



Faith, Fire, and the Virgin's Gaze: WVPAC's The Hunchback of Notre Dame

Description

West Valley City, UT On Friday, August 8, 2025, the bells of Notre Dame rang not from a distant cathedral tower, but from **West Valley Performing Arts Center (WVPAC)**. Known for its theatre-in-the-round design, the venue places audiences on all sides of the stage, with an intimacy that magnifies both the grandeur of **Victor Hugo's** sweeping narrative and its most vulnerable moments. This is not Disney's Hunchback but the adaptation with book by **Peter Parnell**. WVPAC's production, directed by **Kate Rufener** and assistant director **Rob Fernandez-Rosa**, leans unapologetically into Hugo's darkness, delivering scenes so harrowing that more than once I saw audience members flinch or avert their eyes. Running August 8-30, 2025, this staging pairs the beloved [Alan Menken](#) (*Little Shop of Horrors*, *Newsies*, *The Little Mermaid*) and lyrics by [Stephen Schwartz](#) (*Pippin*, *Wicked*, *Prince of Egypt*, *Godspell*) with immersive, in-the-round storytelling in a version more faithful to Hugo's original than Disney's romanticized retelling, leaning fully into the work's potent religious undertones.

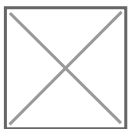


Photo Credit: [West Valley Arts](#) Facebook

Summary

Set in 15th-century Paris, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* opens with the bells of Notre Dame pealing across the city as the onstage choir and ensemble set the scene for the Feast of Fools—a day when social order is upended, and the streets erupt in music, color, and revelry. From his perch in the bell tower, Quasimodo, the cathedral's isolated and physically deformed bell-ringer, watches the festivities longingly. Raised by the powerful and austere archdeacon Dom Claude Frollo, Quasimodo has spent his life hidden away under the guise of a sanctuary, taught to fear the outside world and the people in it.

When he gathers the courage to defy Frollo's orders and join the celebration, Quasimodo is swept into the noisy, unpredictable energy of the crowd. There, he meets Esmeralda, a spirited and compassionate Romani dancer whose kindness stands in stark contrast to the cruelty he experiences from others. Their meeting also draws the attention of Captain Phoebus, the newly appointed leader of the cathedral guard, and sparks tensions with Frollo, whose stern moral authority begins to crack under the force of desire and obsession.

As the feast gives way to suspicion, political maneuvering, and religious zeal, alliances are tested and the boundaries between justice and prejudice blur. Against a score that blends sweeping choral grandeur with driving folk rhythms, the musical explores themes of belonging, compassion, and the dangerous collision of love, faith, and power. Audiences can expect a visually rich, emotionally charged story that balances epic spectacle with moments of quiet humanity.

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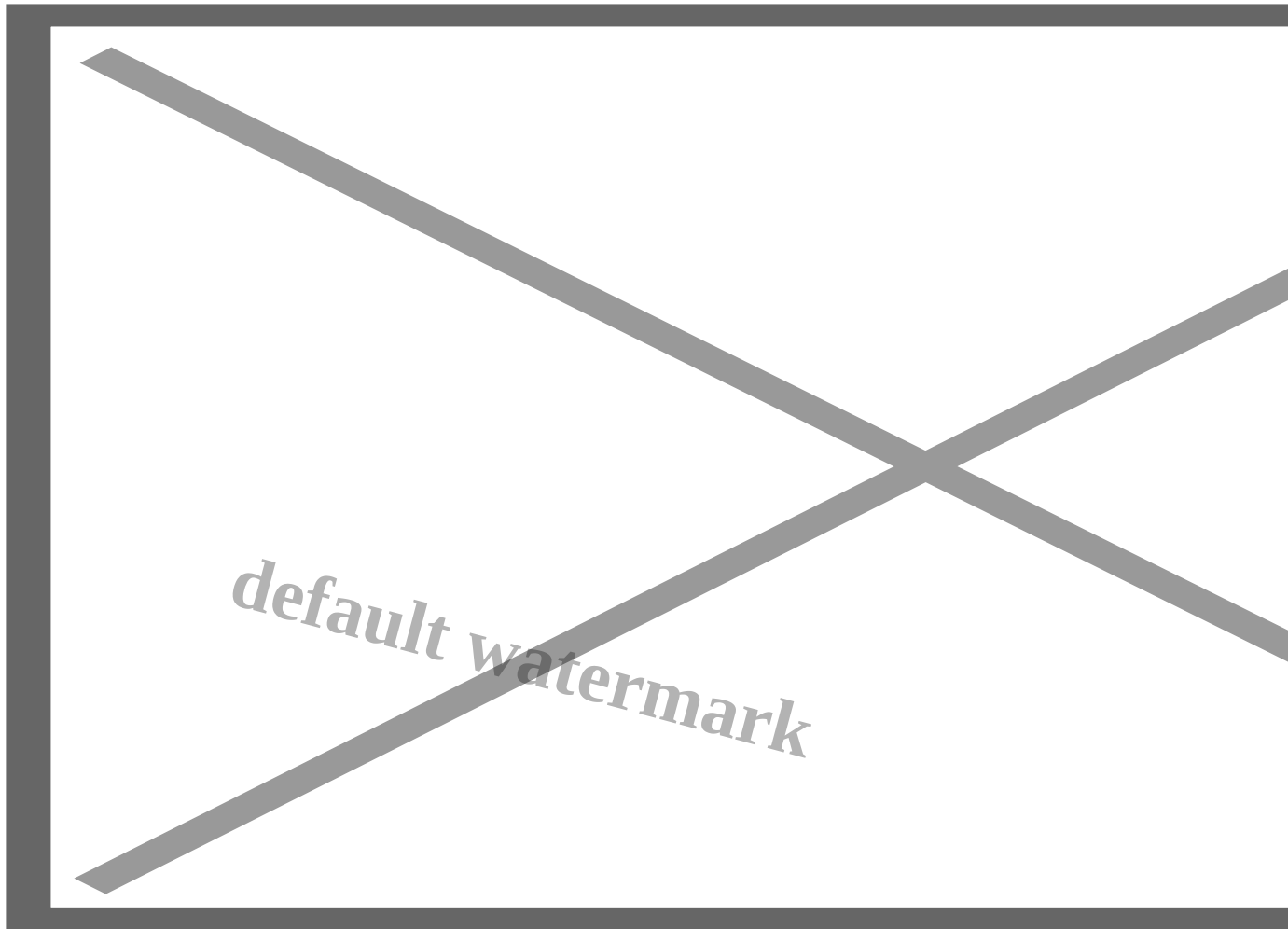
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From Page to Stage

Hugo's 1831 *Notre-Dame de Paris* is as much a moral reckoning as it is a love letter to Gothic architecture. Beneath its spires and gargoyles lies a stark examination of systemic injustice, religious hypocrisy, and the persecution of those deemed – other, – particularly the people of Roma. Across nearly two centuries, the story has been reshaped in forms ranging from tragic opera to Disney's animated musical.

The stage musical has its own layered history. **James Lapine** wrote the book for the original German production, *Der Glöckner von Notre Dame*, which premiered in Berlin in 1999 as Disney's first musical to open outside the United States. In 2014, Parnell created a revised English-language book for the North American premiere at **La Jolla Playhouse**, followed by a 2015 run at the **Paper Mill Playhouse**. Despite strong critical reception and early speculation about a Broadway transfer, the production never made it to the **Great White Way**. **Stephen Schwartz** later confirmed that Disney chose to license the show regionally instead, citing the unusually large chorus – up to thirty-two singers – as a significant cost factor, along with the darker, Hugo-faithful tone that restores the tragic ending and leans into mature religious themes.^{1,2}





Theatre and Venue Context

WVPAC's production draws from this English-language version, marrying the sweeping Menken's Schwartz score with a script that refuses to soften cruelty, moral complexity, or the uncomfortable questions at the core of the tale. The result is a work that embraces spectacle while challenging its audience to confront both the beauty and brutality within Hugo's world.

The WVPAC's theatre-in-the-round design immerses audiences inside the cathedral's shadow. Its rotating, elevating stage allows for seamless movement between the soaring bell tower and the bustling streets of Paris, heightening the contrast between sacred space and public square. The closeness of the seating—never more than 35 feet from the action—creates a rare immediacy, where every glance, breath, and physical shift registers. That same intimacy, however, demands a careful balance; in a large ensemble show like *Hunchback*, constant motion can occasionally blur sightlines and make it harder to track the central speaker. On opening night, a few microphone issues in the ensemble briefly muddled the clarity of the choral sound (the leads, however, remained clear), but the strength of the visual and emotional storytelling carried through—demonstrating that in this venue, grand scale and intimate detail can thrive side by side.

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Liturgical Authenticity and Musical Contrast

One of the most striking elements of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*'s score is its authentic use of church music, particularly Gregorian chant, to underscore character psychology and thematic tension. In "Hellfire," the Latin *Confiteor* ("I confess to God almighty, to blessed Mary ever Virgin, to the blessed archangel Michael, to the holy apostles, to all the saints") runs beneath Frollo's anguished solo, its solemn confession clashing with his escalating obsession. This sacred texture reappears throughout the musical—woven instrumentally in moments with Quasimodo and Esmeralda, and echoed in "Olim," a chant-like adaptation of the song "Someday." Such liturgical borrowings are more than decorative; they heighten the drama by contrasting the purity of choral pleas ("Kyrie," or "Lord have mercy") with the corruption and violence they accompany. The authenticity of these chants not only deepens the emotional impact but also lends the production an added credibility, anchoring its fictional drama in the real musical language of the medieval Church. The juxtaposition of the meditative *Olim* chant against the consuming fire of "Hellfire" is particularly affecting—a musical reminder of the chasm between faith's ideals and human fallibility.

Performance Highlights

Taylor J. Smith's Quasimodo is both physically authentic and emotionally precise, his halting speech and sudden bursts of vocal clarity in "Out There" and "Heaven's Light" capturing the naïveté of a man stunted by years of abuse. It's a portrayal at once respectful and unforgettable—so reminiscent of **Tom Hulce's** original voice performance in Disney's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (*Amadeus*, *Animal House*) which, as far as I'm concerned, it's one of the highest compliments an actor in the role could receive: Hulce is one of the most underrated actors of his generation. **Watch video above*

Beatriz Melo's Esmeralda radiates warmth and resolve, her presence alive with quick wit and an undercurrent of fearless defiance. Every movement carries purpose—whether teasing Phoebus, protecting Quasimodo, or standing her ground against Frollo's threats. Her "God Help the Outcasts" stills the room, as her voice soars with urgency and vulnerability, transforming a simple prayer into a rallying cry for compassion. Melo's Esmeralda is not a passive dreamer but an active force for justice, embodying the production's central call to stand with those the world tries to cast aside. Her confrontation with Frollo was among the most chilling moments of the night—brilliantly acted, with tension so sharp it seemed to cut the air.





In **Chase Petersen**’s hands, Frolo is no flat caricature of villainy but a man of conflicted humanity, which makes the horrors he unleashes in the second act land with devastating force. It’s not an easy role to play—balancing pious conviction, repressed desire, and ruthless control—and Petersen meets the challenge with chilling precision and stunning vocals.

Christian Johnston, stepping in as Phoebus [on opening night] brought roguish warmth and easy charisma to the role. Swings deserve so much more credit than they get—they step in at a

momentâ??s notice and still manage to deliver with precision, presence, and charm. So well done!

Wesley Valdezâ??s Clopin brought wit, energy, and a spark of danger to the â??Topsy Turvyâ?• festivities.

Behind the Cathedral Walls

While Mariaâ??s silent arc was one of the most compelling directorial choices, it was part of a larger tapestry of thoughtful artistry. Under **Kate Rufener**â??s direction and **Roberto Fernandez-Rosa**â??s assistant direction, the production balanced spectacle with intimacy. **Marilyn Montgomery**â??s choreography â?? extending beyond dance into ritualized movement â?? gave the ensembleâ??s processions and mob scenes a kinetic energy that made the in-the-round space feel alive, while also granting Mariaâ??s entrances and exits a weighty, processional quality.

Music director **Aioleoge Lesa** guides the cast through the scoreâ??s demanding Latin chants (â??Olim,â?• â??Bells of Notre Dameâ?•) with commendable precision, their resonance amplified by the spaceâ??s intimate acoustics. However, the in-the-round staging occasionally works against the musicâ??s cohesion. In the most complex choral passages, spreading the ensemble throughout the theatre creates blending challengesâ??high notes can pierce sharply when sung directly beside the audience, and the physical distance between singers makes a unified tone harder to achieve.

â??The Bells of Notre Dame,â?• a particularly demanding piece, begins with an a cappella, Latin-texted high-wire act before the orchestra joins in. It requires precision, breath control, and perfect unisonâ??especially in the opening â??Olim.â?• WVPACâ??s sopranos navigated the notorious high D with admirable stamina, though the overall blend might have benefited from a more restrained use of vibrato. Even with its rhythmic shifts, sudden tempo changes, and layered choral textures, the numberâ??s complexity pays off: diction remains crisp when English enters, the â??kyrieâ?• consonants land with bite, and the accelerando into the final â??bellsâ?• motif carries the kind of intensity that sets the tone for the rest of the production.

Adam Flittonâ??s set design transformed the WVPAC into the inside of an impressive cathedral. With a visually stunning checkered floor and impressive arches over each entry. The massive foam tower bells, suspended overhead, were both visually impressive and ingeniously lightweight, disappearing silently into the air when not in use and then gliding back down to frame the action. This rise-and-fall echoed the storyâ??s shifts between sanctuary and peril, and their return for key scenes felt almost ceremonial. **Michael Gray**â??s lighting shifted from the golden sanctity of Notre Dame to the greens and purples of the skies above the bell tower and against Flittonâ??s checkered floor and stunning archâ??s it was a sight to behold.

Alicia Kondrickâ??s costumes wowed meâ??not only did they vividly define the divides between clergy, nobility, and Parisâ??s marginalized, but her designs and the ensembleâ??s lightning-fast quick changes kept the storytelling fluid. At this point, Iâ??m convinced thereâ??s nothing she canâ??t do. **Savanna Finley**â??s wig and makeup designs gave each character a distinct visual identity: Esmeraldaâ??s wig in particular was stunning. **Andrew Domyan**â??s sound design grounded the grandeur of the score with the intimacy of whispered prayers.

Other key contributions included **John Sweeney** (producer), **Vanessa Olson** (artistic director and production photography), **Marilyn Montgomery** (properties), **Jonah â??Duckieâ?• Garlick** (automation design), **Kai Sadowski** (stage manager), **Colton Hattabaugh** (scenic painter), and **Kat Peterson** (graphic design). Together, their work created a living, breathing Notre Dame â?? one where faith, fire, and the fight for freedom played out under the watchful eyes of a silent, sorrowful Maria.

Video Credit: Rhetorical Review

The Prison Confrontation: Faith, Obsession, and Power

One of the stage adaptationâ??s most compelling features is its willingness to slow down and give Frollo and Esmeralda moments of sharp, philosophical sparring. In one early exchange, Frolloâ??s disdain for â??her kindâ?• and moralistic condemnation of her dancing collide with Esmeraldaâ??s pointed questions about charity, justice, and shared humanity as he says, â??*Some of us are less human than others. In the morl sense.*â?• The dialogueâ??framed within the visual presence of the crucifixâ??lays bare the contradictions in Frolloâ??s theology, even as he is momentarily disarmed by her appeal to Christâ??s own words. Scenes like this elevate the conflict beyond a simple hero-villain dynamic, allowing the audience to witness the ideological chasm between them in real time.

Later, in the prison confrontation, that ideological duel gives way to something more personal and dangerous:

FROLLO: My dear. Do you feel as uncomfortable as you look?

ESMERALDA: I wouldnâ??t give you the pleasure.

FROLLO: It brings me no pleasure. I would much rather set you free.

ESMERALDA: Then why donâ??t you?

FROLLO: Because for that, I would need you to make me a promise. You see, I still want to help you. I still believe your soul can be saved.

ESMERALDA: Not in the way you would save it. Iâ??d rather die.

FROLLO: And what about Phoebus? Would you rather he die as well?â?|

ESMERALDA: Why me? I donâ??t understand. Of all peopleâ?|?

FROLLO: I donâ??t know. I wish I knew. Sometimes we are drawn to the very things that repel usâ?|

ESMERALDA: You truly are a monster.

FROLLO: â?|No. No, indeed. If these last few weeks have shown me anything â?| it is that my curse is Iâ??m truly human. My love for you is fireâ??it is hot lead.

If the earlier scenes hint at Frollo's conflicted nature, his prison confrontation with Esmeralda tears away any ambiguity. Here, he couches his proposition in the language of salvation, dangling freedom for her and life for Phoebus in exchange for submission. When she refuses, the veneer of righteous authority collapses, and his confession turns almost feverish: *"Take pity on me! my love for you is fire. It is hot lead."* The imagery echoes directly into *"Hellfire,"* where sacred chant collides with the language of lust and damnation, underscoring the character's moral disintegration. This is the heart of Frollo danger—his ability to recast lust as moral struggle, abuse as mercy. In **Petersen's** performance, the scene plays not as overblown melodrama but as the chilling self-justification of a man who can no longer tell the difference between sin and sanctity.



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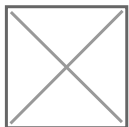
The Presence of Maria in WVPAC's Theatre's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*

One of the most striking and unconventional choices in WVPAC's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* was the decision to make Maria, Frolo's imagined vision of the Virgin Mary, a fully embodied presence. Instead of an untouchable icon high above the stage, Maria (**Sophia Morill Mancilla**) walked among the characters, a living symbol of grace and judgment. Sometimes she trailed Esmeralda like a guardian; other times she shadowed Frolo, a wordless reminder of the standard he claims to serve but continually betrays.

In Catholic tradition, the Virgin Mary or Maria—revered as the Mother of God (Theotokos)—holds a central role as both a model of holiness and a compassionate intercessor who advocates for the faithful before God. Believed to have conceived Jesus through the Holy Spirit while remaining a virgin, she is venerated in doctrine and devotion for her purity, obedience, and closeness to the divine. Catholic teachings emphasize her perpetual virginity, Immaculate Conception, and bodily Assumption into Heaven, while devotional practices—from prayers like the *Ave Maria* to the veneration of Marian icons—highlight her as a spiritual protector and source of comfort. Her presence in religious art and performance often carries deep symbolic weight, embodying mercy, moral witness, and the possibility of divine intervention.

In Catholic tradition, Mary is most often depicted wearing blue—a practice dating back to the **Byzantine Empire**, where blue signified imperial status. In medieval and Renaissance Europe, blue pigment came from costly lapis lazuli, making its use a sign of devotion and honor. Artistic portrayals of Mary range from serene Madonnas to deeply emotional—pietÀ—scenes of her cradling Christ's body. These visual traditions have reinforced Mary's symbolic roles as queen, intercessor, and witness to both compassion and suffering, shaping how audiences perceive her presence in religious storytelling.

In the original libretto, *Hellfire* unfolds as a private confession, with Frolo addressing an unresponsive statue of the Virgin Mary. WVPAC's staging transforms this static image into a living embodiment of Mary, portrayed by an actor cradling the Christ child. This shift reframes the scene from solitary prayer into a charged confrontation: Mary becomes a silent but palpable witness to Frolo's moral disintegration, her distress mounting as his lust and self-justification intensify.



—Hellfire— Confrontation with the Divine

In WVPAC's staging, Maria—holding a swaddled (though clearly artificial) infant—became the living target of Frolo's confession. In most productions, *Hellfire* unfolds as a one-sided plea to an unresponsive statue of the Virgin Mary. Here, she had flesh, breath, and expression, transforming the number into an emotional assault.

—Beata Maria, you know I am a righteous man / Then tell me, Maria, why I see her dancing there / Protect me, Maria, don't let this siren cast her spell / Destroy Esmeralda! or else let her be mine / Be mine or you will burn.—

Instead of casting these words into the void, Frollo stared directly into Maria's eyes. His piety-laced self-praise rang hollow when her lowered gaze refused to validate him. As the verse darkened, her stillness began to splinter: her breathing quickened, her jaw tightened, and tears welled. The irony was devastating—the very protector he invoked was recoiling from him. When he demanded Esmeralda's destruction, Maria clutched the child closer, her anguish registering as both maternal instinct and divine grief. By the final refrain, the holy stillness had dissolved into visible anguish, and she fled, unable to bear his corruption.

In this staging, her silent withdrawal became a form of judgment, reframing *Hellfire* as the moment the man of God lost heaven's favor. No longer an inert object of veneration, she was a divine witness who rejected him outright—validating the audience's discomfort and underscoring the blasphemy of his rationalizations.





Maria's continued presence deepened this effect in Act Two's opening. In a moment of shocking symbolic violence, the child she carried—both the baby Jesus and, by extension, all the children of God—was torn from her arms as chaos broke out onstage. The image was deeply unsettling: a sacred figure rendered powerless in the face of worldly cruelty. This was not a passive scene dressing but a thematic gut punch, embodying the destruction of innocence that threads through the story. Her silent devastation in that instant rippled through the rest of the act, a visual reminder of the stakes for every soul in Paris. After all this, Maria's absence from Esmeralda's death felt like a rupture in the visual and moral arc the production had so carefully built; to see her stand beside Quasimodo, or cradle Esmeralda as she once cradled the Christ child, would have completed the story she had been silently telling all along.

• God Help the Outcasts • Interpretive Layers

In WVPAC's production, *God Help the Outcasts* became the quiet but unshakable moral axis of the story. The staging was simple yet potent: Esmeralda, alone in the cathedral, stares up at the crucifix as a revelation seems to dawn. Strikingly, Maria was absent from this moment. Her earlier presence in

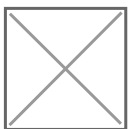
Hellfire reframed that number as a direct confrontation, but here, Esmeralda's plea goes unanswered. The Virgin's silence—whether due to staging choice or theological distance—makes the prayer's vulnerability sting all the more.

I don't know if you can hear me / Or if you're even there / I don't know if you would listen to a gypsy's prayer / I ask for wealth / I ask for fame / I ask for glory to shine on my name / I ask for love I can possess / I ask for nothing / I can get by / But I know so many less lucky than I / Please help my people, the poor and downtrodden / I thought we all were the children of God / Children of God.

Here, the song collapses any distance between spiritual and political truth—her request is not for divine favor but for systemic justice. The final repetition of *Children of God* becomes less an affirmation than a question hurled into the echoing void of the cathedral.

In the Disney animated film, the Virgin Mary appears during *God Help the Outcasts*—distant, passive, and removed from the action—framing Esmeralda's plea as a quiet, private prayer. WWPAC's staging makes a bolder choice: she is absent altogether. That omission speaks volumes. Without a visual focus for Esmeralda's words, the unanswered silence in the cathedral becomes deafening, amplifying the vulnerability of the moment. The contrast with *Hellfire* is striking—there, Maria is fully embodied and able to react to Frollo's turmoil, but here her absence leaves the prayer suspended in empty air, a haunting reminder of faith unanswered.

If Esmeralda were to sing to Maria—rather than toward a distant crucifix or abstract divine presence—the moment would shift from a solitary reflection cast into the void to an intimate, face-to-face plea for intercession. That framing would turn the number into a dialogue, intensifying its vulnerability and urgency. Maria's gaze or silence could then serve as moral commentary in itself—either affirming Esmeralda's compassion, withholding judgment, or underscoring divine indifference. Such a choice would also echo Maria's presence in *Hellfire*, where she stood as a silent witness to corruption, transforming her into a moral throughline who observes both the most selfless and the most hypocritical expressions of faith.



This reframing could have deepened the song's emotional and thematic resonance, transforming it from a personal prayer into a charged exchange with a living embodiment of the divine. Maria's physical presence—whether offering empathy, turning away, or maintaining an unreadable stillness—would invite the audience to grapple with the ethics of intercession: What does it mean when the divine is present yet chooses to comfort, to refuse, or to remain inscrutable?

As staged, the production instead uses Maria's contrasting presence in *Hellfire* and absence in *God Help the Outcasts* to shape the moral currents of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. In *Hellfire*, her embodiment turns the scene into a confrontation, allowing the audience to witness Frollo's moral collapse through her eyes. In *God Help the Outcasts*, her absence renders Esmeralda's prayer achingly unanswered, amplifying the tension between spiritual hope and institutional silence. Had Maria been present for both moments, the result might have been a cohesive moral arc linking witness,

judgment, and potential mercy. As it is, the production leaves audiences in the unresolved space between these poles—sitting with the discomfort of divine silence and the haunting possibility that even the purest prayers may go unanswered.

Final Thoughts

In the end, WVPAC's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* delivers a rare combination of grandeur and intimacy—one that makes the cathedral's bells feel as close as the beating heart of the story. By leaning into Victor Hugo's darker moral terrain, this staging resists the temptation to romanticize suffering, instead confronting its audience with the cost of prejudice, obsession, and silence. The presence of Maria—sometimes embodied, sometimes absent—becomes a subtle but powerful lens for reading the production's moral arc, even if her journey stops short of its fullest potential. Strong, deeply felt performances from **Taylor J. Smith**, **Beatriz Melo**, and **Chase Petersen** anchor the show's emotional weight, while thoughtful design work transforms the in-the-round space into a living, breathing Notre Dame. Imperfections in sound balance and occasional sightline challenges do little to diminish the overall impact. This is not a softened Disney fairytale—it is a vivid, often harrowing reminder that the fight for compassion and justice is as urgent in our world as it was in Hugo's Paris.

Lastly, as a story centered on a non-normative body, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* carries both a responsibility and an opportunity for more inclusive casting in Theatre and beyond. Quasimodo's partial deafness and physical difference make the role—and indeed the entire production—a natural vehicle for the representation of actors with disabilities across all characters. As deaf actor **John McGinty**, who has played Quasimodo in multiple productions, has urged:

Have an open mind and heart. This musical is really perfect to show representation of different classes and levels. I encourage theaters to look at any persons with disabilities; it's worth it to take the risk. If you don't, you won't know how successful it could be.

In a cultural moment when many companies are working to diversify race and ethnicity onstage, disability—America's largest minority group—remains underrepresented. Perhaps this show is a reminder that the power of this story lies not only in its soaring score or moral weight, but in its ability to widen the circle of who gets to tell it.

Show Details, Ticket Pricing & Accessibility

Performance Details

Dates: August 8–30, 2025

Venue: West Valley Performing Arts Center, 3333 Decker Lake Drive, West Valley City, UT 84119

Showtimes: Thursdays–Saturdays at 7:30 p.m., with select Saturday matinees at 3:00 p.m.

Running Time: Approximately 2 hours, with a 15 minute intermission

Suggested Age: 8+

Content Advisory: This production contains mature themes and intense moments; children under 8 are not encouraged to attend.

[Directions](#)

ð??? Tickets: \$20 (Youth)-\$35 (Adults) [Buy Here](#)

ð?? Youth (under 12):

ð??? Senior/Military: Discount available at the box office with ID

ð?• **West Side Weekend Special** (Aug. 8&??9 only): \$10 off at the door for West Side residents with proof of address

â?¿ Accessibility

ð?¤? **ASL-Interpreted Performance:** Saturday, August 23, 2025 at 3:00 p.m.

ð?? Accessible seating available&??contact the box office in advance for best sightlines for interpreted/accessible performances

ð??? Wheelchair accessible venue

ð??? **Hours:** Wed & Thu, 4&??8 p.m.; Sat, 9 a.m.&??1 p.m.

ð?? Open 90 minutes before each performance through intermission

ð??± **Phone:** (801) 965-5141

ð??§ **Email:** <https://wvcarts.org/>

ð??• **Website:** wvcarts.org



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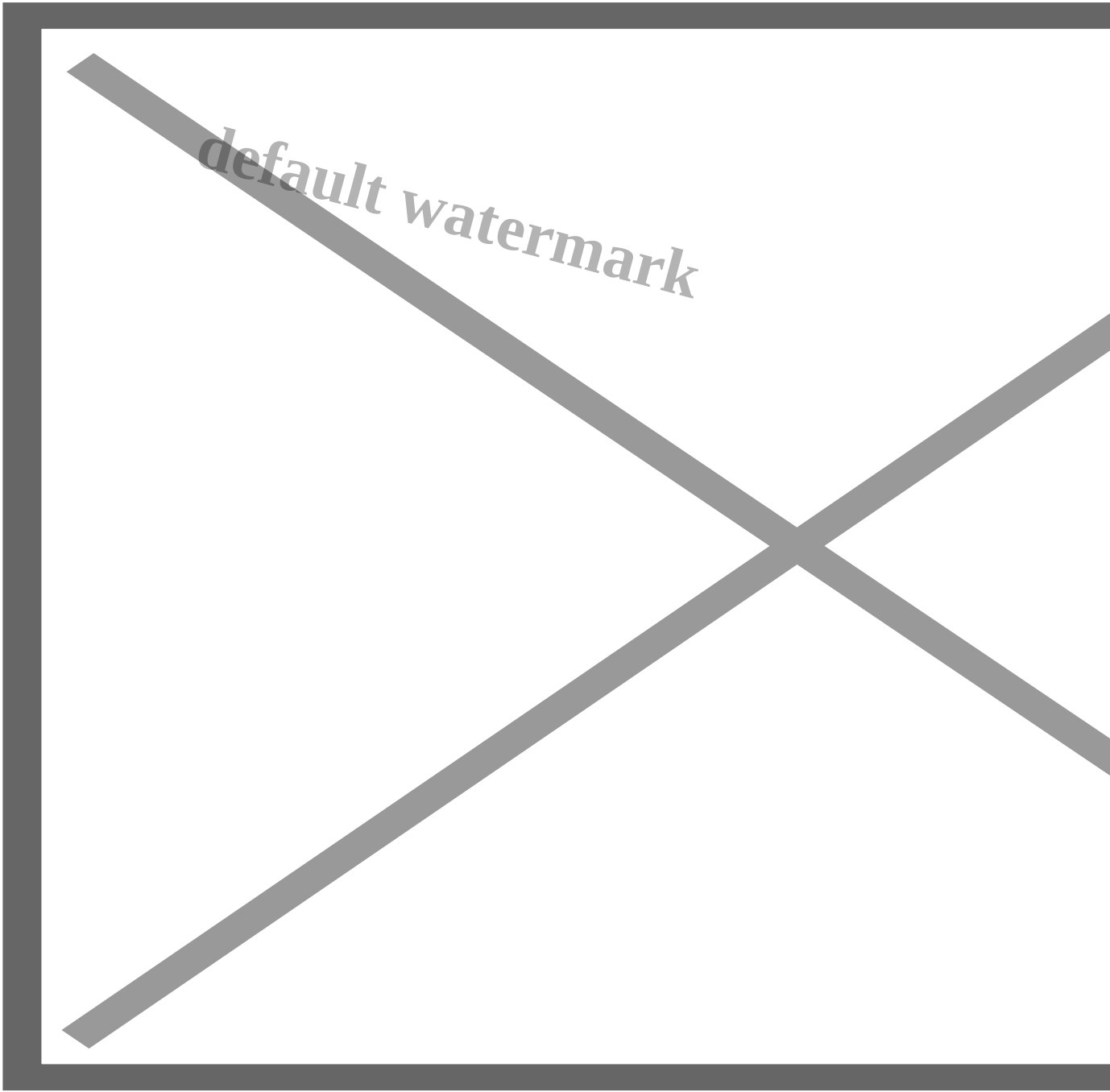
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Cast/Production



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^1 Playbill Staff, "Stephen Schwartz Reveals What's Next for *Hunchback of Notre Dame*," *Playbill*, July 15, 2015, <https://playbill.com/article/stephen-schwartz-reveals-whats-next-for-hunchback-of-notre-dame-com-353549>.

^2 "Why Didn't *Hunchback of Notre Dame* Make It to Broadway?," *BroadwayWorld*, accessed August 9, 2025, <https://forum.broadwayworld.com/thread/Why-didn-t-Hunchback-of-Notre-Dame-make-it-to-Broadway-1096599>.

About the Playwright: Peter Parnell

Peter Parnell is an acclaimed playwright, screenwriter, and children's author whose work spans Broadway, television, and literature. He most recently penned the new book for the Broadway revival of *On A Clear Day You Can See Forever*, starring Harry Connick Jr. and Jessie Mueller. His stage works include *Trumpery* (Atlantic Theatre Company), *QED* starring Alan Alda (Mark Taper Forum, Vivian Beaumont Theater at Lincoln Center), and the two-part stage adaptation of John Irving's *The Cider House Rules* (Seattle Rep, Mark Taper Forum, Atlantic), which won the American Theatre Critics Association Award. Other plays *Sorrows of Stephen*, *The Rise and Rise of Daniel Rocket*, *Romance Language*, *Hyde in Hollywood*, *Flaubert's Latest*, and *An Imaginary Life* premiered at the Public Theater and Playwrights Horizons.

For television, Parnell served as co-producer on *The West Wing* (earning two Emmy Award citations) and as a producer on *The Guardian*, *Inconceivable*, and *Six Degrees*. He is also the co-author, with Justin Richardson, of the award-winning and frequently challenged children's book *And Tango Makes Three*.

Dedicated to the craft of writing, Parnell has taught at Dartmouth College, The New School, Columbia University, the Yale School of Drama, and currently New York University. He also serves as Vice President of the Dramatists Guild of America.

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