



ORLANDO SHAKESPEARE THEATER

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH UCF

Curriculum Guide 2014-2015



Les Misérables

The musical adaptation of the novel by Victor Hugo

Standards

Theatre

TH.68,912.C.2
TH.68,912.C.3
TH.68,912.H.1
TH.68,912.O.1
TH.68,912.O.3
TH.68,912.S.1

English Language Arts

LAFS.6,7,8,910,1112.L.3.4
LAFS.6,7,8,910,1112.L.3.5
LAFS.6,7,8,910,1112.SL.1.1
LAFS.6,7,8,910,1112.W.1.1
LAFS.6,7,8,910,1112.RL.2.5

Social Studies

SS.912.H.1.5

Content Advisory: *Les Misérables* deals with difficult subject matter including social revolution, poverty, prostitution, suicide, and death. The musical contains mild language, suggestive material and movement, and violence. Best suited for ages 13 and up.

Les Miserables

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Les Miserables

Introduction

Educators:

First, let me thank you for taking the time out of your very busy schedule to bring the joy of theatre arts to your classroom. We at Orlando Shakes are well aware of the demands on your time and it is our goal to offer you supplemental information to compliment your curriculum with ease and expediency.

With that in mind, we've redesigned our curriculum guides to be more "user friendly." We've offered you activities that you may do in one class period with minimal additional materials. These exercises will aid you in preparing your students to see a production, as well as applying what you've experienced when you return to school. We've included Sunshine and Common Core Standards to assure you that those curriculum needs are being met.

It is our hope that by streamlining our guides they will invite you to dip in to grab historical background on an author or playwright, a concise plot summary and colorful character descriptions, discussion questions to explore in class or as writing assignments and interactive activities to bring the magic of live performance back to your classroom. And, of course, how to prepare your students to enjoy live theater.

We look forward to hosting you at the Lowndes Shakespeare Theater. Additionally, should you wish to bring our Actor/Educators into your classroom, we will work around your schedule. Feel free to contact us at Orlando Shakes should you have any questions or suggestions on how we can better serve you. We are always learning from you.

Thank you for your tremendous work in nurturing our audiences of tomorrow.

Bravo!

Anne Hering

Director of Education

Les Miserables

Enjoying Live Theater

Theater Is A Team Sport

The **Playwright** writes the script. Sometimes it is from an original idea and sometimes it is adapted from a book or story. The Playwright decides what the characters say, and gives the Designers guidelines on how the play should look.



Sound Designer Bruce Bowes
Photo: Rob Jones

The **Director** creates the vision for the production and works closely with the actors, costume, set and lighting designers to make sure everyone tells the same story.

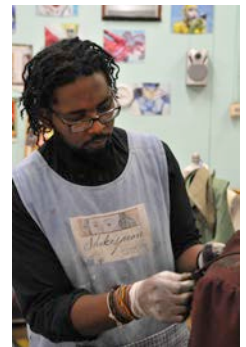


Costume Designer-
Denise Warner
Photo: Rob Jones

The **Actors** use their bodies and voices to bring the author's words and the director's ideas to life on the stage.

The **Designers** imagine and create the lights, scenery, props, costumes and sound that will compliment and complete the director's vision.

The **Stage Manager** assists the director during rehearsals by recording their instructions and making sure the actors and designers understand these ideas. The Stage Manager then runs the show during each performance by calling cues for lights and sound, as well as entrances and exits.



Costume Apprentice-
Sheldon Desmond
Lamar Roberson
Photo: Rob Jones



Stage Manager-Stacey
Renee Norwood
Photo: Rob Jones

The **Shop and Stage Crew** builds the set, props and costumes according to the designer's plans. The Stage Crew sets the stage with props and furniture, assists the actors with costume changes and operates sound, lighting and stage machinery during each performance.

The **Front of House Staff** welcomes you to the theater, takes your tickets, helps you find your seat and answers any question you may have on the day of performance.

The Theater is where it all takes place. Orlando Shakespeare Theater In Partnership with UCF is the only professional, classical theater company in Central Florida, reaching students and audiences in the surrounding eight counties.

Mission/Vision:

With Shakespeare as our standard and inspiration, the Orlando Shakespeare Theater In Partnership with UCF produces bold professional theater, develops new plays, and provides innovative educational experiences that enrich our community. Our vision is to create theater of extraordinary quality that encourages the actor/audience relationship, embraces the passionate use of language, and ignites the imagination.

Les Miserables

Enjoying Live Theater

The Actor/Audience Relationship

The Audience is the reason Live Theater exists. At Orlando Shakes, we cherish the Actor/Audience relationship, the unique give and take that exists during a performance which makes the audience an **ACTIVE** participant in the event. The actors see the audience just as the audience sees the actors, and every, laugh, snuffle, chuckle and gasp the audience makes effects the way the actor plays his next moment. We want you to be engaged, and to live the story with us!



Photo: Rob Jones

There are certain Conventions of the Theatrical Event, like, when the lights go down you know that the show is about to start, and that the audience isn't encouraged to come and go during a performance. Here are some other tips to help you and your classmates be top notch audience members:

- Please make sure to turn off your cell phones. And **NO TEXTING!**
- Please stay in your seat. Try to use the restroom before you take your seat and stay in your seat unless there is an emergency.
- Please do not eat or drink in the theater.

Talkback

After the performance, the actors will stay on stage for about 10 minutes to hear your comments and answer any questions you have about the play, the production and what it means to be a professional actor. We'd love to hear what you felt about the play, what things were clear or unclear to you, and hear your opinions about what the play means. This last portion of the Actor/Audience Relationship is so important to help us better serve you!

Here are some things to think about while watching the show. You might be asked these questions in the talkback!

1. What is the effect of actors playing multiple characters in the play? Is it confusing? Why or why not? How does it change the impact of the scenes?
2. How did the director and designers let you know the location had changed on stage?
3. How did you know time had passed?
4. Note when the actors directly address the audience. Why do you think they do this at some times and not others? How does it make you feel?

Les Miserables

About the Book

Plot Summary

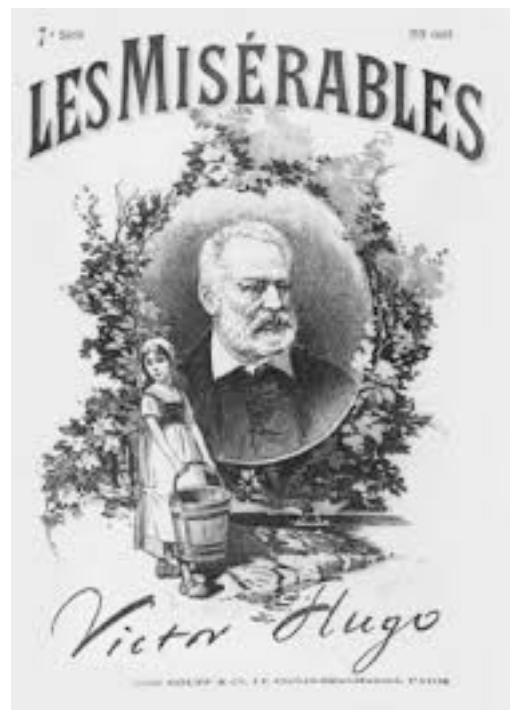
Les Miserables is considered to be one of the greatest books of the 19th Century. Written by Victor Hugo, it was published in 1862. Hugo, born in 1802, is renowned as one of France's greatest writers of history. Although originally a royalist, Hugo's political views changed as he grew older and he became a major supporter of republicanism. Because of his views, he was exiled from France, but eventually returned a hero. His work was often influenced by the political and social issues of the time. Hugo felt it was a modern writer's responsibility to defend the less fortunate members of a society. Victor Hugo is also well known for penning his earlier work, *Notre - Dame de Paris*. It took Hugo a full 17 years before his idea for *Les Miserables* would come to fruition. Hugo died in 1885.

PLOT SUMMARY

Jean Valjean has just been released after nineteen years in prison for stealing a loaf of bread. Nobody will give him a bed or a meal, except for a bishop who puts him up for the night at his home. Valjean repays him by stealing his silver and running off into the night. When the police drag Valjean back, the bishop says the silver was a gift and that Valjean is free to go. This one act of kindness changes Valjean forever.

Fantine is a poor single mother who leaves her small daughter, Cosette, with the Thénardiens in Montfermeil, in order to look for work in a factory in Montreuil. The Thénardiens make Fantine pay a lot of money to take care of her daughter but they actually spend it all on themselves and mistreat the child. Fantine sells her hair and her teeth, and even becomes a prostitute, to provide for Cosette ignoring that the child is starved, dressed in rags, and treated like a slave.

Valjean changes his name to Monsieur Madeleine and starts a new life and business in Montreuil. He becomes a successful and respected citizen, and even the mayor of his town. Yet, two people there upset his life – Fantine, who accuses him of firing her from



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her job at a factory and the local inspector of police, M. Javert, who recognizes him as Jean Valjean and wants to send him back to prison. M. Madeleine tries to compensate Fantine by putting her up at his place and helping her to get her daughter back, but she dies. M. Javert catches Valjean and sends him back to jail, but he escapes and leaves Montreuil.

Valjean, looking for Fantine's daughter, arrives in Montfermeil and stays at the Thénardiens' inn. He sees how they treat the little girl and gives a lot of money to them to take Cosette with him. He adopts Cosette, removing her from danger and unhappiness and moving to Paris with her.

Valjean and Cosette stay in Paris for a while. As he takes care of the girl, he understands what love is for the first time. Valjean gives money to many beggars, and one of them ends up being Inspector Javert in disguise. So Valjean decides that he and Cosette should leave Paris in no time. They are chased by Javert's men but they finally escape.

Just like many other robbers at wartime, Thénardier steals money and jewellery from dead bodies during the Battle of Waterloo and, by chance, he saves the life of a dying soldier, M. Pontmercy. The man is grateful and makes his own son, Marius, promise that he will help Thénardier if he is ever in need. Marius is a young shy man who works in a bookshop and enjoys walking around the Luxembourg Gardens. One day he sees Valjean and Cosette and falls in love with her at first sight. From that day on, he goes to the park every day to

see her. He finds a handkerchief that she dropped and the initial on it leads him to believe that she is called 'Ursula'. Valjean believes that Marius is a policeman and he and Cosette escape once again.

The Thénardiens are Marius's neighbours but they call themselves 'the Jondrettes' and they continue to lie to people in order to steal from them. Unaware of this, Marius pities them for being so poor and looks through a hole in the wall to see how they live. He sees how one of the Thénardier daughters, Éponine, brings Valjean and Cosette home, since the old man always gives her money at church, and the family pretends to be in a terrible plight. The Thénardiens recognise Valjean and Cosette and they plan to hurt them to get more money from them. Marius witnesses this and warns the police about what the Jondrettes are about to do. The Thénardiens are caught and sent to jail and Marius discovers that his neighbors are the very same family that he is supposed to help.



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Marius sends money weekly to the the Thénardiens. His disappointment about having lost track of Valjean and Cosette becomes happiness when he runs into one of the Thénardier daughters, who gives him the address of 'Ursula'. Marius leaves a set of love poems for Cosette in her garden and as soon as she finds them she thinks of the handsome man in the Luxembourg Gardens and feels they are his. One evening they meet, they declare their mutual love and kiss. From that day on, they spend wonderful evenings together until Cosette tells him that she and Valjean are leaving for England. Desperate, Marius promises her that he will get enough money to go with them.

Marius visits his rich grandfather, who brought him up, M. Gillenormand, to ask him for money and for permission to marry Cosette. The old man criticises his looks, his political ideas and his foolish dreams, and refuses to help him. Marius is annoyed by the old man's attitude and leaves his house. Marius's only hope is to meet Cosette for the last time. Yet he is left in despair when he finds that there is nobody at his beautiful girlfriend's house. While there, someone tells him that his friends are waiting for him at the barricade on the rue de la Chanvrière.

Marius's friends, together with a lot of people, build a barricade to prepare for war. They grow suspicious of an old man, Inspector Javert in disguise, who seems to have come to spy on them. They capture and tie him up. Marius watches the soldiers advance towards the rebels at the barricade and tries to save



them. He and his friends fight fiercely. A bullet is aimed at Marius but Éponine, dressed up like a boy, puts herself in front of the gun and gets wounded instead. Marius threatens to blow up the barricade and the soldiers leave. In agony, Éponine tells Marius that she is in love with him and hands him a letter from Cosette. Marius sends a letter to her saying that he cannot marry her and that he will die of love.

Cosette and Valjean moved to a new house before leaving for England. Valjean discovers the letter that Cosette has written to Marius and remembers the young man in the Luxembourg Gardens. He is afraid that she might abandon him. He meets a boy in the street who brings a letter for Cosette from Marius. Valjean finds out that Marius will die and, even though he feels happy for himself, he knows Cosette will feel miserable, so he decides to

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help Marius wearing his National Guard uniform.

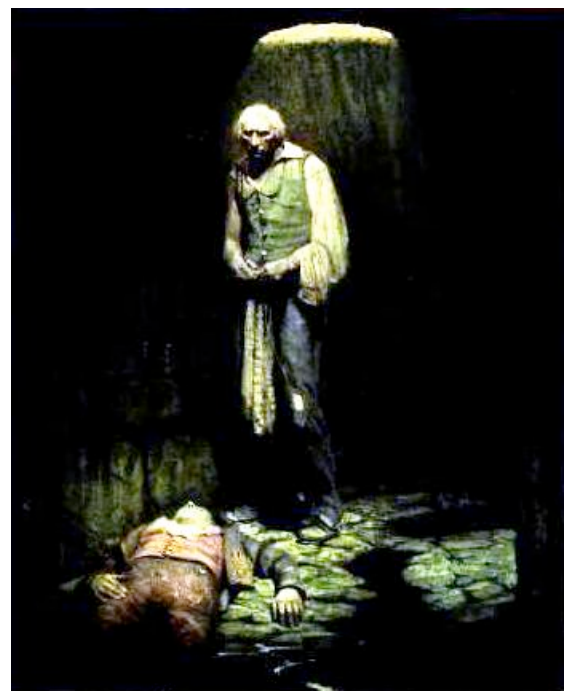
Marius and his friends decide that married men should leave the barricade and Valjean arrives just in time to help the rebels fight bravely. Valjean finds that Javert is tied to a post and asks the rebels to allow him to kill the police inspector. They both leave the barricade and Valjean sets Javert free. Marius and the other rebels continue to fight fiercely. He is shot in the shoulder and taken prisoner. All his friends are killed

In fact, Marius is taken prisoner by Valjean, who notices that Marius has been wounded and tries to help him. They are trapped between the battlefield and the barricade and Valjean escapes through a hole in the road and then through an underground passage along the sewers carrying Marius. Valjean finds the address of Marius's grandfather in his pocket and he and Javert take the dying body of the young man there. Valjean promises Javert that he will surrender after going home for the last time. Both men go back to Valjean's place. Unable to understand Valjean, Javert kills himself. Against all odds, Marius survives.

Marius is in a bad health for several months. Once he is out of danger, his grandfather tells him that Cosette has come to visit him disguised as an old man. Gillenormand asks Valjean for Cosette's hand on behalf of his grandson and he agrees to their getting married. On the day of Marius and Cosette's wedding, Valjean confesses the truth about his past to Marius. He begs him to keep it secret and to

allow him to visit his 'daughter', his only reason for life.

Valjean visits Cosette every evening but she finds him strange and distant. He does not allow her to call him 'father' and makes her call him Monsieur Jean instead. Valjean starts feeling that he is not welcome at the Pontmercy's home and stops visiting Cosette. She feels very sad but she does nothing about it since she realises her husband dislikes her 'father'. Thénardier visits Marius to ask him for money in exchange for information. He tells the young man that, contrary to what he thought of his father-in-law, Jean Valjean is M. Madeleine and that he did not kill Inspector Javert. But the most important item of news is that it was Valjean who saved Marius's life. Both Cosette and Marius go to Valjean's place to make up with him and find him on his death bed.



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About the Book

Meet The Characters

Jean Vajeau – An ex-convict who leaves behind a life of revenge and deception and makes a new life for himself in the industrial world. He becomes Cosette's adopted father. He finds meaning in helping others, even it means risking his own safety and wealth. Ultimately, his whole life is a search for redemption for his past sins.

Javert – A police inspector. He strictly believes in law and order. He is incapable of showing compassion or pity. Becomes obsessed with capturing Vajeau and constantly pursues him. Ultimately, Javert finds difficulty in being able to say with certainty that Vajeau deserves to be punished for his actions. This internal conflict forces Javert to re-evaluate his system of belief.

Fantine – A working class woman. An innocent affair with a wealthy student leaves her pregnant and abandoned. Despite her desperate situation, she never gives up fighting for her, or her daughter Cosette. She stands to represent the destruction that the 19th Century French society cruelly wreaked on the less fortunate classes.

Cosette – Fantine's daughter. She spends her childhood as a servant to the Thenardiers. She grows into a beautiful and educated young woman under the shelter of Vajeau. She eventually falls in love with Marius. She is very innocent, but also very brave when it comes to what she will do in the face of danger.

Marius Pontmercy – The son of Georges Pontmercy, a colonel in Napoleon's army. Marius however grows up in the house of his grandfather, a monarchist. Marius has difficulty coming to terms with reality when he realizes the

true reason for his separation from his father, and leaves in search of himself. Also an innocent, Marius gets swept up in the battle and fights in the barricades, and falls in love with Cosette.

Eponine – The Thenardier's oldest daughter. She is not a nice person, but is redeemed in her love for Marius. She proves that no one is beyond redemption as she has a great change of heart.

Monsieur Thenardier and Madame Thenardier

Monsieur is a crooked, wealth-obsessed man. He is Cosette's first care taker after Fantine dies. Monsieur deceives money from whoever he can trick. He eventually turns into an informant who will provide information to the highest bidder. He is incapable of loving human things and lives only for money. His wife, Madame, is just as evil and takes great joy in abusing Cosette.

Enjolras – The leader and organizer of the Friends of the ABC. He is a radical, passionate student revolutionary. He leads the charge in the barricades.

Gavroche – Thenardier's oldest son. He is kicked out of the house at an early age and grows up a street rat. He is really a happy child who enjoys the simple things in life. He is very, very brave and plays a large part in the ultimate outcome of the fighting in the barricades.

Bishop Myriel – A much admired clergyman whose great kindness and generosity have made him quite popular throughout his parish. He is ultimately responsible for passing these qualities on to Vajeau, and giving him a spiritual renewal through his words and actions to save Vajeau.

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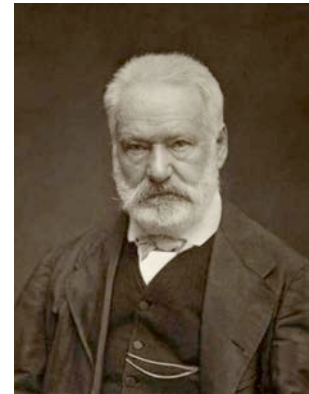
About the Book

Meet The Author

About the Author

Selected Works by Victor Hugo

<i>Notre Dame de Paris</i>	(1831)
<i>Les Contemplations</i>	(1856)
<i>Les Misérables</i>	(1862)
<i>La Légende des siècles</i>	(1877)
<i>Les Travailleurs de la mer</i>	(1866)
<i>L'Homme qui rit</i>	(1869)
<i>Quatre-Vingt-Treize</i>	(1874)



Victor Hugo was born in Besançon in 1802 and by the time he was 13 he had realized that he had a literary calling. During the 1820s he became one of the leading figures of the French Romantic movement. In 1830 his position was enhanced by the success of the play 'Hernani' which was subject to fierce controversy, symbolizing as it did the conflict between new

Romantic ideas and classical French theatre. 1830 also saw the publication of 'Notre Dame de Paris', which evoked the way of life in the Middle Ages and centered on the famous Paris cathedral. During the 1830s Hugo concentrated principally on the theatre, with mixed success. Following difficulties in his relationship with his wife, Adèle, he began a liaison with Juliette Droue, an actress with whom he met in one of his plays. This relationship was to go on to last more than fifty years.

In his earlier years Hugo had been a monarchist, and during the political revolt from 1848 onwards Hugo was at first concerned that order should be established, and he originally welcomed and supported the candidature of Louis Bonaparte. He later began to realize that his moral and political ambitions were not shared by his political allies, and his relationship with them soon fell apart.

By July 1851, his blatant disagreement to Louis Bonaparte had solidified with his coining of the phrase "we have had Napoleon the Great, now we

have to have Napoleon the Small", and after the 'coup' on the 2nd December, which he tried his best to oppose, he fled the country to avoid arrest, initially to Brussels. The Belgian authorities were afraid that Hugo's political statements would strain the relationship to France, so in 1852 Hugo moved to Jersey. Hugo was later expelled from France due to his commentary regarding a visit of Queen Victoria to Paris. This prompted him to move to Guernsey at the end of October.

Although Hugo was legally able to return to France in 1859, Hugo decided to remain a resident on the island until 1870. During his period in Guernsey he wrote, completed or published the majority of the works for which he is best known, including *Les Misérables* which illustrates some of Hugo's ideas on the social and moral issues of the time, which he felt to be crucially important. Though at the time it was not a critical success, the book would go on to prove to be very successful commercially.

Following the fall of Louis Bonaparte in 1870, Hugo returned to France as a hero. He became involved in politics, and was elected to the National Assembly in 1871 and was by now a well known public and literary figure. He continued to write during this period as well. Victor Hugo died of complications due to pneumonia on May 22, 1885.

Les Miserables

About The Musical

History

Many famous composers had entertained the idea of turning *Les Miserables* into an opera, but it never came to fruition. Then, Alain Boubil saw a production of *Oliver!*, the British musical on the novel by Charles Dickens, where the character of the Artful Dodger reminded him of a singing version of the character Gavroche.

After two years of back and forth workshopping, Boubil and his songwriting partner Schonberg released a two hour concept album in 1980. From there, the musical caught the attention of young director Peter Ferago, who suggested the musical to the acclaimed British producer Cameron Mackintosh. From there, acclaimed writers/directors John Caird and Trevor Nunn were brought on to help pen the english translation of the musical.

Nunn is quoted as saying: "I approach the material as if doing a play by Chekhov or Shakespeare," says Nunn. "Nothing is allowed through as a simple matter."

The musical opened in London on October 5th, 1985 by the Royal Shakespeare Company, and eventually opened on Broadway on March 12th, 1987. Though initially met with mixed and critical reviews, the commercial success of *Les Miserables* was greatly positive and pushed the show on to earn vast amounts of money and win countless awards.



Les Miserables

About The Musical

The Creative Team

Claude-Michel Schönberg (Composer) – Born in 1944 of Hungarian parents, Claude-Michel Schönberg began his career as a singer, writer and producer of popular songs. He wrote the musical score of *La Révolution Française* (1973), *Les Misérables* (1980-85), *Miss Saigon* (1989) and *Martin Guerre* (1996). He has also supervised overseas productions of *Les Misérables* and *Miss Saigon* and co-produced several international cast albums of his three shows. In 2001, he composed his first ballet score, *Wuthering Heights*, which was created by the Northern Ballet in 2002. *The Pirate Queen*, which opened on Broadway in 2007, is his sixth complete score. *Marguerite*, Claude-Michel's collaboration with Alain Boublil, Michel Legrand and Herbert Kretzmer, opened in May 2008 at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket. In 2003, Claude-Michel Schönberg married the English ballerina Charlotte Talbot. He is the father of one son and two daughters.

Alain Boublil (Lyricist)– Alain Boublil's first musical, *La Révolution Française*, was the first ever staged French rock opera in 1973 in Paris and the start of his collaboration with composer Claude-Michel Schönberg. Their next show, *Les Misérables*, opened in Paris in 1980 and played there again in 1991 after having in the meantime opened in most of the world's major cities starting in London in 1985, produced by Cameron Mackintosh. It opened on Broadway in 1987, winning Alain two Tony Awards for Best Score and Best Book and a Grammy for Best Original Broadway Cast Recording as well as numerous awards all over the world. *Les Misérables* is still playing in major cities and returned to Broadway in 2006. *Miss Saigon* opened in London in 1989 and later in New York, playing for more than ten years in each city, and has won numerous international awards. *Martin Guerre* followed and won the 1997 Olivier Award for Best Musical before commencing its USA tour. Alain and Claude-Michel's musical *The Pirate Queen*, based on the true story of the 16th-century Irish heroine Grace O'Malley, in the time of Elizabeth I, played in Chicago and on Broadway in 2006 and 2007.

Cameron Mackintosh (Producer) - For nearly 45 years Cameron Mackintosh has been producing more musicals than anyone else in history, including the three longest-running musicals of all time, *Les Misérables*, *The Phantom of the Opera* and *Cats*, which are still running extraordinarily successfully across the world. As well as original musicals, Cameron enjoys producing new versions of such classics as *My Fair Lady*, *Oklahoma!*, *Carousel* and *Oliver!* – which have all been worldwide hits. *Oliver!* recently enjoyed another record-breaking run at London's legendary Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, and a new production is on tour in the UK. Other original international productions include *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Side by Side by Sondheim*, and *Martin Guerre*. He also produced the most successful production ever of Stephen Sondheim's *Follies* in London. Over the next three years over 40 new productions of his musicals are due to open around the world.



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The Creative Team

Trevor Nunn (Adaptation and Direction) - Trevor Nunn was educated at Downing College, Cambridge, and in 1962 he won an ABC Director's Scholarship to the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, where, as resident director, his productions included *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *Peer Gynt* and a musical version of *Around the World in Eighty Days*. In 1964, Trevor joined the RSC, and was made the company's youngest-ever artistic director in 1968. He was responsible for running the RSC until he retired from his post in 1986. Productions for the RSC included: *The Revenger's Tragedy*, *The Relapse*, *The Alchemist*, *Henry V*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Henry VIII*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus*, *Julius Caesar*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *As You Like It*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Once in a Lifetime*, *Three Sisters*, *Juno and the Paycock*, *Othello* (the final production at The Other Place Theatre), *The Blue Angel* and *Measure for Measure* (the first two productions in the new Other Place Theatre). With his colleague John Caird, he co-directed *Nicholas Nickleby* (winner of five Tony Awards), J M Barrie's *Peter Pan* and *Les Misérables* which won eight Tony Awards and has become the most performed musical in the world. In 1982, he opened the RSC's new London home, the Barbican Theatre, with his production of Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Parts I and II*. 1986 saw the opening of the Swan Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon which he conceived and for which he



directed one of the first productions, *The Fair Maid of the West*. In 2007, he returned to the RSC to direct *King Lear* and *The Seagull*. He directed the Tony Award-winning *Cats*, *Starlight Express*, *Aspects of Love*, *Sunset Boulevard* and *The Woman in White* for Andrew Lloyd Webber, and the world premieres of *The Coast of Utopia* and *Rock 'n' Roll* for Tom Stoppard. Other theatre includes: *Chess*, *The Baker's Wife*, *Timon of Athens*, *Heartbreak House*, *The Lady from the Sea* (Almeida), *Skellig* (Young Vic), *Acorn Antiques – The Musical!*, *Hamlet* and *Richard II* (Old Vic), a new musical version of *Porgy and Bess* (Savoy), *Gone with the Wind* (New London) and *A Little Night Music* (Menier, Garrick).

John Caird (Adaptation and Direction) - He is an honorary associate director of the RSC, where he has directed over 20 plays including classic works by Shakespeare, Shaw, Farquhar, Gorky, Strindberg, Brecht and Ben Jonson, and new plays by Peter Flannery, Pam Gems, Jonathan Gems, John Berger and Nella Bielski, Richard Nelson, David Edgar, Mary O'Malley and Charles Wood. His productions of *Les Misérables* and *Nicholas Nickleby*, both with Trevor Nunn, have won numerous awards around the world. Other work includes Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Song & Dance* (Palace), Mozart's *Zaide* (Battignano Opera Festival, Tuscany) and the *Siegfried and Roy Spectacular* (Las Vegas). Television includes: *Nicholas Nickleby*, *As You Like It* and his own adaptation of Shakespeare's *Henry IV* plays for the BBC. Published work as a librettist and lyricist includes: a new version of John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* with the composer Ilona Sekacz, first performed at the RSC, a new adaptation of J M Barrie's *Peter Pan* (RSC and NT), *Children of Eden* with composer Stephen Schwartz, *Jane Eyre* and *Daddy Long Legs*, both with composer Paul Gordon, and Bernstein's *Candide* with new lyrics by Richard Wilbur and Stephen Sondheim.

Les Misérables

About The Musical

Facts and Figures

+*Les Misérables* has been translated into 22 different languages: English, Japanese, Hebrew, Hungarian, Icelandic, Norwegian, German, Polish, Swedish, Dutch, Danish, French, Czech, Castilian, Mauritian Creole, Flemish, Finnish, Argentinian, Portuguese, Estonian, Mexican Spanish and Korean.

+Productions have played in 42 countries and over 319 cities: England, United States of America, Japan, Israel, Hungary, Australia, Iceland, Norway, Austria, Canada, Poland, Sweden, Holland, Denmark, New Zealand, France, The Czech Republic, Spain, Northern Ireland, Eire, Scotland, Wales, Bermuda, Malta, Philippines, Mauritius, Singapore, Germany, Hong Kong, Korea, South Africa, Belgium, Finland, Argentina, Brazil, Estonia, China, Mexico, Switzerland, Serbia, The Channel Islands, The Dominican Republic & Kuwait.

+The production has played over 48,000 professional performances giving a total audience figure of more than 60 million people worldwide.

+The London production of *Les Misérables* is the world's longest running musical where it played 7,602 performances at the Palace Theatre before transferring to the Queen's Theatre where it opened on 3th April 2004.



+*Les Misérables* has won over 100 major theatre awards including Oliviers, Tonys & Grammys.

Les Misérables *About the Musical* **Other Versions**

The 1978 television film adaptation,
starring Richard Jordan and Anthony Perkins



The 1980 musical, by Alain Boubil and Claude-Miguel Shonenberg



The 1998 film, starring
Liam Neeson and
Geoffrey Rush



The 2000
television mini
series, starring
Gerard
Depardieu and
John
Malkovich



The 2012 film version of the musical
production starring Hugh Jackman
and Russell Crowe.

Les Miserables

Historical Context

The French Revolution - These events lead to a France that is torn as to how it would like to be politically represented, and thus the setting for the novel.

May 5th, 1789 – Massive royal debts force Louis XVI to call Estates-General meetings.

June 17th, 1789 – Third Estate proclaims themselves a National Assembly.

July 14th, 1789 – The famous storming of the Bastille by the Paris mob.

August 27th, 1789 – The National Assembly adopts the Declaration of the Rights of Man. The National Assembly goes on then to pass laws and reforms, thus setting up its own government.

September 1791 – The Assembly adopts its own Constitution.

April 1792 – France declares war on Austria.

August 17th, 1792 – Paris mob storms Tuilleries and imprisons the royal family.

September 21st, 1792 – The National Convention ends the monarchy and declares France a Republic.

January 21st, 1793 – Radical Republicans try Louis XVI for treason and have him beheaded.

1793 through 1794 - Robespierre becomes the head of the Committee of Public Safety. Thousands die during this “Reign of Terror”.

1795 Moderate leaders draft a new constitution that creates a new government to be known as the Directory.

November 9th, 1799 – The Directory is dissolved. Napoleon emerges and assumes dictatorial powers as the first Consul of the Republic.

1800- 1803 – Fourth Constitution is approved and Napoleon restores order and creates a new code of laws.

1804 – Napoleon is crowned as the Emperor of France.

1805 – Napoleon’s naval fleet is defeated, forcing him to give up to the British invasion.

1808 – The Peninsular War with Spain costs many lives and weakens the empire.

1812 – The attempted invasion of Moscow is defeated by a bitter Russian winter.

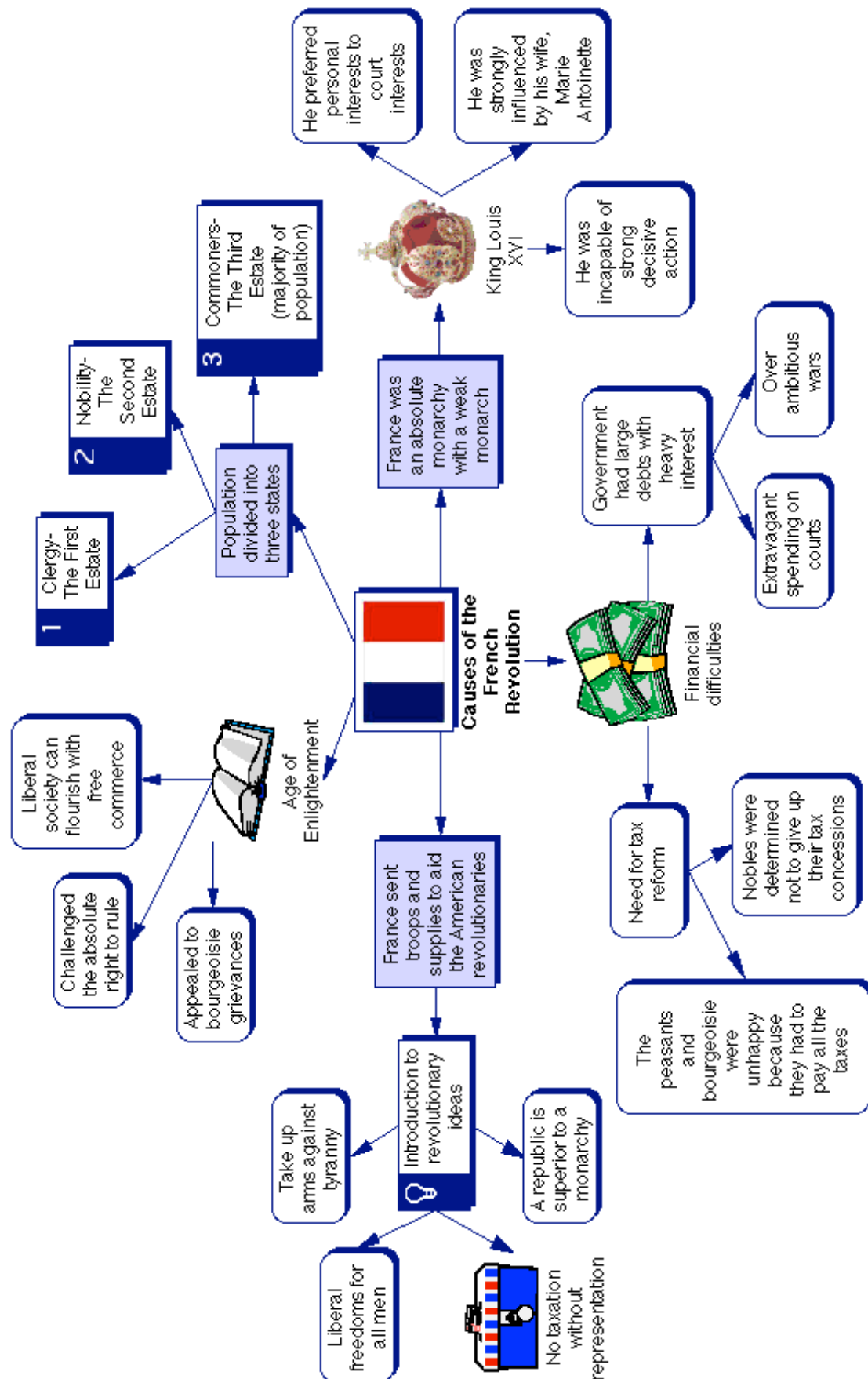
1814 – Napoleon is forced to give up his throne and is exiled to the island of Elba.

1815 – Napoleon escapes, rules France for a mere 100 days, before being defeated at Waterloo. The Congress of Vienna is restored to order and establishes the balance of power in place.

These events set the stage for novel, in which the people of France are torn as to what political set up and representation they collectively desire.

Les Miserables

Historical Context



Les Miserables

Activities

Page to Stage

Read this section of the book, *LES MISERABLES*, from Book Four: JAVERT OFF THE TRACK:

All sorts of questions flashed before his eyes. He asked himself questions and gave answers, and his answers frightened him. He asked himself; "This convict, this desperate man, I have pursued to the point of persecution, and he has had me beneath his feet, and could have avenged himself, and ought to have done so both for his revenge and for his security; in granting me life, in sparing me, what has he done? His duty? No. Something more. And I, in sparing him in turn, what have I done? My duty? No. Something more. So is there something more than duty?" Here he was started; his scale fell out of balance; one end slipped into the abyss, the other flew up into the sky, and Javert felt no less dismay from the one that was above than from the one that was below.

Now read this lyric from the musical, from Javert's song JAVERT'S SUICIDE:

JAVERT

*Who is this man?
What sort of devil is he?
To have me caught in a trap
And choose to let me go free?
It was his hour at last
To put a seal on my fate
Wipe out the past
And watch me clean off the slate
All it would take
Was a flick of his knife.
Vengeance was his
And he gave me back my life!*

*And must I now begin to doubt
Who never doubted all these years?
My heart is stone and still it trembles
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 had killed me even so?*

1. The novel is mostly written in the third person. Why do you think Hugo chose to have Javert speak in the first person in this paragraph?
2. What is the effect of having Javert rhyme certain words?
3. Why do you think Javert sings in mostly one syllable words? When he does use two syllable words, what are they?
4. Which is more effective, the book or the lyric?

Les Misérables

Activities

Write a Review

Explain to students that the director's job is to take the words on the script from the printed page to the stage and bring them to life. Explain that theater critics review shows and publish their opinions. For AmericanTheatreCritics.org, critic Sherry Eaker wrote, "My point of view was that it wasn't the theatre critic's place to tell the playwright what he or she should be doing; instead, the critic should focus on what is already there and explain either why it works or why it doesn't work."

After seeing the production, have each student write a review of Orlando Shakes' production of *Les Misérables*. The review should include one paragraph each for:

- Introduction – What did you watch, where and when, and maybe, why?
- The script – Did you like the writing, the story, the characters? Why or why not?
- The score - Did you like the music? Why or why not?
- The acting – Did you believe and care about the characters as portrayed? Why or why not?
- The design – Did you like the set, costume and light designs? Why or why not?
- The staging – How did the director stage the violence? Was it effective?
- The audience – What ways did the audience respond to particular moments?
- Conclusion – What will you remember about this performance?

If you wish, send your reviews to us at: anneh@orlandoshakes.org

We'd love to hear your opinions of our show!

Read more: How to Become a Theater Critic | eHow.com http://www.ehow.com/how_2079002_become-theater-critic.html#ixzz1v9tEyMnc



Les Miserables

Themes and Discussion

Themes

Law vs Grace – There is a constant struggle between balancing what is obeying the law and what is showing mercy to others. Javert and Jean Vajeau grapple with this the most, but other characters also face challenges that test their conscience as well.

Love – Hugo asserts that love and compassion are the greatest gifts one might give or receive.

Resurrection – The concept of “rebirth” and redemption can be seen throughout the story.

Social Injustice – The injustices seen in social classes is very apparent throughout the novel. Change of class also occurs, as Vajeau starts at the bottom of society and works his way further up the top.

Discussion

1. Who is the most admirable character in the novel? Why?
2. Who is the most memorable character, good or bad?
3. After seeing the musical of *Les Miserables*, what other books do you think would make good musicals? Why?

Supplemental Resources & Bibliography

www.penguinreaders.com

<http://www.history.com/topics/french-revolution>

<http://www.victorhugo.gg>

<http://www.lesmis.com/us/history>

<http://www.lesmis.com/us/education/>

http://wps.ablongman.com/long_kishlansky_cw_5/0,6472,269723-,00.html

<http://www.docstoc.com/docs/127234921/Timeline-and-Phases>