him to charge it up and would return it as soon as it was
charged. The boys are so pumped about everything!!! The guns, the barricade, the bridge....the girls....oh my goodness...hormones!

Friday – Will worked on making the platform to fit the bridge as well as the railing for the bridge. It turns out Bobby is going out of town with his family and left the battery at his house. I talked to his wife and they were very apologetic. But shit!!!! Don’t they know we’ve got a show to mount? I’m sorry to be so ungrateful. This means that Bobby will not have the brackets for the lamppost until sometime next week. Why didn’t we figure this lamppost stuff out before hand? Honestly, I think Will is hoping that the idea of the lamppost will go away and I will decide to scrap them. But no we have to have them!!!!! Kelly gave me their garage code and I ran and picked it up the battery for the bridge. I also ran to Draisen Edwards to pick up the midi cords and gathered 2 computers and 1 keyboard and took them to Central Presbyterian for the rehearsal with the keyboards. Chris Cole is dropping off the 3rd keyboard for them to use and then they are bringing both of the keyboards to the theatre after their rehearsal for us to use for the run of the show on Sunday. Kelsey and Caleb (lighting and sound) were supposed to show up at the theatre by 10:00. They both got stuck at Clemson taking a test. Caleb got there around 11:00 and Kelsey got there around 1:00. One of her professors met her to help with the hanging of the revolutions. I’m really excited to see what she has in store for the lights. Kelsey hooked up the lighting board in the auditorium so that she could work from the audience. Caleb spent his day remounting the speakers and getting the sound board hooked up. He also, helped Kelsey a good bit. Before you know it - it is time for the kids to arrive. We work through the whole show in costume, while Kelsey and Caleb watch and take notes. Kris buzzes around making costume adjustments during the run. Agh!!! The transitions are so hard and now that
we have added the platform to the bridge, the weight is making its landing so flippin’ loud. Oh my goodness it makes a huge bang as it hits the floor!!! Yiks!!! We can drown it out with the music but agh!!! We are still trying to figure out the gate. We have had everyone looking for something since the beginning of rehearsal. Will went to Clemson to see one they had in storage but it was not right and really heavy. We are really getting down to the wire on this one! It is a rough rehearsal – there are lots of transition stuff to work out and the moving of props on and off. Caleb left mid rehearsal and thinks he has the sound situation under control.

I have 8 mics from Boulevard and 6 mics from ECP, one of which does not work, so that gives us 15 mics total. We are going to mic the leads and then some of the bigger secondary parts. The one liners are not going to have microphones. I hope that it will not be a huge discrepancy in sound. Caleb feels he can keep it balanced. Kelsey, is looking a bit overwhelmed. She said that she accidentally did her light plot on the wrong scale and overestimated the amount of lights that we would need. She also wasn’t expecting there to be so much movement on the stage so she needs to redesign her lights and will have to do it on the fly. I’m not really sure what the bleep she is talking about. When we originally talked, I told her that I wanted her to split the space up into areas and light each area with front, back and side lights. At that time she was ‘all knowing’ and said that that is what she would do and that she would turn in a plot to her professor and he would help, etc... but now ... I don’t know! Anyway, I’ve got so much going on with the kids and getting this show adjusted to the space. I told her that I had a couple of people lined up to help her hang the lights tomorrow and that we needed to have them hung, set and focused by Sunday’s rehearsal, so that we could set cues after rehearsal Sunday. I have told her all along that we cannot have a ‘typical’ cue to cue with the actors. We just don’t have
that kind of time. We have to set the cues on our own time. Run the cues as I’m working with the kids and then adjust them on our own time. She totally seemed to understand that.

Unfortunately, this is not real theatre! This is F & N theatre! Haha! I talk to Mandy to see how the rehearsal went with the keyboardist. She said that it went well and felt really good about it.

I asked her about the Real Time sounds and she said they sounded good.

Saturday morning – I meet Kelsey and Caleb at the theatre with Court, Drake and Will ready to help hang lights. Kelsey has decided that we need to rework the way ECP hangs their lights. She said that it is a safety thing and will make the hanging of the lights easier. She has called in ECP’s tech person and gotten permission to do this. Agh! Really! She spends her time going to the store to by nuts and bolts and my crew is taking down ECP’s lights and removing the c-clamps. Will thinks this is a colossal waste of time and I’m feeling a bit frustrated. ECP has been doing it this way for years. Is it the best?? Probably so but now is NOT the time! We do not have time for this???? Anyway, by the time this is done, my crew has to go. So now Kelsey has to find some people to help finishing hanging the lights. I’m helping when I can but I do have other problems to solve. I hang the banners and work with Debbie and Kris on prop and costume stuff, while she and her friends are hanging lights. When she is done, I look at the grid and ask about the front lights. I tell her that I’m really worried that she doesn’t have enough front lights. She said that she really doesn’t need many front lights and she doesn’t want to flatten out the features of the face with front lights. I tell her that I have worked in this space for many years and I’m pretty sure she is going to need more front light. I really wanted to have a transition rehearsal today but I knew I needed to save the space for the lights being hung and it’s a good thing I did because this process is still not finished. While working this morning, I
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asked Court how Lori (one of the keyboardist) felt about yesterday’s rehearsal. He said she said it was really rough. Oh no, I said. Mandy felt good about it. Oh No…. I’m now feeling very unsettled!!! On a good note, Kris had the idea of putting 2 or her gate pieces together, one on top of the other for the gate. Will thinks it will work and is going to figure out a way to attach it to the platforms. I told him that I really want the gate to be able to roll on and off. He looks at me with a skeptical look.

Sunday – we buzz around getting ready for the run through. I told Caleb that I really needed everything ready with the sound because we had to hit the ground running right when the orchestra walked in. He said that he would get there around 10:00 and that would give him plenty of time. He ends up getting there at 1:00 with Kelsey. He gets the mics ready to roll and is surprised to find out that he has to run the sound from the computers not the keyboards. Agh! I have no idea if I did not communicate this to him. I thought for sure we had talked about this but who knows. Anyway, this information puts him way behind and we are not able to really start rolling until close to 3:00 – Crap!!!! And Mandy has to leave at 5:30 – Agh this was really poor planning on my part! The orchestra practices among themselves while Caleb works and I run transitions with the kids. Finally we get rolling! Oh my goodness! I have never heard such horrific sounds come out of an orchestra. The keyboards sound awful. The realtime solution sounds are awful. I have no idea what is going on or how to fix them. I ask Caleb if we can just cut the Real time sounds and use the keyboard sounds but that would make us have to take a break for 20 minutes for him to run the keyboards through. AGH! So we suffer through!!!!! I am freaking out!!!! I stop the show for a second and have Mandy come down and listen to the sounds. She thinks that they are fine. Oh my gosh! Really? I must be losing my
mind. The kids are just looking at me. I've got to say this, they are amazing. They just plow through, holding it together, no matter what is coming out of that orchestra. And the oboe!!! Agh!!! It is Awful! The only saving grace is the drummer, who is absolutely awesome and the flute. Sofia is a MSA student and she is one of the reasons I wanted a live orchestra. She has worked so hard on the music and is really prepared. Mandy has to leave at 5:30 and we haven't even made it through the show. This is not good. We try to continue with the musicians but it is impossible without Mandy. I tell the orchestra to expect a long night tomorrow night. We have to make it through the show! I told them that we would not be out of there until at least 10:00 tomorrow. The keyboardists are saying that the computer program is really difficult to maneuver and that it is not keeping up and there is a lag in time etc... I have no idea what they are talking about. Kelsey fools around with the lights during rehearsal – I love the color but tell her afterward that she has to hang some more front lights. She starts to argue with me and I tell her that it is too dark and we have to have front lights! I call Mandy around 9:30 and tell her we need to rethink the keyboard sounds. Since Lori's program was the one that was really dragging and her part is mostly strings we decide to take her off of the Real Sounds and put her on a strings setting. I told her that we need to call Real Times Solutions and trouble shoot and she said that she really didn’t have time to do that. So we agree that I'll do it, although, I have no idea what I’m doing. I talk to Caleb about how we can balance the sound better. We agree to meet tomorrow morning to hang some curtains. He is such a pain in the ass to deal with. I'm trying to problem solve and he gets all defensive. Agh! Kids....even though they're college students, they are still kids. The mics sounded pretty good today. No feed back to speak of just some popping, which is annoying but at least we didn’t have major feedback. I'm actually
surprised. Oh man....I am really freaking out about the orchestra. And what's up with Marius? His pitch has gone out the window!!! Ah... Debby has been waiting for Kelsey to finish up with the lights so she could get to the floors. She had started a small patch but had to stop because we were still fooling with the lights. In a way it is a good thing because once she saw the colors of the lights, she had a much better idea of what colors to use on the floors. She is going to stay tonight and knock those out. Unfortunately, you can't really help her because one person has to do them or they are too inconsistent in style and color. Bless...I stay with her for a while and have a small freak out with her and Kris. I'm so blessed to have them. I love being at the theatre when it is just us three. Crazy!

Monday - Caleb and I meet. He smarts off at me, getting all defensive and telling me that I'm just unrealistic about what this space can be. I said, “Caleb you listen to me. I know that this is not an ideal performing space and that it is not the Brooks Center or Peace Center. I am well aware of its limitations. But WE are going to do everything in OUR power to make it the best possible!!! This is not about him! I am trying to brainstorm solutions and need him on board!” I’m not sure if it was the head spinning or the pea juice flying out of my mouth but he finally seems to be on board and willing to be a team and not a ‘me against him’ situation. Hopefully that attitude will stick. He went on to tell me all his woes and how he suffered from depression, etc.... Oh....what am I now, a counseling service??? Yes I know, I know, when you are a teacher you are everything....but I am paying these people to do a job!!!!! I didn’t sign up to be a mentor to them as well!!! Breathe....Breathe...Breathe..

I called real times solutions and they can’t really help me if I don’t have the program up and running and I don’t know how to do this. I don’t know how to really explain to them what
was wrong! Meanwhile, there is so much to do. I have to figure out how to cut the banners. Kris has figured out the gate but we need a way to attach it. That’s a Will job. I have to continue to figure out ways to make the transitions smoother. Will worked on the bridge and has fixed the banging on the floor. He is amazing. We talk about covering the structure of the bridge. He said that he really likes it the way it is. He says that it is architecturally what they would have had. You know what...I’m tired and I’m not sure this is a battle that I want to fight. I can’t decide if I like the structure showing. I think that I really would like for it to match the platforms but I don’t know. There are so many other things that I HAVE to fix....I need a way for the gate to hook onto the platform, I need the lamp posts, I need to figure out my orchestra issues, my lighting issues, the list goes on and on. On a positive note the floors looks good. She’s not finished but they look good. Now that she’s almost finished with the floors, I hope that she will fix the platforms. They are still not quite there. Also, we still need to add little steps to them.

Agh! How did that get missed? There are some 16” rises right now and we need to add a small step to make them 8”. This was the plan all along but once we started working on them Will just figured we really didn’t need them. We’re also fooling with the dry-ice machine, trying to get the fog to really roll out. Kelsey has a hazer working from the up high and I’m not sure if I like it. I like the haze but I don’t like the sound or the smell. I think that it will be distracting to the audience. Oh...we’ll see. Tonight we ran the show. The orchestra was still really rough. I told Mandy that the oboe was really off and she said that it wasn’t that it was the English horn. Ah, why is everyone arguing with me? Everyone in the audience agrees with me but oh well. Court keeps coming up to me saying that if you sit in the audience left sound from the orchestra is too strong. I keep talking to Caleb. He tells me that he is in the perfect spot to balance the sound
and that we really don’t know what we’re talking about. I talk to Mandy about bringing the live instruments down, especially the drums. This really is hard to balance and having them audience left is not the best choice. I ask Caleb if he thinks it would be worth moving the orchestra center. It would take a lot of miracles but I’m willing to entertain that notion. He said that he really thinks we can make it work the way it is and that the time and effort it would take would not be worth it. It’s worth the discussion. Meanwhile, Kelsey does not have the light cues set yet! She has some but not the whole show. I have Court sitting with her to learn the cues and they’re not done. She has decided that she would run the show. In the beginning, Court was going to run it but she said that she felt better about running the show, that way if anything went wrong she would be there to trouble shoot. Well that was nice of her. In the middle of the run, one of the revolutions goes out. If it’s not one thing it’s another. Meanwhile the kids are just plowing through... in the dark, with ridiculous sounds coming out of the orchestra and with the most impossible transitions! At about 9:00 I tell everyone to let their parents know that we will not be done until 10:00. We have to make it through the show. Will, my husband, is freaking out because he thinks we’re going to have a mutiny on our hands but I had already sent out an email earlier that day saying that I had underestimated the time it would take and that we would probably not be done until 10:00 each night this week. He did not know that I had done that. I told them if someone was raising hell, they could quietly slip their kid out but we had to get through the show. Well Mandy came marching down and said that the orchestra was not expecting to stay until 10:00. Maybe 9:30 at the latest but not 10:00. So at 9:30 promptly, they walked out. It is all I could do to not dissolve. Are you kidding me? What is this? A musician’s union!!!! Really do you think you can come at 6:00 and leave at 9:30
and really make it through Les Mis!!!!! I am so pissed I can hardly see straight. The orchestra has never played through all of Act II and we are opening in 3 days! I know I need to have a come to Jesus moment with SOMEONE but I’m not sure where to begin!!!!! Meanwhile, the real times solutions are giving the keyboardist fits!!!! I have never in my life been involved in a project that I have personally made so many bad decisions. It is so overwhelming that I am numb and it is really laughable. You know the joke about the man dying and asking God, “Why didn’t you save me?” and God says, “I tried...I sent you a boat, a plane, a helicopter, etc...” Well that is me! God sent me so much and I totally ignored every piece of it. From this summer, Terri said I should really think about using a sound track. I’ve used tracks before so I’m very familiar with them and really they work well with kids. I even had one made when I directed BABY for ECP several years back. But I really caught some grief from local musicians and I wanted this production to be special. Marc from the summer program told me about a company in Utah that makes great sound tracks and his friend just did Les Mis with them and it was awesome. But nooooo......about 6 weeks ago, Lori called me one morning and asked if I had thought about a sound track. I said yes I really had but MTI had assured me that the 3 keyboards would be sufficient etc...yadayadayada. And finally, Maren, the violinist said, you know Mary this is really tough stuff. Have you considered a sound track? Agh!!! How could I so ignore all of this? If I had only listened, I could be using my rehearsal time in the space to really deal with the story and the kids and not be a rehearsal time for the orchestra and busting through so that they can leave at a decent hour. I’m just sick!!!! I send out an SOS to my CWU friends.

6:00 am – Tuesday morning – we’re opening in 2 days. Marc calls. I love Marc. He is such a giving man. “What’s up?” he asks. I explain everything. He has me think through the sounds I
have to have and says to pull one of the keyboards off and put it on piano playing from the
conductors score. He said that the kids need to have a familiar sound coming from the
orchestra. He said to decide on the sounds that I can’t live without and fill those in. So I call
Mandy and propose this and she agrees. She said that she wants to keep Joshua on the real
times sounds. He has a lot of the guitar sounds that we need. I told her that I thought Jamie was
a good enough player to do this. So I call Jamie and ask him if he would be ok with this. He is so
sweet and honestly he was really relieved. He absolutely hated dealing with the real times
solutions. He said that it was such a pain. Bless his heart. I know that this is not fair to change
what they’re doing this late in the game but I’m really not sure what else to do.

Will finishes the gate posts and they’re huge and heavy. They’re beautiful but really big
and bulky. Again, things that are easy to him to move around are not easy for the rest of the
world, yet another thing to have to deal with in the transition. I really wanted something to roll
on and off but this has to be carried in 3 pieces, placed on the platforms and then the gate
added in the middle. It’s going to take a lot of coordination and finesse. I put the angles on the
banners today so that they looked like they had been burned. That was great fun! I did
something productive and it was a success. The mics are really popping and another one of
ECP’s mics went out so I went to Draisen-Edwards to rent another one. I start tonight’s run
with Act II and we make it through the whole show. I can’t stop much because we have to
make it through. We do work some of the transitions and a wonderful accident happened in
the transitions into the bridge. The boys turned them so that the tall ends were more up stage
then down stage. This distance helped so much. The bridge illusion is still not what I was
hoping and I’m hoping we can fix it with the lights but who knows. I want a slow motion
descent to the ground and for Javert to fall in a pool of fog. I need more fog. The fog is coming from behind and if it is enough it is being pushed away by the descent of the bridge. Also, I can see the people lifting the rails. They need to be in black. I think if we put a face on the bridge that would help but Will is at his wits end and I still don’t have my lampposts!!!! AGH!!!!!

Again the lights are flashing on and off and Kelsey is setting cues as we go. Once again the kids are such troopers, but I can’t see what in the world is going on half the time. You know, did we not talk about this? I tell Kelsey that she has to stop that the kids need to see, that she will have to set her cues after the run. I have never in my life experienced such. The mics still have popping issues...but unfortunately that’s the least of my concerns. Caleb is getting a better feel for the balance of the sound but is still defensive when anyone has a suggestion or comment.

After rehearsal, I tell Kelsey that she is not leaving the theatre until the lighting cues are set. I told her I would stay with her and we would get it done! So after rehearsal, we start. Kris is in the lobby working on costumes and Kelsey and I are in the theatre setting cues. We work until 5:00 am and then one of the revolutions stops running. This totally puts us at a standstill. She said she cannot set cues without it. So we stop. I’m a little worried about her driving home and offer a room to her but she said that she is ok. I head home and promptly construct an email to her professor. This is what I said:

Tony,

I think that Kelsey is really struggling. This process has taken such a long time and I think she has been really overwhelmed from the get go. She is a wonderful person and very knowledgeable but there has been a huge learning curve. I was with her until 5:30 am this morning trying to set the cues. Unfortunately another lamp is not working on one of the
revolutions. I'm afraid that her design is very dependent on the revolutions and there is very little front light in it. I think we could bypass them and make the show work but it is difficult with no front light. We're running out of time and I'm not sure what to do. I do not know this board at all and can't program it. Nor do I feel confident in hanging front lights and adding them to her plot. I've done everything I know to do to help her. I guess I should have set strict deadlines. I had set aside Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday for her to hang and focus and possibly set cues. I was there with her when there weren't others there. I lined up help for her Friday but she was really late because of a test. Saturday we had people there and I had a dad with her to help on Sunday.

Don't get me wrong, I have so enjoyed her and she is an incredibly talented young lady. I just need some advice and help on how to go forward from here.

Thank you so much,

Mary

Tony responds to me as follows:

Mary:

Wow. I knew the situation was bad but I didn’t realize it was 5:30am bad. I had hoped that the moving lights would give the light plot a certain amount of flexibility, but apparently one of them stopped working last night.

Thank you for all the support you have given her and for maintaining a supportive atmosphere. I can only imagine the pressure that you are under. If I could have been there I would have, but the whole reason I couldn’t take on Les Mis was because of Sweeney.
In order to help me get caught up with the situation, please answer the following to the best of your knowledge...

Are all of the lights hung and circuited?

Are all of the lights focused?

How far through the show have you built light cues?

As for where to go from here, I talked with several of Kelsey's Clemson professors to make arrangements for her to miss class today. I can come to the theatre tonight after I see a run thru at the Governor's School which will last approximately 7-9:30pm. I am also going to cancel my classes tomorrow so that I can be at ECP most of the day to help out in any way I can. I'll talk with Kelsey today (when she wakes up) to find out how I can best help her.

Tony

His response was really nice and I feel a little relief. I got a few hours sleep and then back to the theatre. Maren is at the theatre practicing. She begins to fill me in on the issues with Real Time Solutions. Because she knows more of what's going on since she is up in the orchestra, she is also a computer nerd, and she calls them and begins to trouble shoot. I just wish she had been there Sunday and could have been trouble shooting all week. She was out of town for fall break so wasn't at rehearsal until Monday. After a lot of work with them it turns out that there is something else you have to download to get the program to run efficiently. I mean it really took her going round and round with them to get to this final point. She does all kinds of stuff and it looks like it might be running ok. We'll see tonight. Maybe if we had had this info early on all of the keyboards would have worked. Oh well it's just as well. We're all running around finishing up final details. I'm pretty much nauseous but numb so I guess that's
good. Moms are helping with make-up and stuff. The make-up looks ok nothing awesome but it’s ok. Valjean is not so great and I talk to the mom about his and we brainstorm on what to do. Javert looks great, but he is doing his own makeup. Working with Will Ragland helped him a lot. But he really has a great character face to make-up. My Valjean has such a baby face! Meanwhile, I’m continuing to have conversations with Caleb about the sound, the balance, the popping mics...etc... Bobby finally brings the sleeves for the lamppost. Oh man. They’re not going to make it for opening night. There’s just no way. Productions Unlimited comes by that afternoon, just before the kids get there to try and fix the revolution. Agh! This is really cutting it close. Kids get here around 4:00 and we begin to get everyone ready. Meanwhile, we have to really monitor the backstage behavior. This monitoring has tied up Debby a lot!!! We have been trying to find the right moms to be backstage to help. Debbie Smith (the producer) keeps offering to help. And we lined her up for this week but she keeps slipping from backstage to watch. Ah! And when she is backstage she is noisier than the kids. Man this is such a pain! Will is back stage helping with the movement of all the stuff. And he is awesome at controlling the crowd. We’ve put up a tent outside and are keeping the backdoors open to help with the heat and overflow of stuff and people. Rynde is awesome backstage and really cracking down. There is so much crap happening with some of the kids and their behavior. I just really need to show a couple of kids the exit. I just don’t want that to blow up in my face!

Will is so good at keeping things organized and running backstage. Thank goodness for him! He came over earlier today and put the steps on the unit. I don’t dare ask him to put a face on the bridge. And what about my lampposts? Oh man, I hope he just doesn’t kill me or divorce me. Bless.... In the mean time the gate posts are so difficult to get on and off stage. I’ve added
some transition music to help with this timing. The run through is ok. The sounds from the orchestra are ok. Sometimes better than other times. The lights are flashing on and off as Kelsey, once again is trying to set cues. I finally told her to stop. Afterwards, I told her that I have never in my life had a final dress where I could not tell what the lights were going to be. Tony, her professor dropped by and they came up with a plan to get everything done tomorrow. I told him we needed front lights. He thought that it would be doable. He agreed that it was dark. Caleb told me that Kelsey was at her wits ends and I needed to lay off her that she felt terrible, etc... Tony felt that it would be more productive for us all to go home and get some rest and reconvene in the am. He was going to come and help. So that’s what we’re going to do. But before we left, Kelsey told me that she should have listened to me about the front lights and that she should have asked for help earlier and let me know she was feeling overwhelmed. She was trying to take the easy way out by not having to hang lights over the audience, which is a pain to get to and Tony told her that it was not ok to make short cuts if it jeopardizes the final product, etc... This is also the rehearsal I filmed to send to CWU and the auto focus was on so the camera was constantly trying to focus because it was so dark. Also, some parent set up right to the left of the camera and was in the way! AGH! If it’s not one thing, it’s another!

Thursday – opening night – I spend the day working with Tony and Kelsey on the lights. Tony brings over another revolution to replace the one from Productions Unlimited. It’s such a blur. I’ve spent so much time worrying with the orchestra and lights that the set is still not finished. The platforms look like dog poop. Literally, dog poop. This is not like Debby but the space has been so tied up with the lighting that everything else has gotten way behind. And my
light posts aren’t going to make it for opening night. We do get some ivy and lamps on the gate posts. That looks great! Opening night... Ready or not here we come. And you know what, we are really not ready. I have no idea what this show looks like! We have a full house. As a matter of fact our first weekend is pretty much sold out. Yee Haw! The show goes remarkably well. I can’t even believe how well it went. It’s still dark but hey it looks pretty good. At least the lights aren’t flashing off and on. We need to work the suicide. Our black outs can’t really be true black outs because of the lights coming from the orchestra. This presents a problem in the suicide effect. We work the timing of the suicide lights after the show and fix a couple of things. Kelsey has to run but agrees to come early tomorrow to fix some notes. I tell Debbie that we have to fix the platforms, they look awful. She agrees. So she is going to get that done tomorrow. I’ve been so bogged down with technical stuff that I have hardly paid attention to the kids. It is so sad. My journaling has neglected to mention the acting/relationship issues that I’ve been continuing to work on but not enough. One which is really noticeable and that is the chemistry between Cosette and Marius. Before we opened we added some movement of them dancing in together. I also talked to them about finding moments to connect with each other. I’ve not really talked to Joseph about his pitch. Lori came Tuesday night to see the run and said that he needs to open up his mouth and round out his sound as well as really concentrate on placing his voice in his head. I told him these things.

Friday – second night – Debbie finishes up the platforms. They look lots better. I’m still nagging Will about the lampposts. The run went well and the audience was really receptive. However in the light cues are off. I’m thinking, “what is going on?” So I finally just go up into the booth and stand behind Kelsey. Evidently she was fixing cues during the run and got behind.
AGH!!! Really!!! I told her she just couldn’t do that! She had to leave after the show but agreed to come back Saturday at 3:00 to fix whatever needed to be fixed. Man...when will the lighting nightmare end. I should have made her teach me the board the minute she entered the space so that I could have just done this. I hate not having control and I HATE that I am paying for this nightmare. I don’t get it! I’m so disappointed that I once again have somehow made such shitty decisions! Lighting was the one thing I was going to sink my money in. I wanted it to be awesome. But now, I just want to have simple cues and be able to see the actors. That’s it. I give kids notes as I see them. The audience really does seem to love it. Go figure!

Saturday – I meet Kelsey at the theatre at 3:00 and she has her mom with her. I guess she brought back-up. Haha! Anyway, we go through cue by cue and I ask her to lighten up most of the cues. She comes back with, “Well it’s night time... or whatever” finally even her mom said, “Kelsey, it is too dark!” Well it is still too dark but you know what. I give up. I just can’t fight it anymore. I don’t think I have ever given up on something before. I know that it can be lighter and it really wouldn’t take much – probably just the bump of a slider - but I’m so tired of pushing. I hate that I feel this way! I understand that she wants to set a mood and so do I but this is nuts! At least the colors are beautiful! And I do love the lights at the end, when Valjean joins Fantine and Eponine. I don’t know if it is hokey or not but I like it. It’s pretty cool.

Unfortunately, it depends on the platforms landing in the right place for the effect to totally happen and there is no guarantee on that one! As a matter of fact, Kelsey said to me, “I don’t mind you changing the placement of the platforms but I really wish you would fill me in”. I said, “Kelsey, I didn’t change it. The kids just didn’t hit their mark”. I have asked them to do some near impossible things and we are all doing the best we can. So I need to remember that about
Kelsey. She is a kid and she is doing the best she can and I am done with the whole situation. Meanwhile, I do not have my lampposts. I talk to Will again and he is going to go over tomorrow and try and get them done. They’re filming tomorrow and I really want them for the video.

Sunday – Will begins to cut the holes in the platforms and mount the brackets. The videographer has food poisoning and they’re going to film Friday night instead. This works out well because Debbie is unable to get all of the fixtures finished for the lamppost. I know both Debbie and Will were secretly hoping the lamps would go away but I know that we need these. I wonder if we are the only people that make such changes after a show opens. I know it’s not right to do but hey….we are tweaking until the final show. But this is truly a first. Even for me!

Yah.....2 days of rest!!!!!! Just school, no shows! Will and I help Debbie finish the lamps for the post and Will builds a stand to hold them while they are not on stage.

Wednesday, October 26th – I run a pick up rehearsal without the orchestra. We mostly work through transitions and speed through songs. I incorporate the movement of the lampposts on stage. They’re going to work well. They add some needed height and diversity to the set. The students are so excited to be back together again. Now that we’re up and running, they just can’t get enough of it.

Thursday, October 27th – It’s show time again. I give notes from the last performance and we run a couple of trouble spots with the orchestra. Before every show I pull together the cast and we do a group warm up and work through some of the music. Usually a cappella because the orchestra isn’t there at that time. I really enjoy this because it gives me a moment to touch each cast member and visually check in with them. I think it also helps focus them to
the task at hand. I’m always worried about students getting cocky once they open and then ‘bam’ that’s when all hell breaks loose. I pretty much warn them of this and ask that they remember what it is they want before each time they walk on to stage. And what tactics are they going to use to get what they want? I always challenge them to discover something new about their characters each performance. We finish up around 35 minutes before show time so that we can open the house and the students can finish getting ready, check props and mentally prepare for the show.

Friday night was rough. We had a little scare before the show when the LED lights on the stage left banners went out. We started checking the power cords trying to see if there was a disconnection and if in fact it was a power supply issue and not a lamp issue. Fortunately, through wiggling cords and unplugging and plugging cords the lights magically came back on. Thank goodness. This is the night that the film company came and of course it was a rough show, microphones popping and going out! The sound was especially bad and Caleb was very obnoxious and loud – He actually ran down from the middle of the sound booth, clomp clomp clomp with keys jingling, in the middle of Fantine’s death. Oh my goodness! You can’t do that Caleb!!! That is a frustrating thing about this space is the lack of ability to communicate from the sound booth to the back stage. This is also the one night that Kelsey was not there. Of course that always happens. Valjean is jumping his cues all over the place. I will say this, the orchestra may sound rough but they’re doing a great job jumping with Valjean. It’s tough! There are so many things I would rework and fix but unfortunately I have to let it go. I do give notes after each performance because I’m always tweaking but they become less and less and I slowly let go. I’m sure that it is not common practice to continue to give notes. But the way I
see it is we only have a short while in the theatre and we need to do all we can to keep growing. I film personally film Saturday night as well, hoping to get a better show to send off to CWU. Unfortunately, something happened and it didn’t start recording until Fantine’s death scene. It was definitely a better show and honestly I think my little camera has better sound than the professional mic. I hate that it didn’t get the whole thing. Oh well, I guess CWU is destined to see the roughest of roughest! AGH! Go figure!

Saturday – Elise came. YAH!!! She was a sight for sore eyes. Will and I met her before the show and she gave me my binder back. I was so glad that we had a moment to visit and that she got to meet Will. She was very gracious and we also got to spend a little time after the show. It was very cool to have her with us! After the show Sunday, we strike the set. We have a load of help and it goes down very quickly. We have many cars and vans taking costumes, props, platforms, equipment, etc...back to the school. Oh my goodness, what a mess. We’re going to be sorting through stuff for a long time. We will have to schedule another time to get ECP’s stuff out of storage and back to the theatre. This strike is going to take a really long time. I finally leave the theatre to run over to the cast party. I leave Kelsey taking down the lights. She couldn’t remove them right away, when we had help, because she was marking where they were. My suspicions are she was doing her light plot for her professor. Later that night I returned to the theatre and she was wrapping things up. She had a couple of people there helping. We parted ways, amicable but somewhat cool. I think we are both relieved to be wrapping this baby up. She said that she would have my lighting information for my binder by the end of November. So we’ll see. I’m not going to hold my breath. I thanked her for her work and off she went.
At the cast party many of the cast members stood up and spoke. They were so very appreciative. Many shared about how meaningful it was to be a part of such an amazing production. Several of my Montessori alumni talked about how much they had missed the theatre since they had left and were so grateful to have had this opportunity. They had forgotten the love and joy they experienced while performing and this production had rekindled their love for theatre and performing. It was really cool for our present students to hear this and give them some perspective on our program. It really is a special opportunity that we give our students. It was really heartwarming to hear each student express how much this meant to them and how much they loved joining the three communities together. The social aspect was certainly one of the reasons for doing this production and I’m so glad that the students really recognized it and appreciated it. It made all the work worth it!

Oh, still so much to do. Return lighting equipment, ship guns, return cart, mail scores and scripts, return a few costumes, wash costumes, find a home for all of our newly acquired and made props and costumes and the list goes on and on.

Okay on a final note.....months and months later.....Whenever I run into a New Covenant parent or a home school parent they tell me how much the show meant to them and their child. How much confidence their child gained from being a part of it and how much they grew vocally. Also, I went to see the National Tour of the 25th Anniversary Show of Les Misérables this past Sunday. One of our parents, Gavroche’s parents, gave me 20 tickets to distribute to cast and crew. So 20 of us went. Anyway, all week families have been coming up and talking to me about the production and talking about our production compared to the tour, etc.... Which is absolutely hysterical because as you know....you just can’t compare the two. They’re not the
same animal; they’re not even in the same zoo. Haha! But so many people seem to have so much for admiration for what we did after having seen the tour. That’s so strange to me.

Anyway I will say this...If you thought my show was dark. Holy cow!!! This was the darkest show I had ever seen. I couldn’t even tell who was singing half the time because they were in the dark. They lit the main singers with a small follow spot and used very little fill. It was crazy!!!!

Just sayin’! I just received this email that I would like to share. This is from the mother of the girl who played little Eponine.

Mary and Will,

We saw you at the Peace Center Sunday night! Hope you enjoyed the show as much as we did!

I just had to take a moment to say that after seeing this production, I am even more in awe of what you accomplished with your production. I have to say that I enjoyed Ben as Thenardiere (sp?) even more than the professional person! And Keegan was so excited to see "her part" on the big stage as she thought it was only in the school edition. The talent that you nurtured and grew in these kids was phenomenal and I even think that some of them showed even more emotion than the professionals. And the final scene--I enjoyed yours the most!

And Will, the sets you constructed were also awesome and although not as HUGE as the sets at the Peace Center they were perfect for ECP and told the story every bit as well as the big set.

You both are awesome and I hope every parent knows how lucky we are to have you both in all of our children’s lives!!

Thank you for all you do!

Amy
Anyway, it is nice to have affirmation after all is said and done and it is crazy that the National Tour solicited this type of affirmation from so many people. What a hoot!

I was talking with Kris today and she pointed out that Alex's journey really did parallel that of Valjean. When he came to us in middle school he was quite a troubled kid, filled with anger and rage, having just lost his father to a brain tumor. He spent three years with us and grew so much during those years. He left us in ninth grade and went to a large high school. There he floundered socially and academically, although he is extremely bright. He did some theatre but nothing that really inspired him. He told us after he began rehearsing *Les Misérables* that he had really been lost over the past three years, really wasting his life. Through his involvement with the play he began to get clarity and focus. He began his own faith journey and has now become very involved in the church. I was blessed to have been a witness to this truly amazing transformation. I know that the time he spent with Valjean motivated his personal faith journey. Like I said before, this musical was about so much more than the actual production.

I can finally close this chapter of my life with a small smile. Put away the failures and rejoice in the successes. I am very grateful to each of you reading this journal. For you are the ones who have motivated me and pushed me forward to be the best I can possibly be. Thank you!!! I love you each dearly and will truly miss our summer time together.

Mary
CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
THEATRE ARTS GRADUATE PROGRAM

THESIS PROJECT/ PRODUCTION PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

STUDENT- Mary Nickles

UNDER CONSIDERATION IS DIRECTION OF: “Les Miserables School Edition” by Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schonberg

EVALUATOR’S NAME: Elise Forier Edie TITLE: Associate Professor

PLACE OF PERFORMANCE: Electric City Playhouse, Anderson, SC

DATE OF VIEWING: October 29, 2011

DESCRIPTION OF PERFORMANCE VENUE:

The Electric City Playhouse is a charming storefront venue in downtown Anderson. Home to a thriving community theatre, it features a gracious lobby and a nice little black box theatre. The theatre has a lighting grid, a fair sized thrust stage and around 200 seats on plywood risers. Like many storefront spaces, it has some quirks: the stage is in one corner of the room, making a triangle with little to no backstage, a couple of pillars frame the stage (these appear to hold up the lighting grid) obscuring visibility and creating obstacles, a cramped backstage area allows little storage, build space or ventilation, and the tech booth, stuffed in a corner behind the seats, is open to the audience. Still, it is a lovely small town space. I wish Ellensburg had a theatre like this downtown.

DESCRIPTION OF CONCEPT:

Mary’s concept revolved around externalizing the themes of “breaking chains” (of oppression, of poverty, of belief) and finding redemption through love. “To love another person is to see the face of God.” Her concept statement called for creating moments of oppression, through sound, lights and movement, and then allowing that oppression to break and lift. The journey of “Les Miserables” focuses on Jean Valjean, who breaks free of prison and of poverty by virtue of the love of others and through loving others.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTUAL PRODUCTION DIRECTION AND/OR REALIZED DESIGN OF SETS, PROPS, COSTUMES, LIGHTING, SOUND:

Mary wisely kept the set simple. All scenes were played on and around two large, multi-leveled, interlocking set pieces, which moved silently and smoothly into a variety of positions. On the walls behind hung a row of ragged white flags in ascending and descending lengths. These flags took on color depending on which lights were on, acting as a kind of broken cyclorama, or variegated backdrop. Different environments were created by the addition of props and small additions to the set: chairs, tables, baskets, nets, ropes, spindles, a gate, a bridge, and — in several marvelously effective scenes—a row of streetlamps.

The props were appropriate, well made, and delightfully detailed. Many of them were downright impressive: the terrific cart in the street scene, the superb spindles for the factory, the tower of sticky bonbons in the party scene. Every satchel, basket, gun and candlestick appeared to be lovingly researched and carefully crafted.

The costumes were equally well chosen and well made, from the soldiers’ resplendent uniforms to the crisp, striped aprons of the factory girls. I especially enjoyed the contrast of young Cosette’s rumpled blouse in juxtaposition to young Eponine’s spotless dress—then their later reversal in dress, reflecting their reversal in status—Cosette’s tidy, well made skirts and Eponine’s careless, fluid attire.

The least successful technical elements were lights and music. The orchestra wheezed and moaned; the violin in particular frequently off key. The lights were so ineptly designed and operated they detracted from the entire production.
After all the wonderful labor that went into the set, costumes and props, it seemed a terrible shame that the lighting designer didn't have the good sense to make sure the audience could see the stage. Often I could not see the actors' faces, which was frustrating, especially in such an intimate space. Some of the light cue changes were also unnecessarily complex. For example, during Fantine's song, "I Had a Dream," the designer detracted from the mood and story by adding all sorts of colors and spots and business that didn't help the song one whit and kept the audience's attention from the actor and the action. What good are fancy colors when the audience can't see the stage?

**HOW DID THE PRODUCTION DIRECTION OR DESIGN IMPLEMENT THE IDEAS EXPRESSED IN THE CONCEPT STATEMENT?**

Mary's concept of "breaking free" was reflected beautifully in her clever set design, the interlocking step pieces that broke and reformed in a myriad of shapes.

Her idea of redemption, which involved the use of lights "breaking through" was less successfully realized, largely due to the utter ineptness of her lighting designer. Nonetheless, I could see attempts by said designer to create an "oppressive atmosphere" by making the stage dark and using lots of saturated color. Unfortunately, the color and darkness insured the audience couldn't see the actors' faces. At times, clear shafts of clean white light "broke through" the color, and that was a tremendous relief. The final moments of the play, which were well lit, allowed us to see and feel Jean Valjean's complete transformation, and Mary's message was heard and seen with touching simplicity and real grace.

The silver candlesticks, symbols of Valjean's transformation, reappeared at various times in the play, very naturally and effectively. This reminder of the "light of truth and grace" was a masterful touch, I thought, and the mark of a fine director.

**APPROPRIATENESS OF CHOICE OF SCRIPT FOR ABILITIES OF PERFORMERS, AUDIENCE, VENUE, AND/OR ACADEMIC SETTING?**

This is an ambitious choice for a project, but I believe Mary's cast and crew rose to the occasion with admirable aplomb. Were the characters, music and story a "stretch" for her kids? Of course. Were some of them working above and beyond their abilities? Absolutely. Is taking a risk like this good for young people (and their adult guides and facilitators)? Again, absolutely. I don't think anyone in this cast or crew didn't know that they were reaching very high indeed by trying to grab on to "Les Miserables." But I also felt, at least with this group, the reach was of benefit to everyone involved.

Before I saw the piece, I worried about whether or not the cast would be able to sing this difficult music, but to be honest, the orchestra struggled more than the student actors. With the exception of the boy playing Marius, who had pitch problems, and the notoriously difficult "Hear My Prayer/Let Him Live" solo of Jean Valjean's, the cast sang quite well, and in many cases exceptionally well. The music was not too much above their capabilities and they had obviously been well schooled and coached.

I cannot say enough good things about this choice in terms of it being a vehicle to unite three schools and their communities. A look at the extensive sponsors' program—a large, book like publication of advertisements, bigger than the "real" program—gives an idea of the scope and impact of this production. Local physicians, dentists, real estate agencies, restaurants and stores all banded together to make the piece possible. The house was stuffed with parents and relatives, all breathless and amazed at the youngsters' achievements. It really felt like an event, something the community and young performers would remember for many years to come. For this reason alone, the choice of play was very, very appropriate and even a remarkable achievement.

**ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING IF APPLICABLE: CLEAR DELINEATION OF UNITS OF ACTION, MOTIVATED BLOCKING, VISUALLY INTERESTING COMPOSITION, VISUAL EXPRESSION OF METAPHOR, USE OF PICTURIZATION IN STORYTELLING, CLEAR AND BELIEVABLE CHARACTERIZATION, ADEQUATE USE OF BODY AND VOICE, UNITY OF PRODUCTION ELEMENTS, CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING.**

The stage was small and the cast was large and this made movement difficult for much of the play. Mary did an admirable job solving this problem, for the most part. I have to commend her on her direction of scene changes—the large
set pieces moved smoothly and swiftly and her cast was very well rehearsed. The transitions were mostly painless and often I was not aware of the tiny stage and all the restrictions it placed on its actors and director. It was downright thrilling sometimes how well her set pieces functioned, and how beautifully they created different scenes and atmospheres. The gate to Valjean’s house was particularly lovely, as were the terrific streetlamps that helped create a bridge and alleyway. When appropriate, Mary created some good stage pictures as well, with skilled use of diagonals and levels. I would say many of the small scenes were extremely well blocked and the staging was generally very good, considering the limitations of the space.

The great exceptions were the larger scenes that cried out for frenetic activity—the bustling street with the cart accident and the battle scenes, for example. Mary chose to solve the “cart crash problem” by having it happen in slow motion, but since this was the only scene in the play that took place in such a style, it simply stood out as being weird and awkward. Instead of being caught up in the moment, the audience was reminded that they were watching a play on a very small stage, and the cart must move slowly so none of the cast members would get hurt. The battle scenes were very static. The boys loaded and fired their guns over a barricade, backs to the audience, with no other movement. There was no sense of a story being told, of specific characters developing within the scene, of panic and desperation, of comrades relying upon and losing one another. Instead, the audience was given a very general “battle scene”—like an interlude between scenes, not a real scene in and of itself— and so had time to reflect, once again, that they were in a very small theatre. I believe both of these problems could have been solved better, with more attention to detail and moment-to-moment storytelling. My suspicion is Mary did not have time to fully choreograph or stage any of these scenes, due to a paucity of rehearsal time in the space.

I also felt Javert’s suicide scene could have been better handled. Mary used a hydraulic lift, which descended slowly, and then had Javert “roll to his death,” in a low budget facsimile of the original Broadway production. In a production design wherein every piece had been so beautifully made and thoroughly researched it was bizarre to have the hydraulic lift suddenly appear, fully visible and obviously modern, even painted a different color from the rest of the set. The teenaged actor playing Javert was clearly uncomfortable rolling around on the floor. I felt like any other choice would have been more effective for this moment than the one that was used and I found myself wondering why use the hydraulic lift at all? Why not have Javert jump to some unseen place, where he wouldn’t have to roll around in a bad lighting effect? With actors at this age and level of development, clear and believable characterization is a rarity. There were times I noticed Alex Marcondes, who played Jean Valjean, physically cringing away from the depth and strength of his character’s journey, actually tucking his chin and closing his eyes against the storm of emotions and actions he did not have the maturity to embrace. But I also noted the times he showed up beautifully for the moment, particularly in Valjean’s more tender and intimate scenes. Meg Spearman, who played Eponine, at thirteen years old had no real connection to her character’s desperation, and resorted to strange and vague hand gestures during her solo. But she connected well with her partner for her death scene and took the audience with her fully. And so it was for all of the kids—in many ways they could not begin to identify with their characters, could not begin to embody the epic sweep of the narrative, but it was evident they were doing their best and were fully committed to trying and even succeeded in certain moments. Ben Otto-Sanderman, the young man play Thernardier, in particular did a stand-out job of acting and singing his role throughout, without a single false note and many brilliant little touches. The young woman playing Fantine also had some fine moments, even while having to drowned in the more ridiculously saturated and unnecessary lighting effects.

**WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THIS PARTICULAR PERFORMANCE VENUE, WAS THIS PRODUCTION SATISFACTORY OR UNSATISFACTORY?**

This production was very satisfactory.

So many things were thoroughly professional, remarkably smooth and well executed, effective and satisfying. It is clear to me that Mary is a director of remarkable sensitivity and a really fine drama teacher. I felt privileged to have witnessed this culmination for her and her students.
Self Evaluation

After *Les Misérables* closed, I plummeted into a deep depression. Part of it was the natural let down of a show closing, part of it was that I was coming up on the first anniversary of my brother’s death and much of it was grieving over the mishaps of the show. I had such high expectations for myself and my failures gnawed at me like an unrelenting mosquito. I could not get the noise out of my head! Craziness, I know. It’s very ironic that I would be so hard on myself because I tell the students to “risk, fail and risk again”. I try hard to let that be our motto but as we all know it is much easier to talk the talk than walk the walk. So I closed my script, washed and folded the costumes, returned rental equipment and promptly put the project away. I ran far, far away from it, although, I never really could get away. I relived it in my mind more times than I care to admit. And everywhere I went people would talk to me about it and the kids still to this day reminisce about the production. The community as a whole really loved the production. But there are those musicians in the crowd that look at me with those critical eyes saying, “Really?” At any rate here I am self-reflecting from that wonderful 20/20 advantage and after having reread my journal, binder, notes and Elise’s evaluation; I can honestly say that I am proud of what we did accomplish. I hope more than anything that I will learn from my mistakes and go forward a better person, director and teacher. When I run into cast members and they tell me how the experience with *Les Misérables* changed or influenced their life, I am reminded that this project was not about me. It was much bigger than me and I will never fully know to what extent its influence will reach.

I first chose *Les Misérables* because of the powerful story. I do believe that it is the depth and power of the story that changed and excited the students involved. Bringing
together the three communities to tell this story was thrilling for everyone. Friendships and memories of a lifetime were made and hopefully everyone walked away with a deeper understanding of life, death and grace. But with this massive story came massive obstacles. Some of which we handled successfully and some of which became a colossal failure. One of these failures was the actual music accompaniment.

The first big question that comes to mind is, “Should I have used a track?” I certainly think a lot of issues would have been eliminated if I had used a track. I would have had more time to concentrate on the action and transitions of the show once we were in the theatre. We would have spent less time clearing out the theatre because we wouldn’t need room for the orchestra, thus freeing up Will to work on the set. Mandy would have been more available to help with the actual singing and balance of voices. Instead her time in the theatre was spent working with the orchestra. We also could have controlled the balance of music and vocal sound better. On the flip side, my Valjean kept jumping all over the place, which would have been a night mare with a track. Would he have continued to do this if he had had enough practice with a track? I feel he would have but who knows. I had no real way of planning out transitions before we got into the theatre. This could potentially have been a big issue with a track. And would I have been able to add the two sections that I wanted to add? These are still questions I have. So in hindsight, I should have called the company that Marc recommended in Utah and asked them if they could help me troubleshoot these questions. I never even had the dialogue which was a big mistake.

If I then decided to go with an orchestra I should have found a full-time musical director and hired Mandy to conduct the orchestra. If I had had another set of ears in the theatre space
they could have backed me up when there were tuning issues in the orchestra. Not only that they could have helped me solve the balance problems. I would have had someone to problem solve with. After hearing the dress rehearsal tape without drums and the performance tape with drums, I’m thinking I should have just yanked all the instruments and just gone with straight keyboards. If I had had a musical director in the house they could have helped me problem solve. As it was, the minute the last note was played, Mandy was out the door. She was certainly available via phone call but not available for a lot of dialogue and problem solving. If I did choose to go with a live orchestra I would be very specific about the duties and expectations for musical director and the conductor. As a matter of fact I would be very specific about my expectations for all the hired positions. Through this process, I have become very aware that communicating clear expectations must be a weakness of mine. There’s a part of me that wonders if I’m scared to really lay out the expectations up front, in fear that the people will be unwilling to do the task being asked. At any rate, I should have drawn up contracts with a job description and expectations for each hired employee. By me laying out the expectations ahead of time tasks would be easier to track and nothing would go unspoken. The channels of communication would be clearer. This also would help with my own organization and follow-up.

The second significant problem with the production was the lighting. I feel like I really communicated with Kelsey, the lighting designer, throughout the rehearsal process and the expectations were very clear. What was muddy and what I could have handled better was recognizing Kelsey’s distress. She carried herself with great confidence. But when I heard that she was redoing her plot and I realized the front lights were non-existent, I should have stopped
everything I was doing and absolutely insisted that we talk through her thoughts and hang some front lights immediately. I should have also had her give me a light plot. This deadline would have forced her to be more prepared. I should have taken on the role of mentor and treated her like a student. I did try and impress upon her the importance of the audience not really noticing the lights. The lighting was there to enhance the dramatic action and help tell the story not distract from it. I should have stuck with this and just made her simplify everything. I think that in the heat of the moment, I get so mentally busy that I do not take the time to stop and truly deal with the matter at hand. This seems to be another weakness of mine, which is exacerbated by the fact that I have very little time in the actual theatre to trouble shoot technical issues.

I think if the issues with the lighting and music had not been so horrific, my energy would have been freed up to make sure the set pieces were finished. The fact that we were so late finishing set pieces was really inexcusable and I truly have no good explanation for it except to say that I was too preoccupied to really push for them. There is, of course, only so much you can do when working with volunteers, but I would have been more available for follow up and help keep everything on track.

I was never really happy with the bridge scene. I would like to have seen a façade on the bridge to match the platforms. I think if we could have moved it more upstage and added more fog from the front it would have been more effective. I also think it would have helped if we could have had more time to figure out the lighting to accomplish this effect. I still like the idea of Javert lowering to his death and the audience watching the descent. Had I used a track, we could have eliminated the orchestra light and accomplished a true blackout, which would have
made the suicide scene more effective.

I feel like the chorus sounded great vocally and they did a great job of enunciating clearly. However, I really struggled with helping them develop their individual characters and relationships. Since we did not have the platforms and barricade for so much of the rehearsals, I should have really concentrated on the student’s stories and relationships so that they could have become more invested in each other. This would have helped a lot during the fighting of Act II. I talked about the students developing their own story and took them through some visualizations but I really didn’t take time for them to share their stories and flesh them out with me and each other. Having the students develop an individual and corporal sub-plot by sharing their stories and relationships would have helped make the fight their own and would have raised their stakes. There was one time during the run that the students and revolutionaries just spontaneously cheered. It was really thrilling! I needed to help them find their own story within the battle.

I also never really accomplished the dirty, grimy, seediness of the streets. I’m not sure how I could have gotten the students to that point. Occasionally I would read Hugo’s descriptions out of the novel to try and help convey the desperation of the people. We did at one point have a hazer going in an attempt to add some heaviness to the atmosphere. Unfortunately, it had technical problems that I was not interested in fixing. Additionally, I felt like the smell was too much for the small space. After Lovely Ladies, I had the prostitutes move in slow motion to show a transitioning into a state of illness and brokenness. I felt like it was effective, but the dim lighting may have obscured it. It seemed to even escape Elise because she indicated in her evaluation that the cart scene was the only place I used this slow motion
technique. In fact, there were four places that I used this slow motion technique; the cart scene, the prostitutes, the dying of the students and the bridge. I think that this technique was fairly effective and added to the dramatic climax of each scene. I had actually envisioned the staging of the cart scene last summer back in the apartment at Central Washington. This was before I knew what size cart we were going to have. I feel like it was dramatically effective and was not out of place in the moment.

The main set was comprised of two revolving units. These worked fairly well although the transitions were extremely tedious and time consuming to practice and perfect. There were times that I found myself wanting a single unit set where the people were the only thing that moved! I do think these units provided versatility for the production as well as levels that helped create interesting stage pictures. After one show a father came up to me and said that he absolutely loved all of the stage pictures that were made throughout show. I'm actually not sure if that was a compliment that he consciously noticed the pictures. But throughout the process, I was constantly thinking about the pictures of the story; I suppose I am glad he noticed.

I do think that Debbie, Kris, Will and Bobby did an outstanding job on the props, costumes and set. I feel extremely blessed to have them as a creative team. Each piece was well thought out and added so much to the story.

The amount of research involved with this production was massive. I'm actually very proud of myself for taking on this challenge since I am not a historian or a scholar and research is definitely not my strength. I thoroughly enjoyed my time with Victor Hugo and marvel at the fact that I knew very little of this amazing man before this project. It was inspiring to work on a
project set in such an amazing time in history and supported by a novel which was a masterpiece.

This was quite a huge undertaking and I feel that the students benefited greatly from being a part of this production. I truly think that it was a successful project, despite the obstacles that we faced. Would I do it again? You bet! But this time I would enter into it with eyes wide open and detailed contracts in hand!
Works Cited


Print.


Print. The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books

*New Revised Standard Version.*


Print.

Works Consulted


## Montessori School of Anderson
### Budget for Les Miserables - 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense</th>
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**Income - Production Fees**

- Tickets/Sponsors/Concessions: 14634.84

**Total Income**: 16214.84

**Profit/Loss**: ($1,738)
### Les Misérables Schedule (Week-by-week)

**Cast Groups:** Note which group(s) you are in and come when these groups are listed on the rehearsal schedule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chorus (INN peeps)</th>
<th>Prostitutes/Whores/Pimps</th>
<th>Primary Principals</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aaron Brickle</td>
<td>Madison Batterby</td>
<td>Jean Valjean - Alex Marcondes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aaron MacDonald</td>
<td>Beth McAllister</td>
<td>Thenardier - Ben Otto-Sunderman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anna Milford</td>
<td>Callie Nickles</td>
<td>Fantine - Bethany Bowen</td>
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<td>Austin Brown</td>
<td>Erin Fauble</td>
<td>Javert - Johnny Culwell</td>
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<td>Beth McAllister</td>
<td>Erin Shuler</td>
<td>Enjolras - Jordan Hannier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Callie Nickles</td>
<td>Ian Culberson - pimp</td>
<td>Marius - Joseph Miller</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camille Foulgar</td>
<td>Jennifer Jennings</td>
<td>Cosette - Kathleen Brickle</td>
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<td>Mme Thenardier - Kelly Carr</td>
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<td>Chloe Curnow</td>
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<td>Eponine - Meg Spearman</td>
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<td><strong>Bethany Bowen - Fantine</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Chorus: In the Innkeepers scene</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Students &amp; Revolutionaries</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Evan Hicklin</strong></td>
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<td><strong>STUDENTS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Erin Shuler</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Aaron Brickle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frantisek Mika</strong></td>
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<td>David Spearman - Combeferre</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Georgiana Yon</strong></td>
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<td>Dylan DeVoe - Prouvaire</td>
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<td>Drake Dial - Feuilly</td>
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<td><strong>Haiwen Zhang</strong></td>
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<td>Frantisek Mika - Joly</td>
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<td>JT Curnow - Lesgles</td>
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<td><strong>Isabelle Foulgar</strong></td>
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<td>Logan Hanner - Courfeyrac</td>
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<td><strong>Jackson Potter - Farmer</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Thugs</strong></td>
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<td>Chase Culpepper - Babet</td>
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<td>Ian Culberson - Brunon</td>
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<td><strong>Kaitlyn Curnow</strong></td>
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<td>Thomas Head - Claquesous</td>
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<td><strong>Lauren Morton</strong></td>
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<td>Ian Culberson</td>
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<td>Matthew Stamey - Sentry 1</td>
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<td><strong>Mansi Joglekar</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Matt Reiter - Bishop</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Matthew Stamey</strong></td>
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<td>Chase Culpepper - Babet</td>
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<td><strong>MJ Culpepper</strong></td>
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<td>Thomas Head - Claquesous</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Paityn Grier - Laborer</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Rebecca Lamb - Laborer</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Zayna Sheikh</strong></td>
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<td>Frantisek Mika - Joly</td>
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</table>

#### REHEARSAL INFORMATION
- Be on time.
- Bring your water bottle.
- Some rehearsals will be at Central Pres; the rest are at MSA until we move into ECP on October 10th. Check schedule.

**IF YOU CANNOT ATTEND A REHEARSAL,** please text or call Rynde Dial at 276-4063 as soon as possible.

**WEDDING DANCERS**
- Aaron Brickle
- Beth McAllister
- Callie Nickles
- Drake Dial
- Evan Hicklin
- Erin Fauble
- Erin Shuler
- Austin Brown
- Logan Hanner
- James Curnow - Laborer*
- Jennifer Jennings
- Jordan Hanner
- Thomas Head
- Rebecca Reiter
- Frantisek Mika
- Madison Battersby
- Mansi Joglekar
- Megan Greer
- Thomas Head
- Rebecca Reiter

Highlighted in Chorus: In the Innkeepers scene

*Starred/Bold in Chorus: Please come to Scene 1 (Prologue) rehearsals when Mrs Nickles is BLOCKING.
**LES MISERABLES**

*Rehearsals listed IN BLUE will take place at Central Pres, Anderson.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>MONDAY 8/22</strong></th>
<th><strong>TUESDAY</strong></th>
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<td>@MSA 2:00-5:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>9-10am Valjean w/Mandy</td>
<td></td>
<td>12:30-2pm Javert + character &amp; songs</td>
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<td>CHORUS + Javert, Valjean, Fantine</td>
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<td>11:15-12:30 Valjean &amp; Javert, Thenardier</td>
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<td>BLOCK Sc 1, 2, 4</td>
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<td>(12:30 lunch break) - MSA</td>
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<tr>
<td>@MSA 4:00-6:00</td>
<td>@Cent Pres 4:00-6:00</td>
<td>@MSA 3:30-4:30</td>
<td>@MSA 4:00-6:00</td>
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<td>@MSA 3:30-4:30</td>
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<td>Marius/Cosette/Eponine Sc 15, 16, 20</td>
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<td>Gavroche</td>
<td>Students Sc 12, 14, 19, 20</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Music—Scene 1, 2, 4</td>
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<td>9-10am Valjean w/Mandy</td>
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<td>12:30-2:00 Mm Thenardier &amp; Thenardier, Little Cosette Sc 7, 8, 9</td>
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<td>11:15-12:30 Valjean</td>
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<td>12:30-1:45 Eponine @MSA</td>
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<td>EAT, SLEEP &amp; DRINK WATER</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00 - 2:00 Javert</td>
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<td>AND MEMORIZE YOUR LINES!</td>
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<td>@Cent Pres 4:00-6:00</td>
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<td>Mme &amp; M Thenardier + &quot;INN peeps&quot;; Sailors &amp; Prostitutes (no Fantine) BLOCK Sc 8 Work Sc 4</td>
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<td>BLOCK Sc 5, 6, Working Sc 1, 2, 3, 4</td>
<td>Music — Scenes TBA</td>
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**LES MISERABLES**  
*September Rehearsals*

*Rehearsals listed IN BLUE will take place at Central Pres, Anderson.*

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<td>Labor Day Weekend</td>
<td>12:30-1:30 Javert</td>
<td>12:30-1:45pm Eponine</td>
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<td>@MSA 2:00-4:00 EVERYONE Run Act I</td>
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<td><strong>After school</strong></td>
<td>@MSA 3:30-6:00</td>
<td>@MSA 3:30-4:15</td>
<td>@MSA 3:30-6:00</td>
<td>@MSA 3:30-6:00 -Everybody</td>
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<td>4:00-5:30 Work with Principles scenes TBA</td>
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<td><strong>rehearsals</strong></td>
<td>CHORUS + Students Music Sc 7, 9, 14, 17, 18 <em>May leave when done.</em></td>
<td>Gavroche</td>
<td>CHORUS, Students + All principals except Fantine BLOCK 10, 14, 17, 18, (9)</td>
<td>Wk 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 14</td>
<td>Music for 18</td>
<td>Lori wk w/ Cosette, Marius, Eponine Enjolras, Javert</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Then...</td>
<td>Students – Scene 13 ABC Cafe</td>
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<td>Mme &amp; M Thenardier + &quot;INN peeps&quot;; Sailors &amp; Prostitutes + Fantine)</td>
<td>Work Sc 4 &amp; 8</td>
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<th>SUNDAY 9/18</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Daytime</strong></td>
<td>9-10am Cosette w/Mandy</td>
<td>12:30-2:00</td>
<td>12:30-1:45pm Eponine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>@MSA 2:00-5:00 Mn Thenardier, Thenardier, Valjean, Marius, Javert, Thomas Head</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1:00-2:00 Javert @MSA (26)</td>
<td>Mm Thenardier &amp; Thenardier Sc 25, 29</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Callie, Beth, Erin F., Mansi, Madison B., Zayna, Rebecca Reiter, Katherine Curnow, Erin Shuler</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>After school</strong></td>
<td>@MSA 3:30-6:00</td>
<td>@MSA 3:30-4:15</td>
<td>@MSA 3:30-6:00</td>
<td>@MSA 3:30-6:00</td>
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<td>Block 25, 26, 29 w/just principles</td>
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<td><strong>rehearsals</strong></td>
<td>Students, Valjean, Javert, Gavroche, Eponine, Revolutionaries Music— Music Act 2 (Mary works w/Fantine)</td>
<td>Gavroche</td>
<td>Cosette, Valjean, Marius BLOCK 27, 28 Work 15, 16, 17</td>
<td>Students, Valjean, Javert, Gavroche, Eponine, HS Girls Revolutionaries Block 22, 23, 24 Work 19, 20, 21</td>
<td>Lori wk w/ Principles Sc. 27, 28, 29&amp;30 if time she can work w/students</td>
<td>Work 27, 28</td>
</tr>
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</table>
**LES MISERABLES**

*September Rehearsals*

*Rehearsals listed IN BLUE will take place at Central Pres, Anderson.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday 9/19</th>
<th>Tuesday 9/20</th>
<th>Wednesday 9/21</th>
<th>Thursday 9/22</th>
<th>Friday 9/23</th>
<th>Sunday 9/25</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Daytime</strong></td>
<td>1:00-2:00 Javert @MSA</td>
<td>12:30-2:00 Mm Thenardier &amp; Thenardier Sc 25, 29, 8</td>
<td>12:30-1:45pm Eponine – fill her in on Rue Plummert blocking</td>
<td></td>
<td>@MSA 1:00-5:30 EVERYONE Work through Act I OFF BOOK!!!</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>After School rehearsals</strong></td>
<td>@MSA 3:30-6:00</td>
<td>@MSA 3:30-6:00</td>
<td>@MSA 3:30-6:00</td>
<td>@MSA 3:30-6:00</td>
<td>@MSA 3:30-6:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students, Valjean, Javert, Gavroche, Revolutionaries</td>
<td>Wedding Dancers, Cosette, Marius, Mm Thenardier &amp; Thenardier</td>
<td>Choreograph &amp; Block Sc. 29 Work unit 88 w/ladies</td>
<td>Gavroche Valjean, Cosette, Fantine, Eponine, Marius, Thenardier Wedding Dancers Block 30 w/out chorus Work 25-29 If time work Dreamed a Dream – Fill</td>
<td>Valjean, Cosette, Fantine, Eponine, Marius, Thenardier Wedding Dancers Block 30 w/chorus Run Act II Act II</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday 9/26</th>
<th>Tuesday 9/27</th>
<th>Wednesday 9/28</th>
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<th>Friday 9/30</th>
<th>Saturday 10/1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Daytime</strong></td>
<td>1:00-2:00 Javert @MSA</td>
<td>12:30-2:00 Mm Thenardier &amp; Thenardier Sc 25, 29</td>
<td>12:30-1:45pm Eponine</td>
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<td>Rehearsal Cancelled</td>
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<td><strong>After School rehearsals</strong></td>
<td>@MSA 3:30-6:00</td>
<td>@MSA 3:30-6:00</td>
<td>@MSA 3:30-6:00</td>
<td>@MSA 3:30-6:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students, Valjean, Javert, Gavroche, Eponine, Revolutionaries</td>
<td>EVERYONE! Work through Act II OFF BOOK!!!</td>
<td>Gavroche Principles work with Mary Scenes TBA Dreamed a Dream Definitely wk sc Fantine’s Death</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Poor, The Beggars, The Workers, Sailors, Prostitutes, INN PEEPS, Fantine, Valjean, Mm Thenardier, Thenardier, Little Cosette, Marius – Work Scene 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 – mvt of People Sing and chorus of One Day More GO TO CAVALIER’S GAME</td>
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**LES MISERABLES**

October Rehearsals

*Rehearsals listed IN RED will take place at Electric City Playhouse, 514 Murray Avenue.*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>MONDAY 10/3</th>
<th>TUESDAY 10/4</th>
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<td><strong>Daytime</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>9-10am Cosette w/Mandy</td>
<td>12:30-2:00</td>
<td>12:30-1:45pm Eponine</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00-2:00 Javert @MSA</td>
<td>Mm Thenardier &amp; Thenardier Sc 25, 29,8</td>
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<td>@MSA</td>
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<td>@MSA</td>
<td>@MSA</td>
<td>@MSA</td>
<td>EVERYBODY RUN THROUGH SHOW WITH THE KEYBOARD PLAYERS</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:30-6:00</td>
<td>3:30-4:15</td>
<td>3:30-6:00</td>
<td>3:30-6:30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students, Valjean, Javert, Gavroche, Eponine, Revolutionaries</td>
<td>Wedding Dancers, Cosette, Marius, Mm Thenardier &amp; Thenardier, Sailors &amp; Pimps INN PEEPS &amp; little Cosette &amp; Eponine</td>
<td>Gavroche</td>
<td>All Principles - Work scenes</td>
<td>EVERYONE! Run Act I &amp; II OFF BOOK!!</td>
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<td>Work Scenes with Students and Valjean/Javert – Also Sc 1</td>
<td>Work 4, 7, 8 &amp; 29</td>
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<tr>
<td>9-10am Cosette w/Mandy</td>
<td>Set Construction at the Theatre</td>
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<td>Move Set into Theatre</td>
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<td>@ECP</td>
<td>@ECP</td>
<td>@ECP</td>
<td>@ECP</td>
<td>@ECP</td>
<td>ECP 2:00 – 5:30 Sing through the show with the orchestra</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00 – 8:00</td>
<td>4:00 – 8:00</td>
<td>4:00 – 8:00</td>
<td>4:00 – 8:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>No Rehearsal – We will be building the set at the theatre. Rest – review your lines and drink water -</td>
<td>EVERYONE!</td>
<td>REST – REST – REST</td>
<td>EVERYONE!</td>
<td>EVERYONE!</td>
<td>Run the show in costume</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adjust Act I to the set Bring a bag supper</td>
<td></td>
<td>Adjust Act II to the Set Bring a bag supper</td>
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# Key:
- **Daytime** activities are held during the day.
- **After school rehearsals** take place after school hours.
- **EVERYBODY** indicates activities for all.
- **RUN THROUGH SHOW WITH THE KEYBOARD PLAYERS**
- **Sing through the show with the orchestra**
# LES MISERABLES

## October Rehearsals

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONDAY 10/17</th>
<th>TUESDAY 10/18</th>
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<th>THURSDAY 10/20</th>
<th>FRIDAY 10/21</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>After school rehearsals</strong></td>
<td>Meet @ MSA and transport to ECP</td>
<td>Meet @ MSA - transport to ECP</td>
<td>Meet @ MSA - transport to ECP</td>
<td>Meet @ MSA</td>
<td>Meet @ MSA by 5:30 to transport over to ECP</td>
<td>Meet @ MSA by 1:30 to transport over to ECP</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4:00 - 9:00</td>
<td>5:00 - 9:30</td>
<td>5:00 - 9:30</td>
<td>5:00/5:30 - 10:00</td>
<td>5:00/5:30 - 10:00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Full Technical Rehearsal starting at 6:00 -</td>
<td>We will transport to ECP @ 6:30</td>
<td>We will transport to ECP @ 6:30</td>
<td>It's Showtime!!!</td>
<td>It's Showtime!!!</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bring a bag supper</td>
<td>Start the run through at 7:00</td>
<td>Transport to ECP at 6:30 for a 7:00 run through</td>
<td>Transport to ECP at 6:30 for a 7:00 show!</td>
<td>Transport to ECP at 6:30 for a 7:00 show!</td>
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<td>Dress Rehearsal</td>
<td>Dress Rehearsal -</td>
<td>It's Showtime!!!</td>
<td>It's Showtime!!!</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Bring a bag supper</td>
<td>Bring a bag supper</td>
<td>Transport to ECP at 6:30 for a 7:00 show!</td>
<td>Transport to ECP at 6:30 for a 7:00 show!</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>After school rehearsals</strong></td>
<td>Meet at ECP</td>
<td>@ MSA</td>
<td>@ MSA</td>
<td>Meet @ MSA by 5:30 to transport over to ECP</td>
<td>Meet @ MSA by 1:30 to transport over to ECP</td>
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<td>4:00 - 7:00</td>
<td>5:00/5:30 - 10:00</td>
<td>5:00/5:30 - 10:00</td>
<td>6:30</td>
<td>1:30 to transport over to ECP</td>
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<td>REST - REST - REST</td>
<td>REST - REST - REST</td>
<td>Quick run through - no costumes</td>
<td>It's Showtime!!!</td>
<td>It's Showtime!!!</td>
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<tr>
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<td>DRINK WATER AND REST</td>
<td>DRINK WATER AND REST</td>
<td>It's Showtime!!!</td>
<td>Transport to ECP at 6:30 for a 7:00 show!</td>
<td>Transport to ECP at 6:30 for a 7:00 show!</td>
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**Showtimes:**
- 7:00 SHOWTIME!
- 3:00 SHOWTIME!
# August 2011

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<tr>
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<td>Production meeting</td>
<td>Meet with Lighting Designer</td>
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<td>Costume, prop and set design</td>
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<td>Costumes, Set and Prop Design &amp; Construction</td>
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- **August 7**: Begin ad design
- **August 8**: Begin prop/set design
- **August 14**: T-shirt sizes
- **August 21**: Measure Actors for Costumes
- **August 28**: Production
- **August 21**: Costume, Set and Prop Construction
- **August 29**: Costume, Set and Prop Construction
<table>
<thead>
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- Costume, Set and Prop Construction
- Pre-sale tickets
- Costume, Set and Prop Construction
- Program Deadline
- Prop and set piece deadline
- Ads program

September 2011
# October 2011

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<td><strong>Loading in Set</strong></td>
<td><strong>Finish Set construction</strong></td>
<td><strong>Set Construction/decorating</strong></td>
<td><strong>Hang Lights</strong></td>
<td><strong>Hang/Focus Lighting</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Tech Run Musicians</strong></td>
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LES MÎSÈRABLES® SCHOOL EDITION

Performed entirely by students
A musical by ALAIN BOUBLIL and CLAUDE-MICHEL SCHÖNBERG
Based on the novel by VICTOR HUGO
Music by CLAUDE-MICHEL SCHÖNBERG
Lyrics by HERBERT KRETZMER
Original French text by ALAIN BOUBLIL and JEAN-MARC NATEL
Additional material by JAMES FENTON
Orchestrations by JOHN CAMERON
Original London production directed and adapted by
TREVOR NUNN and JOHN CAIRD
Original London production by
CAMERON MACKINTOSH and THE ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY
School Edition specially adapted and licensed by
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(212) 541-4684
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# Musical Numbers

## Act I

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## Act I

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**Act II**

**Scene 19 - The Barricade**

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<td>Scene</td>
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<td>Scene 9 - The Bargain</td>
<td>Unit 39</td>
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<td>Scene 18 - One Day More</td>
<td>Unit 65</td>
<td>Valjean</td>
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<td>Scene 26 - Javert's Suicide</td>
<td>Unit 86</td>
<td>Valjean</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scene 30 - Epilogue</td>
<td>Unit 94</td>
<td>Valjean</td>
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<tr>
<td>Act II</td>
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AT THE END OF THE DAY
I DREAMED A DREAM
THE DOCKS
BEGINNING OF CART CRASH
END OF CART CRASH/COURTROOM
ABC CAFE

Students
drinking in
table/chairs
large platform
RUE PLUMET
A HEART FULL OF LOVE
THE ATTACK
ONE MORE DAY
BARRICADE (TRANSITION TO GARDEN)
STREETS OF PARIS
BARRICADE - END OF 19, THRU 24
WEDDING
A HEART FULL OF LOVE
THE ATTACK
ONE MORE DAY

EPILOGUE
Floors / Platforms
blacksmiths, bronze smiths and potters, leather workers... Saxon craftsmen also made elaborate jewelry for the rich ... bookbinders, engravers, printers, machine-tool makers, textile spinners, and metalworkers... cloth finishers and dyers ... nail, cutlery, and leather goods ... wound bobbins and prepared spools, handloom weaving, hand spinning, hosiery, embroidery, lace making, braiding straw, and metalworking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calender Worker, Calenderer</td>
<td>A person who operated a machine which pressed cloth and paper using two large rollers (calenders).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calico Printer</td>
<td>dyed and colored calico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cap Manufacturer</td>
<td>owner of a cap making factory or establishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cartridge Maker</td>
<td>made cartridges for the firearms industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chintz Glazer</td>
<td>A textile mill worker who applied sizing or starch to fabric to give it more body and a smooth surface.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloth Linter or Picker</td>
<td>A person who removed unwanted threads and lint from the finished material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coiner</td>
<td>A person who worked at the Mint stamping out coins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cord Twister, Rope</td>
<td>Someone who twisted fibres to make cord or rope.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton Feeder</td>
<td>A person employed in the cotton mills to feed the cotton into the loom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court Toolmaker</td>
<td>A manufacturer of tools used to produce carts known as courts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artificial Flower Maker</td>
<td>Made and sold artificial flowers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bag Maker, Canvas / Paper</td>
<td>Someone who made bags out of canvas or paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bead Maker</td>
<td>Made beads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bead Piercer</td>
<td>One who drilled the holes in beads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bead Worker</td>
<td>Someone who worked making decorative items out of beads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bed Maker or Bedding</td>
<td>Someone who made beds and bedding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Liner</td>
<td>One who covers cardboard with plain or ornamental paper by hand, using paste and brush, or one who passes cardboard into a pasting machine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolt Finisher</td>
<td>Someone who cut the threads on bolts to finish them off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bone Button Turner</td>
<td>made buttons using a lathe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bone Lace Maker</td>
<td>made pillow lace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bone Mould Turner</td>
<td>made the moulds for button manufacturers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brayer</td>
<td>A person who ground things up in a mortar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broom Dasher</td>
<td>A dealer in brooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silk Engine Turner</td>
<td>Someone who turned the wheel on the automatic silk weaving looms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stick Dresser</td>
<td>Someone who dresses walking sticks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Title</td>
<td>Description</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stick Finisher</td>
<td>Someone who finishes walking sticks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stick Maker or Stickmaker</td>
<td>Someone who made walking sticks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stick Manufacturer</td>
<td>The owner of a walking stick making factory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stick Polisher</td>
<td>Someone who polished walking sticks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockinger</td>
<td>Someone who made stockings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweeper Out</td>
<td>Someone employed in the mills, and other industries, to keep the floor clean.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match Box Maker</td>
<td>Someone who makes matchboxes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match Maker</td>
<td>Someone who makes matches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piecer</td>
<td>Someone who worked in a spinning mill, piecing together any threads which broke. Often a child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plaiter</td>
<td>Someone who made straw plaits used in making hats etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walker</td>
<td>A cloth worker who cleaned and thickened the cloth by wetting it then walking over it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wool Stapler</td>
<td>Someone who sorted the wool into different grades.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reine Berthe instructing girls to spin flax on spindles using distaffs

Hand loom at Hjerl Hede, Denmark, showing grayish warp threads (back) and cloth woven with red filling yarn (front).
Sewing help:
1) We have two French dolls from the 1960s that need 1830's period clothes made for them.

Pewter, tin or wooden plates -- Qty needed: 6-10

Platters -- Qty: 2

Pewter, tin or wooden mugs/cups -- Qty needed: 24
1 or 2 pitchers

Wooden bucket or pail -- Qty needed: 1

Misc barrels (1 or 2)
Pair of Candlesticks (pewter, silverplate, wood—if we can paint them) 18-24" high

Carpet bag 1 (or 2, if very similar)

Large funnel for meat grinder – Qty: 1
Denix 19Th Century French Percussion Dueling Pistol

Price: $43.95 & this item ships for FREE

Amazon
ENU & TABLE LAYOUT

For six to eight diners: one large plate, two medium plates, & four small plates.

FIRST COURSE FOR DINNER.

- A piece of beef, garnished with pasta and skewered sweetbreads, topped with ham essence.
- Two soups: one a pigeon bisque, the other made from a fat capon with tuce and garnished with asparagus.

FOUR SMALL DISHES.

- Two fat, English-style, spit-roasted eckes topped with ham essence.
- Fillet mignon with lettuce.
- Warm rabbit pâté.
- Two small geeselings with asparagus.

SECOND COURSE

THREE ROASTED.

- One of two Campines.
- Another of two young hares.
- Another of eight pigeons.
- Two salads.
- Two sauces.

FOUR MEDIUM DISHES

- One loaf ham bread.
- A spit-roasted sweetbread with jus on the top.
- One stew of agaric mushrooms.
- Asparagus with juice.
Smaller barrel (1) - like nail kegs

Old wooden boxes for ammunition Qty: 4-6

Carpet bag – with short handles 1 (or 2, if very similar)

Old Straw broom (1)
Lobes of Liver (Cat)
Visceral Surface

For Thenardier’s Inn -
Idea of things to throw
Satchels
From the John Forsythe estate, this harlequin set of eight Late George III ladder back chairs from the early 19th century and have rush seats. Comprising two armchairs and six side chairs, individual chairs measure 42 1/4 high by 22 1/2 inches width by 18 1/2 inches deep. The set is expected to bring $2,000 to $3,000.
Used during the Civil War and slave trade days right through the turn of the cent in the old west

Bean cobb leg irons

Pair of convict dead man leg irons
It is made of cones of cream puffs which is filled with French pastry cream and coated with caramelized. It is decorated with marzipan flowers and chocolate is drizzled all over. A croquembouche is a tower of cream puffs held together with caramel. Sugar. In France it is the traditional cake for weddings, baptisms or communions.
French Wedding Traditions

The traditional bridal trousseau, or hope chest, originated in France - from the French word trousse, meaning bundle.

White wedding gown – several 100 yrs ago.

Flowers and bridal bouquets – each flower represents a special and unique meaning to the bride and groom

Also—helped freshen things up (before deodorant and perfumes)

Wedding Reception

At the wedding reception, guests bring along small cakes and pile them together at a considerable height at the center of the table. If the couple is able to kiss without knocking out the pile, it would symbolize life-long prosperity.

The couple then raise a toast to each other from a traditionally engraved cup known as the 'La coupe de mariage' usually a precious family heirloom passed down from generation to generation. (champagne)

Traditional French food, French wine and the French wedding cake are the highlights of a reception. The traditional French wedding cake is known as 'Croquembouche' which means 'crunching in one's mouth' was invented by a French chef at the end of 17th century. It is made of cones of cream puffs which is filled with French pastry cream and coated with caramelized sugar. It is decorated with marzipan flowers and chocolate is drizzled all over.
The cake is made of small, creme-filled pastry puffs piled in a pyramid and covered in a caramel glaze and spun sugar.

In a church filled with incense and flowers, the couple stands beneath a silk canopy. A predecessor of the veil, a square of silk fabric, "carre," is held over the head of the bride and groom as the couple received the priest's final blessing. They were designed to protect the couple from descending malice. The same veil is used for the baptism of their new born child.
LES MIS – Antique French Rod Iron Gates

18th c. "loop" design

Gates -
Hello to All,

First of all, let me introduce myself to those who do not know me. I am Debbie Culwell, and I am the set decorator for the play (also, one of the art teachers at Montessori).

We are in the process of gathering props and need quite a few items that you may possess and be willing to let us borrow. Please know that we try to be very careful with borrowed items, but accidents do happen in theater, so don’t give us anything too valuable or irreplaceable.

I have attached a list of construction, sewing, and prop needs along with images of the style we have in mind.

*Construction help:*
1) Wooden wheels to be used in a portable “textile factory” set piece.

2) Wooden 2-wheel cart – although we may have access to a donkey cart.
This is a local community theatre "stock" prop that I have used several times over the years. It is a period wagon that was made of sturdy welded steel about 20 years ago. It originally was the "Surrey With a Fringe on Top" for a community production of "Oklahoma!" But over the years it has been converted to Tevye's cart for "Fiddler on the Roof", the pumpkin coach for "Cinderella", the "Wells Fargo Wagon" for "Music Man", and the runaway cart for "Les Miserables". So this old prop will surely live on to make many more appearances in our shows! To rent it, you can find the Triad Sceneshop link below. Click my photos to enlarge them:

Above, you can see the carriage as I converted it into the runaway cart for our 2008 production of "Les Miserables The School Edition". This is after the lights come up and Valjean lifts the front wheel to save the man. For this period look, I fabricated a fake driver's seat and a dozen burlap bags filled with lightweight styrofoam packing peanuts!

But the cart entered the stage in darkness. First, I had the crew quickly push it out onto the rotating electric turntable. Then the scene was lit with only strobe lights, so it gave the illusion that the cart was rolling. You can see the actor falling under the front wheel of the cart, which is actually standing still on the rapidly rotating turntable. The "rolling" effect was stunning to the audience.

high school and community theaters near Greensboro, North Carolina are welcome to make use of this website for trading their show-specific props, costumes and set pieces. If you are a local 'rama teacher or director, please join this blog and start sharing today! (Photo: "Les Mis" 2008)
Lamp Post
*The bare carriage frame can be rented locally at the Triad Sceneshop. See it at the bottom of their "props" file: [http://picasaweb.google.com/TriadStageSceneShop](http://picasaweb.google.com/TriadStageSceneShop)
Double-breasted coat with the front sloped to form two tails square ended. The deep lapels have an M notch. The sleeves are gathered and padded at the shoulders. The waistcoat has a high stiff collar, c. 1807

The single-breasted overcoat with an M shaped notch between collar and lapel is worn over a frock coat and two waistcoats square cut in the front. The pantaloons are tucked into knee high buskin boots with a large turn-down in a different colour. The tall hat is of beaver, c. 1803

Coats

Skirted coats were worn throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. The coat tails at the back were divided by a vent and had pleated tops ending with hip buttons. There were either pockets in the pleats or a flapped pocket each side of the skirt at waist level. The flaps were mainly rectangular, but were scalloped for Court wear. The front skirts ended at the waist and met the back tails horizontally – similar to present day dress coats. Another fashion had the fronts curving down from the last button to the back. This style resembled the contemporary morning coats.

The notch between the stiff stand-fall collars was V or M shaped. The M was popular until about 1855 for everyday wear and persisted into the 1870s for evening wear. Coat sleeves were either cuffed at the wrists or had side slits closed with two buttons.

There were several coat styles, single or double breasted. On single-breasted styles the fronts sloped away from the waist and the tails were rounded. The two or three buttons were mostly metal plated for day wear whilst for evenings they were flat gilt; the coats themselves were mainly dark blue. On double-breasted styles the fronts overlapped with a double row of buttons, one for fastening. The front skirts were either square or rounded and the tails at the back squared. The sleeves were plain and the collar was lapelled.

High stand-fall collars and sleeves gathered and padded at the shoulders was a French style named after Jean de Bry.

From about 1820 most double-breasted coats had a separate piece of material for the buttons and buttonholes known as a button stand. This took the strain from the bulk of the material when the coat was buttoned up.

The coat body had only three seams, one either side and one centre back, with the side seams set towards the back. As the coats were made to fit tightly for evening wear they were almost impossible to close, thus revealing the waistcoat, shirt and cravat. In order to give a better fit a dart or separate piece of material was inserted under the armholes to the waist giving the coat five seams and six pieces of material.

In the early part of the century the collar was large and stiff, lined with buckram. The front of the coats were often padded. The waist-high pockets could be concealed in pleats or be flapped.
**PLATE 3** Left The top hat, made of black silk, is worn over a short hairstyle. The morning coat has short revers and with three buttons above the waist. The short collar is slightly high, worn with a cravat. The pin-striped trousers flare shoes, c. 1900. Centre back The informal cut-away M-shaped revers and square ended tails. The pantaloons buttoned up at the sides and strapped beneath the shoe.

Centre A coloured beaver top hat is worn over the curly hair with full side whiskers and beard. The single-breasted frock coat is thigh length with a flared skirt, c. 1857. Right Victorian dandy. The single-breasted jacket is short and loose with a rounded collar worn over a waistcoat. The jacket is bound in braid, and the contrasting loose trousers are in a check material, c. 1870.
72 Patriots wearing Phrygian caps, c. 1793
The drummer is wearing a short peasant jacket called a carmagnole. His pantalons à pont open in front by means of a panel which is held in position with three buttons. The red felt Phrygian cap is upright with a pointed crown and ornamented with the red, white and blue tricolor cockade of the French Revolution.
The other figure is also wearing a Phrygian cap with the tricolor cockade, a carmagnole and a redingote. The revers and short collar are in a red cloth. The length of his pantalons à pont is governed by the height of his jockey boots, which are highly polished black leather with light brown leather turn-downs and boot straps hanging on either side. He has a tricolor sash of the French Revolution over his shoulder.

73 Lady in riding for riding dress. The those on a collars. T
The gentlemen on the left is wearing a double-breasted, knee-length redingote with hip-level, horizontal, flapped side pockets and fairly loose-fitting sleeves. It is fastened from the neck to just below the waistline with two rows of buttons. The back of the coat has a vent with two buttons in the centre. He is wearing top boots and a top hat with vertical sides.

The other gentleman is dressed in the all-enveloping, loose-fitting garrick redingote with several collars. It fastens down the front and is fitted with drawstrings and buttons and straps to alter the girth if required. The turned-up collar or cape can be closed at the throat with a strap and button. The vertical pockets have buttoned-up flaps. The brim of the gentleman's top hat turns up on either side.
Headwear

There was a great variety of headwear, in the early part of the nineteenth century. Low flat crowns with curved brims were mainly for country wear whilst bowl shaped crowns with narrower curved brims were worn in town and were the forerunner of the present-day bowler hat. By the 1860s felt bowler hats became taller. They were also known as Derbys. For summer they were in lighter colours, being either brown or black in the winter.

Low crowned hats, also known as wide-awakes, had wide brims. They could be of felt or straw. Straw hats worn informally in the summer had smaller brims with a ribbon hatband, the ends of which were sometimes allowed to hang behind.

Tail-crowned top hats were one of the most popular and had many variations. The brims could be turned down front and back. The tall crowns could taper or be cylindrical. One popular style was the Wellington hat, typical of the 1830s, the crown curved outwards at the top.

Top hats were stiff and silk covered for formal occasions. They could be worn with frock or dress coats. By the end of Queen Victoria's reign top hats generally fell into decline.

For evening wear, however, the gibus top hat asd well as a coocked chapeau bras carried flat under the arm, remained in vogue.

By the 1870s a deerstarker, a type of cap, had earflaps. It was often worn in the country with Norfolk jackets or caped coats.

Stiff-crowned caps were worn for horse riding and could have a peak in the front. By the late 1830s caps made in quarters with a band, and sometimes a peak, were worn by schoolboys as well as for sports like golf, tennis and cricket.

A Homburg or Trilby hat was fashionable from the end of the century. It was of felt and the crown was indented from front to back.
and fashionable method was the bagging which held the hair in a black bag tied with drawstrings at the nape, finished with a large bow.

The variety of wigs was endless. In the second part of the eighteenth century wigs with queues became smaller as curls were worn less. A toupee, fashionable in the 1750s and 1760s had the front hair brushed straight back with horizontal curls just above the ears. From the late 1760s the front hair could be raised on pads. The toupee, either egg shaped or fanned out on the top, came straight down without sloping to the back of the head. The Macaronis wore large versions of a catogan or club wig, popular from the 1760s. This had a broad flat queue turned up on itself and tied in the middle with a black ribbon.

Shortly before wigs went out of fashion the hedgehog or herrison cut enjoyed a brief period of popularity. This had the top and sides brushed out in spikes and was either worn as a wig or styled from the natural hair itself. From the 1790s the natural hair was cut short in a variety of styles, from short crops to chin or shoulder length hair.

The Brutus crop, one of many fashions, was a short frizzy windswept style.

Accessories

Until about 1730 longer gloves were worn; they were made similar to the short ones, but could be fringed. Mittens were also still popular. Muffs remained popular, made in a variety of materials such as feathers and fur, often ribbon trimmed. From about 1740 small wrist muffs were worn both for warmth and protection of the shirt wrist ruffles.

Snuff boxes remained in fashion and were carried in waistcoat pockets. The insides of the lids often mirrored, the outside having a painted miniature, or of precious metal, tortoiseshell, ivory, etc.

Canes came into fashion early in the century, either long or short. The ornate head often curved could be detachable and hold scent or other small items in the hollow. Sticks were also popular from the 1730s. Both these items could have a ring attachment and looped to a coat button or to a finger for carrying.

Fob pocket watches were carried in the waistband pocket of breeches. The watch case was often of tortoiseshell or precious metal and through the ring handle short ribbons could be attached to a key chain and the waistband. The Macaronis used a great deal of perfume and make-up - they even carried small combs for their eyebrows.

Face patches remained popular as a fashion accessory as well as covering up skin blemishes.

To enhance their legs, gentlemen resorted to pads and bandages to give the calves a better line.
Wellington breeches worn over boots, c 1820

Shoe with a spat buttoning up the side

Leather boots with buckles and strapped fastenings up the sides, c 1815

Footwear

In the first part of the century boots were very fashionable and were named after eminent people such as Wellington, Napoleon, Blucher. They were mainly military styles made of black calf, to the knees, but slightly lower at the back for easier movement. Spurs were worn on all occasions by the fashionable. Loops at the top on either side facilitated pulling on the boots which were also held up with boot garters attached at the back of the boots, and fastened above the knees. These styles with low square heels and rounded toes were generally worn with breeches. Wellington boots became fashionable about 1819 and Bluchers, a type of half boot, were popular just a little later. They were open in the front and fastened over a tongue.

By the later 1870s Wellington boots lost their popularity and were replaced by buttoned boots. By the 1880s patent and suede boots were worn for the daytime.

Hessian boots still remained popular from the previous century and were worn with pantaloons, Buskins were very similar, except they were slightly shorter and did not have the tassel decoration in the front. Highlo-ws were another style still popular, especially amongst the working class and for country wear.

By the 1830s heels became higher and toes were more pointed. In 1839 when vulcanized rubber was patented this was used extensively for the heels and soles of boots, shoes and even sports shoes with canvas uppers.

Elastic-sided boots with an insertion of elastic either side were popular from the 1840s until the end of the century. After the French Revolution in 1789 the popularity of buckles gradually declined. They were slowly replaced by laces. Pumps or dress shoes were worn at Court or on formal occasions. They were made of a specially treated leather that was varnished and lacquered until it shone - patent leather. Spatterdashes made of cloth and worn mainly with breeches reached just below the knees and were fastened on the outside with a row of buttons. Half gaiters or spats were shorter to just above the ankles and worn with pantaloons or trousers. They also buttoned on the outside edge, and had a strap passing under the shoe to hold them down. They were often of a canvas in either grey or fawn.

Overshoes such as galoshes or clogs were worn for inclement weather. About 1844 rubber galoshes were made to fit over the shoes.

For Court wear stockings were usually white with clocks, whilst for formal evenings they were flesh coloured in open work with embroidery. By about 1820 ribbed stockings were popular, especially worn with knickerbockers and leggings. Coloured and striped stockings were also seen later in the century. Half stockings, another name for socks, were worn mainly on informal occasions.
1830s FRENCH - MENS FASHION
INSPECTOR JAVERT
9423 Size (8, 10) Small Taille Pattern/Patron
Small Petite Cont. Un Patron de Costura
1830s FRENCH FASHION – WEDDING DRESSES
"The day when a woman who passes in front of you and gives off light as she walks, you are lost; you are in love. There is only one thing to do: think of her so intently that she is forced to think of you."

---Victor Hugo's comment on Juliette Drouet
out from the tiny waist line! By 1830 shoulders were in excess of padding, neck. Huge hats bearing fruit, and feather were ring curled confection of any attempts at natural ing the boot and perhaps even an inch or so of stocking, and very, very full. No hoop had yet been inserted, but stiffened petticoats and crin-o-zephyr, which was a sort of horse-hair tissue, were usually worn.

Starch played a very important and uncomfortable part in the laundering of the 'thirties. Starched ruffles, cuffs, collars, and petticoats were indispensable, and the gigantic puffed sleeves were often assisted by wire supports or little feather pillows.
The dress worn by the lady on the right has a long-waisted, figure-hugging bodice, boned in front. The décolletage has a high V-shaped opening. A deep falling border covers the top of the sleeves which are in the Victoria style. The skirt is full to the ground and gathered into the waist. The top hair is brushed sleekly down from the centre.

The lady on the left is wearing a morning dress with a close-fitting bodice and a net pelerine which has a V-shaped neck with a deep, turned-down collar, and which fastens down the front to join at the pointed waist. The sleeves are tight to the wrists. The bonnet, with a bonnetlet, is set back a little on the head and trimmed with lace and ribbons, which tie under the chin in a bow.
Summer wear for the lady consists of a dress with a close-fitting bodice and tight, elbow-length sleeves. A cape-like collar called a 'bertha' accentuates the sloping shoulder-line. The neckline has a turned-down, frilled collar tied in a bow at the centre. The full skirt is gathered at the waist and falls to the instep. She is wearing a large bonnet, decorated with feathers. She carries a parasol as protection from the sun. The little girl is wearing a tight-fitting bodice and a full skirt. The pantalettes can be seen hanging down below the dress and fastening at the ankles.

The gentleman in the background is wearing a petersham frock coat, short and full. It is double-breasted with a broad velvet collar and sleeves tight to the wrists. He is also wearing double waistcoats.
Hairstyles

As they had lost in popularity wigs were worn mainly by older or professional men. In the early part of the century fashionable hairstyles were short, like a Brutus crop. After about 1810 hair was grown longer allowing curls and waves to become fashionable. The back hair was generally a little shorter this being more practical with the high collars. From about 1880 hair could be brushed back and slightly raised. By the end of the century side partings became popular instead of the centre parting. Long hair was considered artistic and worn only by artists and musicians. A number of hair-care products such as macassar oil, a perfumed hair oil to keep the hairstyles sleek, as well as hair colourants, came onto the market.

High shirt collar with the cravat held in place with a pin. Sideburns down the side of the face were popular, c 1840

Until about 1825 the face was clean shaven, but side whiskers were worn.

The new fashion was whiskers and beard to meet, framing the face. Gradually the clean shaven look came to an end, hair slowly becoming longer with sideburns. Moustaches only became popular again around the mid 1830s when they were combed with side whiskers and a small beard beneath the chin so as not to hide the face. In the 1880s beards became longer and bushier, as did sideburns and whiskers. Small beards, slightly pointed, were fashionable amongst the dandies.

Butterfly collars known by names such as Piccadilly whiskers or Dundrearys could be worn with beards or drooping moustaches. A mixture of beeswax and pomade helped stiffen the moustache.

Hair brushed straight back with short whiskers and a beard, c 1855

High collar extending to the cheeks. The hair is worn short and curly, c 1823

Hair in short curls and clean-shaven face, c 1834

Wavey hairstyles, c 1852

Neckband tied in a bow in front, c 1830

High collar and bow tie, Dundreary side whiskers, c 1857

Butterfly collar with a necktie in a large knot, c 1895
93 Lady and Girl in walking-out costumes, c. 1834

The close-fitting bodice of this lady's dress has ruching right down the front to the hem. The sleeves (imbecile sleeves) are very bouffant coming full to the wrists and fastening in a tight cuff. The skirt, too, is very full and puffed out with starched petticoats. Her silk bonnet has a tall crown. She carries a parasol as an accessory.

Her little girl is wearing a close-fitting bodice with the waist encircled by a wide ribbon sash tied in a bow. The pelerine is edged with ribbon. The skirt is full and comes just below the knee while the overskirt is ruched and edged with ribbon. The cambric trousers or pantalettes are similarly decorated. She is wearing gaiter boots.
fitting and narrow; the original wearer must have been a very thin girl. This simple style of straw bonnet, with a now much smaller crown, is perfect in shape, although it belonged to a doll of about the same date (see child, p. 138).
Lilac silk taffeta dress with tartan stripes in cream and green, with some pink. Bodice and sleeves, waistband and cuffs, lined white cotton. Edges and seams are piped; the deep hem is padded. Large gigot sleeves. Slit to pocket in skirt. Waist tape tie. Snowshill Collection

Black satin shoes, square toe, satin baby ribbon ties. Mrs M. Macbeth

The smallness of the waist is emphasized by the bodice decoration, huge sleeves, and increasingly wide skirts, now gathered all round at the waist. Padded hems are rarely seen after 1828, and the gigot-type sleeve, which appeared c. 1824, lasted to about 1836, with a
1825-30

Red printed cotton day dress, pattern in white with touches of blue, in delicate floral trailing design with Chinese pagoda motifs. Full sleeves, bodice very richly ruched and piped, both being lined in white cotton. Skirt closely gathered at back. Hem frilled to knee-level, edges all piped. Inner waist-ties.

Snowshill Collection

A very good example of a day dress showing the increased decoration of the bodice and hemline, with typical ruching and thick piping, also the V shape to the trimming on the bodice. The 'gigot' sleeves are set into small high armholes, and are very fully gathered.
in the late Capt. Spencer Churchill's Collection shows the fashionable hair style with 'Apollo knots' and ringlets, 1824-33. White continues popular for evening wear, also gauze over satin, with striped printed muslins for day.
1825-28

White striped muslin, floral printed pattern trailing design in deep pinky reds and pale blue-grey. Waist lower with wide shoulder-line, fully gathered sleeves and skirt, with frilled and ruched decoration at hem. Bodice and sleeves lined white cotton. Tape tie inside. Fastens hook and eye at back bodice and on wrist. Slit to pocket. Snow Hill Collection

There is an elegance about this day dress, not only in the cut and fine sewing of the tiny gathers, but also in the printed muslin. This fern-like design is one of the characteristics of the delicate patterns of 1825-30, with nicely restrained colouring. The study from the miniature
similar type again appearing in the 1890's. Shoes continue to be heelless, but the toes became square by the '30's, and at this time are still not made for left or right feet, but a tiny label in French often indicates which is which.
1825-29


Snowshill Collection

Long transparent gauze sleeves are one of the most fashionable features of evening dress at this period; they had first appeared some ten years earlier than this, but were then not so full at the shoulder. These are made very long, hanging in graceful folds round the forearm.
1820-30
Ribbed white cotton cap with muslin frills, finely gathered crown, all beautifully sewn. Second cap, all of net, embroidered net frill, and fully gathered crown pulled up by draw-strings in seam.

1800-25
Two white lawn tuckers, double pleated frills, cord ties with tassels. Shoulder frills on one tucker. Snowshill Collection

The remarkably fine sewing, pleating, and gathering on these accessories have to be seen to be believed. Both caps have the frill round the face and neck in one long piece, overlapping over the forehead, so that it need have no join. The 1822 study shows both cap and tuckers.
of the printed muslin day dress, with the imbecile sleeves, p. 155, and to the one on the reticule, p. 153. The crossing tape ties inside are the same as those found on the cloaks of this decade. The small studies show the underwear in use during the early '30's.
Pagoda-shaped parasols, fashionable from c. 1800, remained in use until c. 1840; the tubular metal stick with ivory handle is found c. 1835. Large silk bonnets, perhaps because they are so large, and therefore difficult to store, are more rarely preserved.
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Rebecca, Maddy & Anna

"Break a Leg,"
Beautiful Girls!
We Love You!
~Your Moms and Dads

Erin Fauble

Erin,
We are so proud of you and all your dedication and hard work!
Love always,
Dad, Mom, Jeff, Teri, Jim, ratties and catties

Paityn Grier

GOOD LUCK PAITYN!

Aaron MacDonald

We are so proud of you!
You are a special grandson and we love you so much
~Sittie and Mimi

Benjamin Otto Sunderman

You have been the Master of our House since 1994!
We love you!!
Mom, Dad & Broderick

Aaron MacDonald

You’re not just a great Gavroche, you’re the best big brother ever!
Love, Elli

Aaron MacDonald

You’re not just a great Gavroche, you’re the best big brother ever!
Love, Elli

Aaron MacDonald

You CO, Aaron!
You are the BEST!
Love you,
Lera and Mary

Alex Marcondes

Alex,
We are so proud of you!
We hope you are having a wonderful time.
~Mom, Alice, Dave, Hannah, & Matthew

Joseph Miller

Whether as Mowgli or Marius, you are always entertaining!
Break a leg, Joseph!
Love, Mom

Aaron MacDonald

It would be the worst thing in my life if I didn’t have a brother like you.
Love, Noah

Aaron MacDonald

We are so proud of you!
We are so proud of you!
~Aaron & Keremy MacDonald

Alex Marcondes

Alex,
We are so proud of you!
~Aaron & Keremy MacDonald

Erin, Maddy & Anna

"Break a Leg,"
Beautiful Girls!
We Love You!
~Your Moms and Dads
Meg Spearman
What a wonderful message you are communicating onstage: “To love another person is to see the face of God.” God’s love shines through you and it lights up the stage and our hearts! Enjoy every moment you have as “Eponine.” We love you!
Dad, Mom, Emily & David

Aaron MacDonald
Break a leg! You’re the best!
We love you, John John & Sister

David Spearman
You are such a blessing to our family. We are so incredibly proud of the tremendous job that you are doing onstage. Even more importantly, we are proud of the fine young man that you have become. The Lord has blessed you with many gifts... use them for His glory!
With love --
Dad, Mom, Emily & Meg

Matt Stamey
“Break a leg,” Matthew!
We love you --
Mom & Dad

BREAK A LEG!
“Bravo!” to the MSA Middle School Cast Members!
Break a leg, Callie! We love you so much!!! --Mom & Dad

Zayna and Sofia, have fun! --Love Mum and Dad

Sweet Bethany, Your Fantine lights up the stage as you light up our lives.

Keegan, you are our shining star and we are so proud of you! Love, Mom & Kady

Beth, Enjoy the stage! You have worked so hard. We are very proud of you.
Mom & Dad

Mansi, have fun. Make us proud. Love Mom, Dad, Sakshi, & Grandparents

Matthew and Rebecca, Super work!!
We love you! --Mom & Dad

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Inspector Javert ....................... Johnny Culpepper
Fantine ................................. Joel McAllister
Little Cosette .............................. Kalie Bonham
Little Eponine .............................. Morgan Rossum
Thénardier ............................ Ben Otto-Sundeman
Mme Thénardier ...................... Kelly Carr
Gavroche .............................. Aaron Macdonald
Marin ............................... Joseph Miller
Couturier ............................ Kathryn Brickle
Eponine .............................. Meg Spearman
Enjolras ......................... Jordan Hanner

The Cast

Honor one of the greats of the musical theatre: Jean Valjean. The Cast of the Montessori School of Anderson's production of "Les Miserables" includes a talented ensemble of students and alumni. The show is directed by Mary Nickles, and the orchestra is conducted by Mandy Keathley.

Directed by Mary Nickles
Montessori School of Anderson & New Covenant School present
Les Miserables: School Edition

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School Edition specially adapted and licensed by
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Les Miserables: School Edition

There are 4 gunshots during the second act.

The Orchestra

Music Director/Orchestra Conductor .......................... Mandy Keathley
Violin ......................................... Marley Reeves
Flute ........................................ Sofia Sheikh
Clarinet, Oboe, English Horn, Sax .................. Donna Mahler
Keyboard 1 ....................................... Joshua Phillips
Keyboard 2 .................................... Jamie Dixon
Percussion .................................. Lori Ramey
Vocal Coach .................................. Deedy Francis
Vocal Coach & Rehearsal Pianist ......................... Lori Courdin

The Crew

Direct ................................. Mary Nickles
Stage Manager ........................... Mary Nickles
Light Designer/Operator .................. Rynde Dial
Sound Designer/Operator ............ Kelley Bailey
Set Design ................................. Kalib Williams
Set Construction ............................ Will Nickles
Costume Design ............................. Keri Yon
Scenic/Prop Decoration ................. Debbie Culpepper
Graphic Design ............................ Debbie Smith

Special Thanks to
Matt Otto-Sundeman, Steven Pregraves, Drake Dial, Dylan Davie, Michael Bridge, Shara Sheehy, Sofia Sheehy, Tony Penny, Woody Moore and the Brooks Center Production Staff, Suzanne and Ondra Mika, Daniel Pefer, David Rogers, NYT Styke, Mark Stamer, Sarah Curnow, Jean Spearman, Carol Faulh, Court Ramsey, Shana Hanner, and parents who brought snacks & helped in many ways.

Costume Construction: Susan Melvin, Becky Estridge, Kelly Ann Hughes, Amy Kub Cau, Renee Potter

Students & Revolutionaries: STUDENTS Aaron Brickle, David Spearman (Comber), Ben Otto-Sundeman, Drake Dial (Pascal), Frantisek Mika (Prouvaire), J T Curnow (Eponine), Logan Hanner, Jean Spearman, and parents who brought snacks & helped in many ways.

Revolutionaries: Ian Cullerson, Matthew Stamey, Thomas Head, Austin Brown

Jordan Hanner attends T L Hanna High School. He plays Enjolras, the charismatic leader of the students, and has had roles in several other productions including Oberon in Midsummer Night's Dream and Charlie Brown in You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown. He's loved learning about Les Misérables, meeting fellow cast members and expanding his vocal range. He would like to thank Mrs. Nickles for putting on the show, Mrs. Yon for making his costume, and Michael Maguire (the inspiration for his character) who played Enjolras in the 10th Anniversary run of Les Misérables.

Joseph Miller from T L Hanna High School is playing the role of Marius. He played Hotch in the 2008 Montessori production of The Jungle Book and has had roles in The Prince and the Pauper, The Wind in the Willows and Snooker at Montessori. His favorite aspect of Les Misérables has been working with so many other talented people with a desire for drama. He would like to thank Mrs. Nickles for pulling this together and allowing him to join.

Kerr Carr is a senior at Montessori School of Anderson and plays the role of Marius. He performed as the Prince in The Prince and the Pauper, The Wind in the Willows and Snooker at Montessori. His favorite aspect of Les Misérables has been working with so many other talented people with a desire for drama. He would like to thank Mrs. Nickles for putting on the show. His major role.

Kathleen Curnow is a senior at Montessori School of Anderson and plays the role of Fantine. She has been active in the school productions for years, most notably as Mrs. Lovett from the production of Sweeney Todd. Her favorite aspect of Les Misérables has been working with so many other talented people with a desire for drama. She would like to thank Mrs. Nickles for pulling this together and allowing her to join.

Matthew Stamey is a senior at Montessori School of Anderson and plays the role of Marius. He performed as the Prince in The Prince and the Pauper, The Wind in the Willows and Snooker at Montessori. His favorite aspect of Les Misérables has been working with so many other talented people with a desire for drama. He would like to thank Mrs. Nickles for putting on the show. His major role.

Mary Nickles is a senior at D W Daniel High School and plays the role of Fantine. She has performed in several other productions including The Sound of Music, The King and I, and The Music Man. Her favorite aspect of Les Misérables has been working with so many other talented people with a desire for drama. She would like to thank Mrs. Nickles for putting on the show. His major role.

Bethany Bovin is a senior at Montessori School of Anderson and plays the role of Fantine. She has been houseproductioned this year. She has performed in several CET productions, but this is her first major role. She would like to thank Mrs. Nickles for all the work she has poured into this production and for giving us this amazing opportunity. She was always grateful for putting on the show, has been actively involved in Montessori productions for years. She is known as "The Face" and she truly enjoys the positive feedback from the audience. She has always been one of her favorite performance venues.

Les Misérables: School Edition

Directed by Mary Nickles
Montessori School of Anderson & New Covenant School present
Les Miserables: School Edition

Directed entirely by students
A musical by Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schonberg
School Edition specially adapted and licensed by
Music Theatre International and Cameron Mackintosh

There are 4 gunshots during the second act.

The Cast

Jean Valjean ............................... Alex Merendino
Inspector Javert ....................... Johnny Culpepper
Fantine ................................. Joel McAllister
Little Cosette .............................. Kalie Bonham
Little Eponine .............................. Morgan Rossum
Thénardier ............................ Ben Otto-Sundeman
Mme Thénardier ...................... Kelly Carr
Gavroche .............................. Aaron Macdonald
Marin ............................... Joseph Miller
Couturier ............................ Kathryn Brickle
Eponine .............................. Meg Spearman
Enjolras ......................... Jordan Hanner

The Cast

Honor one of the greats of the musical theatre: Jean Valjean. The Cast of the Montessori School of Anderson's production of "Les Miserables" includes a talented ensemble of students and alumni. The show is directed by Mary Nickles, and the orchestra is conducted by Mandy Keathley.

Directed by Mary Nickles
Montessori School of Anderson & New Covenant School present
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The Orchestra

Music Director/Orchestra Conductor .......................... Mandy Keathley
Violin ......................................... Marley Reeves
Flute ........................................ Sofia Sheikh
Clarinet, Oboe, English Horn, Sax .................. Donna Mahler
Keyboard 1 ....................................... Joshua Phillips
Keyboard 2 .................................... Jamie Dixon
Percussion .................................. Lori Ramey
Vocal Coach .................................. Deedy Francis
Vocal Coach & Rehearsal Pianist ......................... Lori Courdin

The Crew

Direct ................................. Mary Nickles
Stage Manager ........................... Mary Nickles
Light Designer/Operator .................. Rynde Dial
Sound Designer/Operator ............ Kelley Bailey
Set Design ................................. Kalib Williams
Set Construction ............................ Will Nickles
Costume Design ............................. Keri Yon
Scenic/Prop Decoration ................. Debbie Culpepper
Graphic Design ............................ Debbie Smith

Special Thanks to
Matt Otto-Sundeman, Steven Pregraves, Drake Dial, Dylan Davie, Michael Bridge, Shara Sheehy, Sofia Sheehy, Tony Penny, Woody Moore and the Brooks Center Production Staff, Suzanne and Ondra Mika, Daniel Pefer, David Rogers, NYT Styke, Mark Stamer, Sarah Curnow, Jean Spearman, Carol Faulh, Court Ramsey, Shana Hanner, and parents who brought snacks & helped in many ways.

Costume Construction: Susan Melvin, Becky Estridge, Kelly Ann Hughes, Amy Kub Cau, Renee Potter
Les Misérables
School Edition

Ticket Pre-Sale!

NCS and MSA families and cast members can order tickets in advance of the public ticket release for Les Misérables. Tickets will sell out fast among the community. We encourage you to order your seats now!

$12 Performances
Oct 20, 21, 22, 23*
Oct 27, 28, 29, 30*

(advance price)

13pm matinee

Your Name
Phone #

Indicate how many tickets for each show:

Th, 10/20
Fri, 10/21
Sat, 10/22
Sun, 10/23*

Th, 10/27
Fri, 10/23
Sat, 10/29
Sun, 10/30*

*3pm matinee/all other shows 7pm

Total # of Tickets x $12 = $

*Make checks out to MSA or NCS, Put "Les Mis" in the subject line.
Les Mis
Dress Rehearsal