



## Les Misérables: A Timeless Story of Justice, Revolution, and Redemption

### Description

**Salt Lake City, UT** In an era marked by widening economic disparities, mass protests, and growing debates over justice and reform, *Les Misérables* feels more urgent than ever. **Victor Hugo**'s tale of poverty, oppression, and resistance, first published in 1862, speaks directly to contemporary struggles, reflecting tensions that continue to shape our political landscape. The musical adaptation, which premiered in Paris in 1980 before opening in London's West End in 1985, has since become one of the longest-running shows in theatre history. Its themes of systemic inequality, justice, and revolution resonate sharply in today's world of rising inflation, stagnant wages, and policies that disproportionately harm marginalized communities. Just as 19th-century France saw the lower classes crushed under an indifferent ruling elite, modern societies grapple with parallel crises—from housing shortages and student debt to ongoing battles for fair wages and workers' rights.

My first trip to Broadway was to see *Les Misérables*, with Alfie Boe as Jean Valjean. That experience left a lasting impression on me—not just because of Boe's breathtaking performance, but because *Les Mis* is a story that stays with you long after the curtain falls. It was more than a show; it was a moment of realization about the power of storytelling, one that ultimately influenced my decision to pursue English in graduate school. The production I saw then is not the same as the one playing now. Reimagined with expansive projections and a striking cast, this revival breathes new life into a familiar story—yet what remains unchanged is its ability to move audiences through themes of courage, sacrifice, and justice.

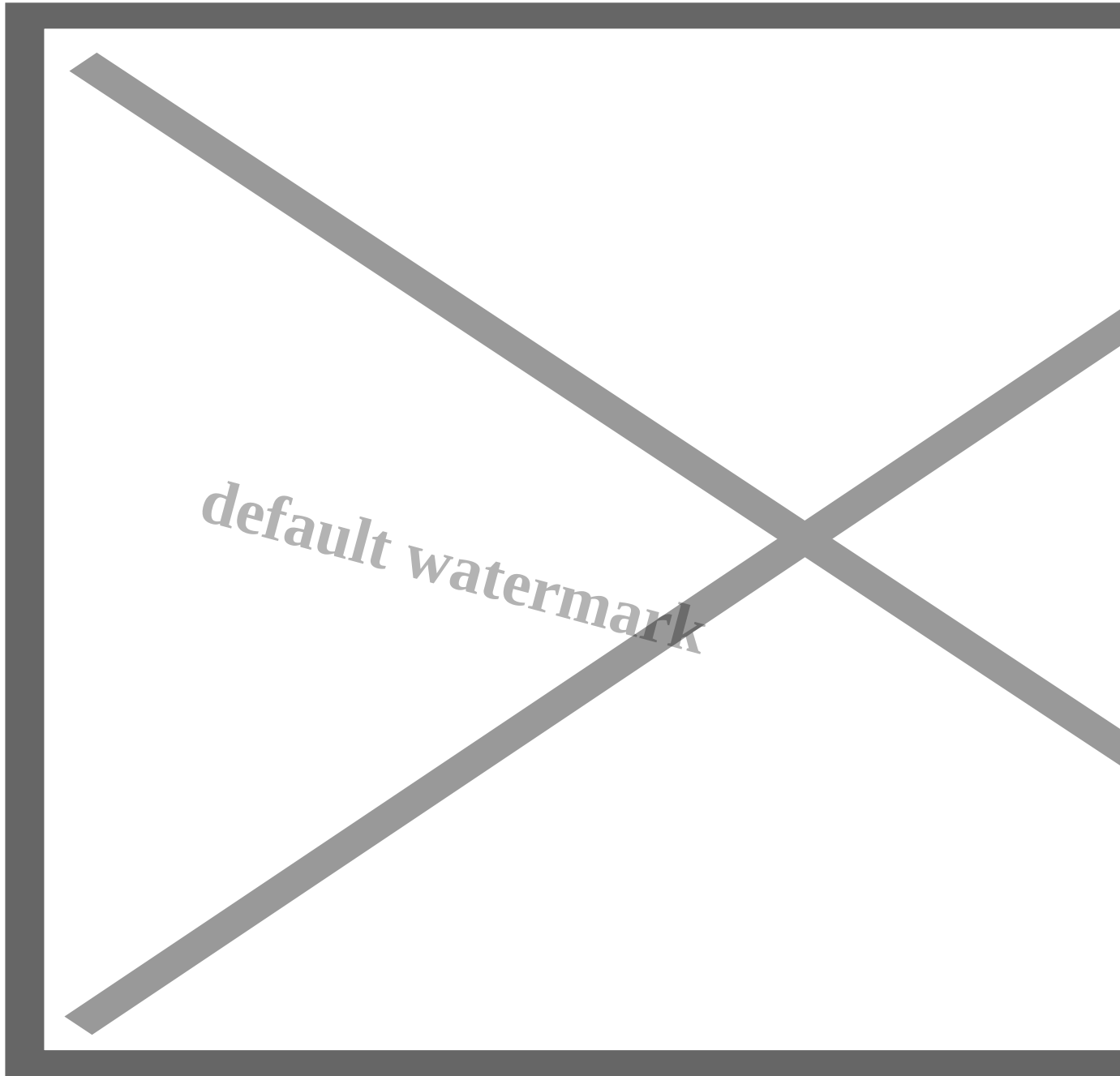
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The moments in *Les Misérables* that resonate most with me are those shaped by profound sacrifice and leadership in the face of inevitable defeat. When Jean Valjean sings, "Let him live," he acknowledges that saving Marius may cost him his own life—but he accepts that risk, believing the sacrifice is worth it for Cosette's happiness. Similarly, when Enjolras, after losing a comrade, turns to his company and says, "No unnecessary sacrifice you must make! There are some among you who have families, mothers, sisters, wives, children. Let such leave the ranks," it becomes a sobering moment of clarity. He knows their chances of victory are slim, yet he chooses to protect those who have more to lose, redefining leadership not as heroic death, but as ethical responsibility.

These moments bring a rare sense of peace and clarity amid the chaos—both onstage and beyond it. Right before battle, when a leader accepts that there is no chance of victory, the focus shifts from survival to meaning: to ensuring that what is lost will matter. *Les Misérables* speaks to this paradox of hope within futility, a lesson that still reverberates today. While most of us will never face such mortal stakes, we live in a world where instability has become ordinary—where leadership often feels detached from the realities of job loss, unaffordable housing, and dwindling security. In *Les Misérables*, sacrifice is a choice born of conviction; in our time, struggle is too often imposed by indifference. The musical leaves us with an unresolved but urgent question: how do we keep resisting without losing our humanity—and how do we transform collective struggle into meaningful change?

Performance Highlights

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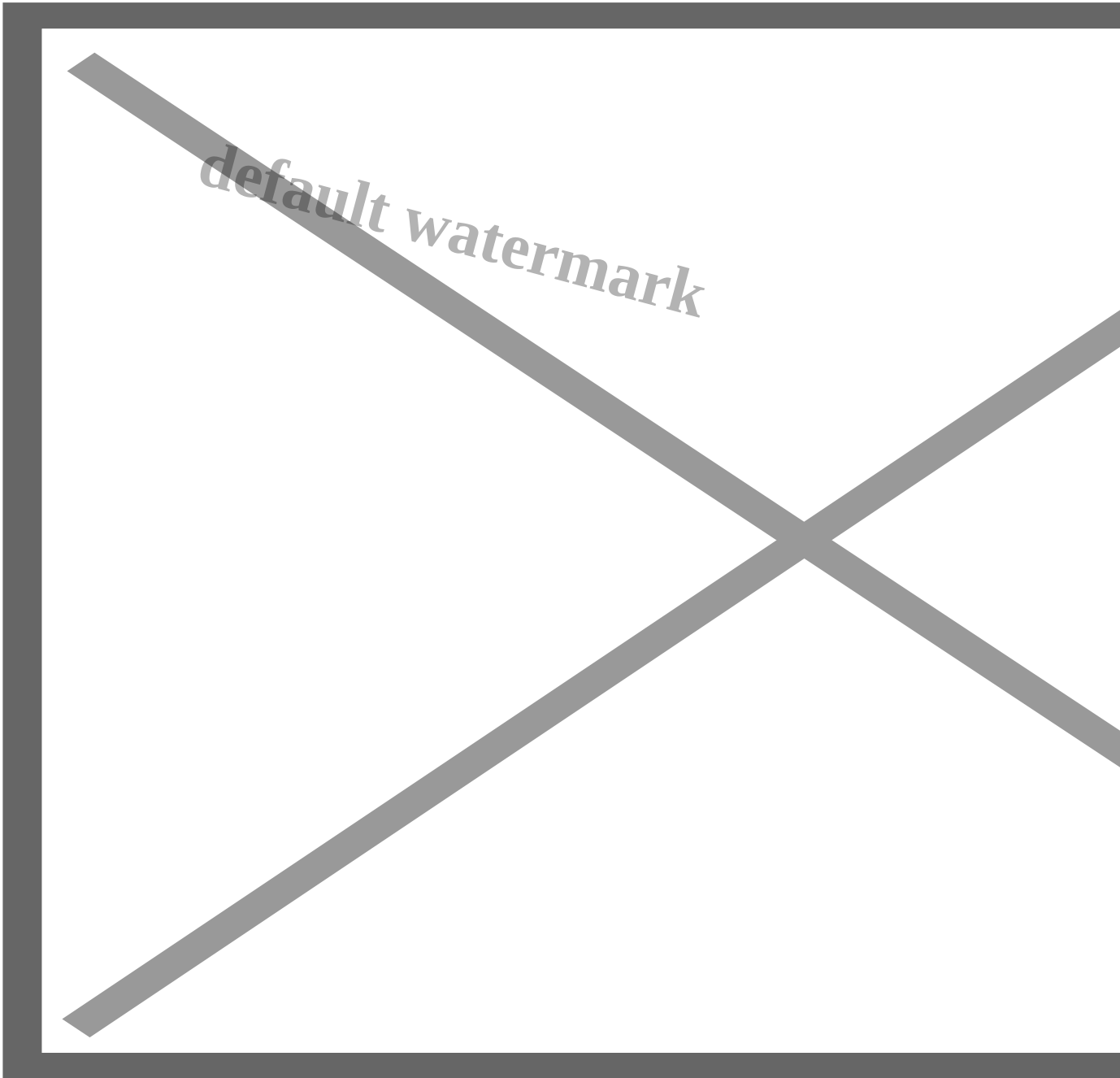
Nick Cartell as Jean Valjean Photo by Matthew Murphy

**Having performed the role over 1,000 times, Nick Cartell brings a lived-in authenticity to every moment, infusing his performance with nuance and a profound understanding of Valjean’s moral evolution.**

His vocal performance, blending powerful vibrato with moments of monastic introspection, brings new layers to the role. Songs like “Who Am I?” and “Bring Him Home” showcase his impressive range, with the latter delivered in a breathtaking falsetto that feels almost like a prayer—fragile yet

unwavering. His ability to shift from the raw desperation of “Valjean’s Soliloquy” to the tenderness of “Suddenly” demonstrates his mastery of both technical skill and emotional storytelling.

In today’s climate, where criminal justice reform and the treatment of formerly incarcerated individuals remain pressing issues, Valjean’s story serves as both an indictment of punitive justice and a plea for redemption. Cartell’s performance makes these themes feel especially urgent, reminding audiences that transformation is possible when compassion triumphs over condemnation. After more than 1,000 performances, Cartell’s authenticity is a testament to his dedication to one of musical theatre’s most demanding roles.



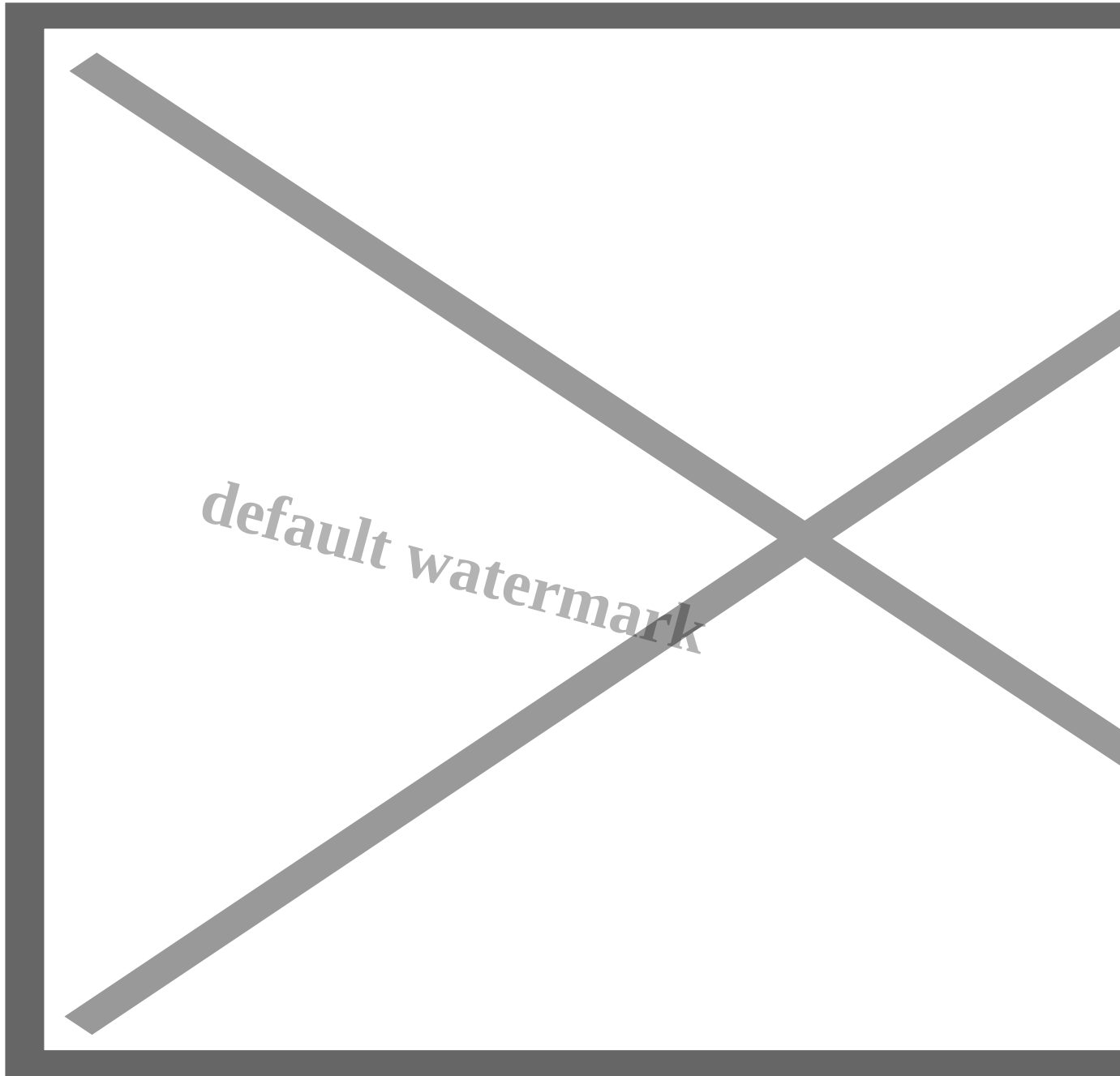
Nick Rehberger as Javert. Photo by Matthew Murphy

Through commanding vocals and a layered interpretation, Nick Rehberger crafts a Javert who is both formidable and fragile—a figure whose downfall lingers long after the final note.

Nick Rehberger's rendition of "Stars" is a standout moment, underscoring Javert's unwavering devotion to an unforgiving moral code. Yet, it's in his Soliloquy that Rehberger reveals the fissures in this rigid framework, making his ultimate demise all the more tragic.

Rehberger's performance feels especially resonant in today's climate, where ideological rigidity often obstructs societal progress. His portrayal draws clear parallels to contemporary debates on law enforcement, political polarization, and the dangers of moral absolutism.

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Lindsay Heather Pearce as Fantine, Photo by Matthew Murphy

**Lindsay Heather Pearce proves once again that she is a force on the stage, bringing a fresh yet faithful take to Fantine. With her stunning vocals and emotional depth, she cements herself as one of the most compelling Fantines in recent memory.**

Known for her powerhouse performances as Elphaba in *Wicked* and her standout run on *Glee*, Pearce brings her signature intensity to Fantine, crafting a performance that is both vocally soaring and

emotionally devastating.

Her rendition of "I Dreamed a Dream" is particularly gripping, infused with a quiet despair that builds into an aching crescendo. Pearce's voice—known for its impressive belt and crystalline high notes—balances power with fragility, making Fantine's descent into desperation all the more heartbreaking. Unlike her bold, defiant Elphaba or the theatrical flair she displayed in *Glee*, her Fantine is grounded, portraying a woman whose suffering is not just tragic but deeply human.

Dramatically, Pearce leans into the realism of the role, making Fantine's arc feel painfully inevitable. From her early optimism in "At the End of the Day" to the gut-wrenching moments of "Lovely Ladies," she fully embodies the character's downfall without overplaying the melodrama. Her chemistry with the ensemble and her scenes with Valjean (Nick Cartell) are filled with urgency and heartbreak, particularly in "Come to Me" where she clings to the hope that her daughter will be saved.

Jake David Smith, Mya Rena Hunter, Nick Cartell, and Delaney Guyer: Photo by Matthew Murphy  
Jake David Smith, Mya Rena Hunter, Nick Cartell, and Delaney Guyer. Photo by Matthew Murphy

**Together, Jake David Smith and Delaney Guyer create a Marius and Cosette who feel fully realized, their love story serving as a beacon of hope amidst the tragedy and a testament to love's ability to endure even in the darkest times.**

**Jake David Smith's** Marius and **Delaney Guyer's** Cosette bring a refreshing sincerity to their roles, grounding their performances in genuine emotion rather than melodrama. Their chemistry feels natural and unforced, making their whirlwind romance believable and heartfelt.

Guyer's Cosette is luminous, elevating a role that can sometimes feel secondary to the more dramatic characters around her. Her crystalline soprano soars effortlessly, adding warmth and depth to songs like "In My Life" and "A Heart Full of Love." More importantly, her acting choices make Cosette feel like an active participant in her story rather than just a passive love interest. She portrays Cosette's sheltered innocence without making her seem fragile, instead emphasizing her quiet strength and unwavering hope. In her final scenes with Valjean, Guyer brings a touching sincerity that highlights Cosette's love for the father who raised her, making their farewell all the more poignant.

Smith's Marius is both charming and deeply vulnerable, portraying the character as more than just a lovestruck young revolutionary. His performance of "Empty Chairs at Empty Tables" is particularly haunting, infused with raw grief and survivor's guilt that echoes long after the final note. Smith's tenor voice carries the weight of loss beautifully, with subtle vocal inflections that make his heartbreak feel deeply personal. Earlier in the show, he brings youthful idealism to "Red and Black," seamlessly shifting from playful banter with his fellow students to earnest determination. His rendition of "A Heart Full of Love" is tender and sweet, reflecting a Marius who is overwhelmed by newfound love but still retains a sense of wonder rather than naivety.

Mya Rena Hunter as Éponine, Photo by Matthew Murphy

Mya Rena Hunter as *Œponine*. Photo by Matthew Murphy

**Mya Rena Hunter's *Œponine* caught between love and survival, gives voice to those who are often forgotten or used as stepping stones for others's success.**

The ensemble, from the impoverished masses to the scheming Thénardiens, reflects the social stratification that remains prevalent today. **Mya Rena Hunter's *Œponine*** beautifully captures *Œponine's* playfulness amidst her heartbreak, making her sacrifice in the barricades one of the most poignant moments in the show.

Christian Mark Gibbs as Enjolras, Photo by Matthew Murphy  
(far right) Christian Mark Gibbs as Enjolras. Photo by Matthew Murphy

**Christian Mark Gibbs as Enjolras is exceptional—his tenor is commanding as his voice blends authority with idealism—perfectly capturing Enjolras's unwavering belief in the revolution.**

## The Revolutionary Spirit: Student Uprisings and Modern Parallels

The student revolutionaries, led by **Christian Mark Gibbs** as Enjolras, inject *Les Misérables* with revolutionary fervor. Their cause—a fight for justice and the dignity of the impoverished—echoes modern movements advocating for systemic change. The tragic fate of these students serves as a stark reminder that not all revolutions succeed, but their courage and ideals endure. In an era marked by protests and activism, *Les Misérables* reminds audiences that the struggle for justice is ongoing and often met with brutal resistance.

Vocally, the student ensemble is passionate and precise. Their harmonies in “Red and Black” and “Do You Hear the People Sing?” are striking, amplifying the urgency of their cause. The rest of the ensemble supports Gibbs with strong diction and emotional depth, making the revolution's downfall all the more powerful.

Beggars at the Feast, Photo by Matthew Murphy  
Beggars at the Feast. [Photo by Matthew Murphy](#)

**Matt Crowle's performance in “Master of the House” is a masterclass in controlled chaos—every movement and vocal inflection oozes self-serving deception.**  
*—The Rhetorical Review*

The ThÃ©nardiers provide a stark contrast to the themes of justice and sacrifice, instead embodying greed and opportunism. **Matt Crowle** and **Victoria Huston-Elem** bring an infectious energy to their roles, balancing comedy with an underlying menace that makes their scheming all the more unsettling.

Crowle's ThÃ©nardier is delightfully conniving, using sharp comedic timing and expressive physicality to create a character who is equal parts ridiculous and menacing. His performance in "Master of the House" is a masterclass in controlled chaos—every movement and vocal inflection oozes self-serving deception. While he leans heavily into the role's humor, he never lets the audience forget the character's cruelty, especially in the darker moments when ThÃ©nardier exploits Cosette and later attempts to rob Valjean. His ability to transition from slapstick comedy to genuine malice keeps the character from becoming a mere caricature, making his presence on stage both entertaining and unsettling.

Huston-Elem's Madame ThÃ©nardier is equally dynamic, her brash and boisterous portrayal elevating the duo's scenes with unrelenting energy. She delivers her lines with razor-sharp wit, and her chemistry with Crowle makes their partnership feel both dysfunctional and perfectly in sync. Her vocals are strong and commanding, adding an extra bite to her comedic insults. However, beneath the humor, Huston-Elem infuses the character with venomous cruelty, particularly in her interactions with young Cosette and Ãponine. Her delivery of "Beggar at the Feast" is delightfully unhinged, a final, sneering jab at the world that has rejected her.

Vocally, both actors shine in their respective roles. Crowle's nasal, exaggerated delivery in "Master of the House" enhances the song's dark humor, while Huston-Elem's robust voice adds grit to their duets. Their harmonies are well-matched, and their ability to seamlessly blend humor with menace makes them standout performers in this production. Together, they create a ThÃ©nardier duo as hilarious as it is despicable, leaving a lasting impression.

Jack Jewkes as Gavroche, Photo by Matthew Murphy  
Jack Jewkes as Gavroche. Photo by Matthew Murphy

**Jack Jewkes's spirited turn as Gavroche infuses the barricade scenes with both mischief and heroism, making his tragic fate all the more devastating.**  
*—The Rhetorical Review*

His charisma and energy bring a necessary spark to the barricade scenes, making Gavroche's fate all the more heartbreaking. His stage presence and confidence make him a standout in the ensemble, embodying the role with a balance of mischief and heroism.

**Emerson Mae Chan's** portrayal of Young Cosette is delicate and heartfelt, capturing the character's vulnerability while showcasing an impressive vocal range. Her rendition of "Castle on a Cloud" is poignant and sincere. Chan's ability to hold her own in scenes opposite seasoned actors is commendable, and she effectively conveys the contrast between Cosette's despair and the hope that Valjean brings into her life.

Although Young Éponine has less stage time than the other child roles, **Gretta Schaeffer** makes a memorable impact. She effectively conveys the early signs of Éponine's rough upbringing, endowing her with a natural toughness that foreshadows the character's later struggles. Her brief interactions with Young Cosette and the Thenardiers are well-executed. Schaeffer ensures that Young Éponine's presence is felt, subtly setting the stage for the tragic arc to come.

The Barricade, Photo by Matthew Murphy  
The Barricade. [Photo by Matthew Murphy](#)

## Technical Brilliance and Symbolic Design

The 2025 revival of *Les Misérables* brings a fresh, contemporary interpretation, led by directors **James Powell** and Laurence Connor, who blend spectacle with intimacy, enhancing emotional moments while retaining the grandeur of the original. However, some purists felt it deviated too far from the classic. Set designer Matt Kinley uses large-scale projections to immerse the audience in the industrial, revolutionary world of Paris, though some critics felt these projections sometimes overshadowed the emotional depth of the story. That said, modern audiences will likely love the projections, which add a dynamic and immersive layer to the production. Matt Kinley's lighting design was a revelation for me, bringing more meaning to the story by perfectly complementing the emotional beats. Though some found it too harsh in certain scenes, I thought it captured the production's mood shifts. Sound designer **Mick Potter** ensures clarity in the score.

Matt Crowle as Thénardier, Photo by Matthew Murphy  
Matt Crowle as Thénardier. Photo by Matthew Murphy

The production excels technically, with Kinley's dynamic set and **Finn Ross** and **Fifty-Nine Productions's** evocative projections creating a Paris that feels both realistic and dreamlike. Notably, the sewer scene stands out as a powerful visual and symbolic moment. Constable's lighting and Potter's sound amplify the emotional beats, from the soft glow of the bishop's mercy to the explosive chaos of the barricades. Costume designers Andreane Neofitou, Christine Rowland, and Paul Wills provide historically informed designs, and **Stefan Musch's** wigs, hair, and makeup contributed wonderfully to character development.

Music director **Glenn Alexander II** maintained the integrity of the score, though some moments felt off in terms of emotional pacing, and conductor **Will Curry's** brisk tempos occasionally detracted from the drama, but his overall execution was solid.

With a creative team that boasts impressive credentials, including Tony Award winners for their contributions to theatre, this *Les Misérables* production is undoubtedly a testament to the talent behind it. While I agree with other reviews that some of the tempos were quick, this revival is definitely worth the ticket price.

The anthem, "Do You Hear the People Sing?"  
The anthem, "Do You Hear the People Sing?" is a rallying cry for justice and liberty: "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?" (Act 1). Though their rebellion fails, their spirit lives on, inspiring future generations to fight against tyranny and oppression.

## What will we stand for

Returning to where this review began: the question of sacrifice is central to *Les Misérables*. Fantine gives up everything for her daughter, Valjean dedicates his life to Cosette, and Enjolras leads a doomed revolution. Javert, unable to reconcile mercy with his rigid code, takes his own life. Together, these stories ask what we are willing to risk for justice, love, and hope. These struggles still echo in today's fights for equity and reform, reminding us that sacrifice remains as necessary and as costly as ever. As Valjean declares in his final moments, "To love another person is to see the face of God."

This revival proves why *Les Misérables* endures: it's not just a classic, but a mirror for our times. With this stellar cast, breathtaking visuals, and timeless score, it offers both a haunting reminder of the cost of injustice and why we must extend compassion. For newcomers and longtime fans alike, it is a journey worth taking to the barricades once more.

## Show Information

- **Dates:** February 26 – March 15, 2025
- **Showtimes:**
  - **Tuesdays & Thursdays:** 7:00 PM
  - **Fridays:** 7:30 PM
  - **Saturdays:** 1:00 PM & 7:30 PM
  - **Sundays:** 1:00 PM & 6:30 PM
  - **Additional Friday Matinee:** March 14 at 1:00 PM
- **Tickets:** \$59 – \$249
- **Contact:** [Broadway-at-the-Eccles.com](#), 801.355.ARTS (2787)
- **More Information:** [Les Misérables Tour](#)
- **Venue:** The George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Theater  
131 Main St, Salt Lake City, UT 84111
- **Run time:** 2 hours and 58 minutes with 1 intermission

## Accessibility Performances

- **Open Captioned:** Saturday, March 1 at 1:00 PM
- **Closed Captioned:** Available for all performances via StreamText.net
- **Audio Described:** Friday, February 28 at 7:30 PM
- **ASL Interpreted:** Friday, March 7 at 7:30 PM

For more details: [Theater Accessibility Info](#)

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1. Reviews
2. Musicals

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1. Andreane Neofitou
2. Christian Mark Gibbs
3. Christine Rowland
4. Delaney Guyer
5. Fifty-Nine Productions
6. Finn Ross
7. Glenn Alexander II
8. Jake David Smith
9. James Powell
10. Laurence Connor
11. Matt Crowle
12. Matt Kinley
13. Mick Potter
14. Mya Rena Hunter
15. Nick Cartell
16. Nick Rehberger
17. Paul Wills
18. Stefan Musch
19. Victoria Huston-Elem
20. Will Curry

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