

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Trollwood Performing Arts School ~ Costumes, Kathi Dykstra ~ Wedding Cake,  
Gene & Linda Durieux ~ Weaponry, Nelson Masonry ~ Props,  
Cy Hoffarth and the GF Public Schools Print Shop, Donna Wilson ~ Costumes  
Ginger & Ulric Johnson ~ Costumes, JLG Architects ~ Props,  
Ron & Diane Sitzer ~ Costumes, Becky Schmidt ~ Costumes,  
Central HS, Red River HS, and Valley MS ~ Keyboards, Jan Burke,  
Danielle Hagan and Robin Everson ~ Creative Expertise

*We remember our good friend Gene Durieux as we perform for you tonight. Les Miserables is a story of transforming grace. Gene lived in grace. He was always delighted to share his talents with us. He will be missed.*



## PLEASE...



To demonstrate respect to performers and other audience members, please turn off your cell phones and remain in your seats during the show.

Also, no flash photography or videotaping is allowed at the performance.

Thank you, and enjoy the show!

## You can reserve tickets for SPA shows online!

## [www.spacompany.org](http://www.spacompany.org)

MAILING LIST: If you would like to be on our mailing list for the best seating for productions (and to avoid the ridiculously long phone message ☺) at Red River or at SPA, fill out the form below, tear it out from the program, and pass it along to an usher or mail to Red River HS, 2211 17th Ave. S. 58201, "ATTN: MAILING LIST". *No need to fill this out if you are already on the list.*

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

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PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

## THE 2007 SUMMER PERFORMING ARTS COMPANY PRESENTS:

# Les Misérables<sup>©1988 CNOL</sup> School Edition



## July 19-25

## 8:00 pm





LES MISERABLES- 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  
 MUSIC THEATRE INTERNATIONAL and CAMERON MACKINTOSH

## CAST

*Name followed by 2007-2008 grade and school*

Jean Valjean.....Jace Beehler-12-RR  
 Javert.....Alex Guy-12-RR  
 Eponine.....Teran Ferguson-12-RR  
 Cosette.....Alyssa Graham-12-RR  
 Enjolras .....Tyler Rood-12-GFC  
 Marius.....Steven Douglas-12-STEPHEN ARGYLE  
 Gavroche.....Brent Shrum-9-RR  
 Monsieur Thenardier..... Zach Spicer-12-RR  
 Madame Thenardier .....Kayli Davis-12-RR  
 Young Cosette..... Therese Kulas-6-SACRED HEART  
 Young Eponine..... Lindsay Barta-12-RR  
 Chain Gang soloists .....Joel Braxton-11-GFC, AJ Geary-12-GFC,  
 Luke Snustad-11-RR, Ben Peterson-12-GFC, Cody Oss-12-GFC  
 Constables .....Phil Jensen-11-RR, Grant Fisher-12-GFC  
 Farmer ..... David Ewens-11-SACRED HEART  
 Bishop/Proouvaire.....Brock Moser-11-RR  
 Fantine.....Kate Paulson-12-RR  
 Foreman/Claquesous..... Dan Wiebusch-12-RR  
 Workers..... AJ Geary-12-GFC, Ben Peterson-12-GFC  
 Girls .....Hannah Diers-11-GFC, Brenna Everson-12-RR,  
 Janie Sanner-12-RR, Britt Lazur -11-RR  
 Sailors ..... Luke Snustad-11-RR, Ken McGurran-11-GFC,  
 David Ewens-11-SACRED HEART  
 Old Woman.....Lindsey Spies-12-RR  
 Bamatabois/Grantaire .....Keenan O'Shea-11-EGF  
 Man in Charge of Ladies/Lesgles .....David Ewens-11-SAC. HEART

## SPA 2007 STAFF

**Administrative Director:** Dean Opp  
**Program Director/Mentor Coordinator:** Brad Sherwood  
**Elem./M.S. Coordinator:** Lori Young  
**Operations Director/Student Registration:** Allison Peterson  
**Box Office Coordinator:** Allison Peterson  
**Office/Box Office Staff:** Jacob Geffre, Allie Hoistad, Michaela Hill  
**Vocal Coordinator:** Maria Williams Kennedy  
**Vocal Staff:** Christina Runyan, Amy Erickson, Becky Mercer, Becky Cicha,  
 Annette Hovey  
**Elem. SPA:** Chris Fosse, Mike Shea, Jamie Toutenhoofd, Diane Blue,  
 Patti Becker, Rhonda Cameron, Cassandra Schaffer, Kami Anderson,  
 Carly Bratvold, Andrea Johnke, Ashley Holcomb  
**MS SPA:** Tom Young, Joel Beyer, Carolyn Berge, Maren Tunseth,  
 Christina Runyan, Rich McFarlane, Nick Wiebusch, Tony Peterson,  
 Amanda Speare  
**Tech Staff:** Josh Anderson, John Holten, Mike Brown, Jordan Green,  
 Ethan Johnson, Paul Amundson, Nick Wiebusch, Loren Liepold  
**Junior Tech Assistants:** James Freestone, Joey Freestone  
**Les Mis Directors:** Connie Sherwood, Dr. Mike Weber  
**HMS Directors:** Geoff Mercer, Rich McFarlane  
**Revue Director:** Angie Black Erickson  
**Production Assistants:** Paul Barta, Cassel Everson, Roxanne Gessler,  
 Kathi Dykstra, Jolly Sherwood, Tony Peterson,  
 Andrea Johnke, Amanda Speare  
**Costume Staff:** Amy Sanner, Amanda Hill, Sarah Winger, Katie Sanner  
**Class Instructors:** Maria Williams-Kennedy, Mike Blake  
**Webmaster:** Jeff Seabloom

## 2007 PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Parents helped us supply food and treats for the staff and students, usher performances, and much more.

Sue Jenö, Deb & Greg Nelson, Judy Klaus, Laurie & Mark Guy,  
 Jolene Mikkelsen, Shirley Pung, Leah & Jeff Byzewski, Mary Kulas,  
 Jayne & Dennis Flaagan, Joe Woods & Cindy Yarbrow, Annette Hovey,  
 Donna & Chris Smith, Pat & Ron Guthmiller, Mark & Louise Diers,  
 Pam Laffen, Cindy Jensen, Cheri & Mike Douglas, Jenny Sun

There were many helpers this year...we apologize if we have left your name out of the program. Thank you for all of your help and support.

## NOTES FROM THE ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR

20 years...20 summers filled with set buildings, rehearsals, and standing ovations. 20 seasons of personal growth for thousands of students.

Much has changed in the last 20 years of SPA. There are now more lights, mics, new technology, staff, students, and performances, but the basic philosophy has stayed the same. The original team wanted to have a program with the following tenets: **1. Every student would have an opportunity to perform.** We would expand the number of shows to fit the number of interested performers. And unlike during the school year where some students that audition do not get into shows, everyone would have a part; **2. No student would ever be turned away due to financial concerns.** We would make sure there was a scholarship fund to help any student that wanted to participate and needed help to do so; and, **3. Students would have the opportunity to experience the best in dance, drama, and music.** We would make sure that SPA allowed both experienced and novice students to work with the very best performing arts educators in the region.

I am so proud to say that I work with a program that has these guiding principles. As I visit with directors of other summer programs from across the nation, they are amazed at what we do. The students and staff of SPA represent the excellence in education that others talk about. SPA has truly become a gem for our community.

As we look ahead to the next 20 years we will continue to be guided by the same principles. SPA will continue to be a place for ALL students to experience the power and excitement of the performing arts. And in time we will all be stars!

**Dean Opp, Administrative Director**

## NOTES FROM THE ADMINISTRATION

Congratulations on another wonderful SPA season, especially since this is the 20th year of the program. SPA continues to provide wonderful opportunities for students and their mentors to work together to create magic in performances and tremendous growth on a personal level.

I am proud to be in a district and a community that takes great pride in the SPA program and also gives such wonderful support to all of the fine arts. We should all be proud.

**Ron Gruwell, Superintendent of Schools**

## CAST – CONTINUED

### *Name followed by 2007-2008 grade and school*

Ladies of the Night .....Johanna Dittus-12-RR, Janie Sanner-12-RR,  
Diane Stjern-12-RR  
Fauchelevent/Army Officer ..... Isaac Black-11-RR  
Onlookers ..... Sarah Harlow-12-GFC, Ken McGurran-11-GFC,  
Janie Sanner-12-RR, Brenna Everson-12-RR  
Joly /Fake Valjean..... Cody Oss-11-GFC  
Gavroche gang..... Connor Joseph-8-SOUTH, Ian Sherwood-8-SOUTH,  
Cole Sherwood-7-SOUTH  
Montparnasse .....Austin Manning-12-RR  
Babet..... AJ Geary-12-GFC  
Brujon..... Grant Fisher-12-GFC  
Combeferre ..... Jordan Speare-11-RR  
Feuilly .....Ken McGurran-11-GFC  
Courfeyrac ..... Luke Snustad-11-RR

## *Chorus*

Rachel Abbe-11-RR	Kiersten Jensen-11-GFC
Kristen Anderson-11-GFC	Emily Johnke-11-GFC
Alyssa Becker-11-GFC	Kirsten Johnson-12-RR
Kristin Berg-11-RR	Amelia Klaus-11-GFC
Brita Bostad-11-RR	Lexi Mattson-11-RR
Karlie Breidenbach-11-RR	Kelsey Misialek-12-RR
Katie Duchscherer-11-RR	Michael Mondry-11-RR
Sarah Duchscherer-11-RR	Justin Nelson-12-EGF
Stephanie Freng-10-EGF	Dakota Noyes-12-RR
Eric Gandrud-11-RR	Todd Olson-11-RR
Lyndsey Harter-12-RR	Jackie O'Neil-11-RR
Matt Hippen-11-THOMP.	Susie Peters-12-RR
Samantha Houska-11-GFC	Kayla Rosenkranz-11-RR
Sarah Hysjulien-11-GFC	Loren Vogt-12-RR
Colleen Jen0-12-RR	

## ORDER OF MUSICAL NUMBERS

### Act 1

Prologue .....	Chain Gang, Javert, Valjean, Farmer, Labourer, Innkeeper, Innkeeper's Wife, Bishop, Constables 1 & 2
At the End of the Day.....	The Poor, Foreman, Workers, Fantine, Valjean
I Dreamed a Dream .....	Fantine
The Docks.....	Sailors, Ladies of the Evening, Old Woman 1 & 2, Fantine, Man in charge of Ladies of the Evening, Bamatabois, Javert, Valjean
The Cart Crash.....	Onlookers, Valjean, Fauchelevent, Javert
Fantine's Death .....	Fantine, Valjean, Javert
Little Cosette .....	Cosette, Madame Thenardier
The Innkeeper's Song.....	M. & Mme. Thenardier, Drinkers, Diners, Chorus
The Bargain.....	Valjean, Cosette, M. & Mme. Thenardier
The Beggars .....	Gavroche, Old Beggar Woman, Prostitute, Women, Marius, Enjolras, Urchins, Chorus
The Robbery.....	M. & Mme. Thenardier, Marius, Eponine, Valjean, Javert
Stars .....	Javert, Gavroche, Eponine, Marius
The ABC Café.....	Combeferre, Feuilly, Courfeyrac, Enjolras, Grantaire, Marius, Students, Prouvaire, Lesgles
The People's Song.....	Enjolras, Combeferre, Courfeyrac, Students, Fueilly, Chorus
Rue Plumet .....	Cosette, Valjean, Marius, Eponine
A Heart Full of Love .....	Eponine, Marius, Cosette
The Attack on Rue Plumet.....	Eponine, Montparnasse, Babet, Thenardier, Brujon, Claquesous, Marius, Valjean, Cosette
One Day More ...	Valjean, Marius, Cosette, Eponine, Enjolras, Students, M. & Mme. Thenardier

~ 10-MINUTE INTERMISSION ~

### Act 2

The Barricade .....	Enjolras, Javert, Prouvaire, Grantaire, Lesgles, Marius, Eponine, Valjean, Combeferre, Courfeyrac, Fueilly, Army Officer
Javert at the Barricade.....	Javert, Enjolras, Gavroche, Grantaire, Prouvaire, Courfeyrac, Feuilly, Lesgles, Combeferre, Eponine, Marius, Joly, Valjean
The First Attack.....	Sentry 1 & 2, Enjolras, Feuilly, Lesgles, Grantaire, Valjean, Javert
The Night.....	Feuilly, Prouvaire, Joly, Grantaire, Chorus, Marius, Valjean, Enjolras
The Second Attack .....	Enjolras, Feuilly, Marius, Valjean, Gavroche, Lesgles, Joly
The Final Battle.....	Army Officer, Enjolras, Combeferre, Courfeyrac
The Sewers.....	Thenardier, Valjean
Javert's Suicide .....	Valjean, Javert, Women
The Café Song.....	Marius
Marius & Cosette.....	Cosette, Valjean, Marius
The Wedding.....	Chorus of Guests, M. & Mme. Thenardier, Marius
Epilogue .....	Valjean, Fantine, Cosette, Marius, Eponine

## ABOUT THE SHOW - ACT 1

A chain gang is working in the scorching sun in Toulon, France, in 1815. Javert, the prison guard, enters to tell one of the prisoners, Valjean, that after 19 years, his parole has begun. Javert reminds Valjean that he intends to keep his eye on Valjean in the future. Valjean is overjoyed at being free, however he realizes he is a branded man, and he cannot make a living or find a place to stay. In the town of Digne, a saintly Bishop allows Valjean to stay in his house over night. Valjean steals some silver from the Bishop, and is questioned by the constables. To save him from law, the Bishop backs up Valjean, but asks Valjean to use the silver to become an honest man. Valjean tears up his yellow ticket of leave that is his link to his life in prison and begins a new life with a new identity.

Eight years later, we find ourselves in the factory owned by Valjean, now leading a new life under a new identity. We find a group of despaired young women gossiping about one of the female workers, Fantine. They grab a letter away from Fantine and learn that she has a child who lives with an innkeeper in another town. The women insist that Fantine be fired because of her loose morals, and Fantine soon finds herself out on the street. To earn money for her daughter, Fantine sells her necklace and hair and becomes a prostitute. Valjean comes to the aid of innocent Fantine. When Valjean and Javert meet face-to-face once again, Javert thinks he recognizes him, but quickly realizes it can't be him because he recently re-arrested a man who he thought was Valjean. Valjean realizes that he will not be able to live with himself if he does not spare the falsely accused man. Valjean appears at the trial and confesses his true identity in front of Javert.

Fantine takes ill, but Valjean escapes Javert and vows to Fantine that he will take care of her daughter, Cosette. Fantine dies. We find Cosette sweeping at the Thenardier's inn. Mme. Thenardier, Cosette's guardian, constantly scolds her, but praises her own daughter, Eponine. Valjean enters the scene, and extracts a settlement with the inn-keepers, promising Cosette a better future with him.

The scene shifts to the streets of Paris in 1832. A group of students lead by a young man Enjolras, accuses the nation's leaders of ignoring the poor. A young boy, Gavroche warns them of a gang led by Thenardier, who has moved his operation to Paris. Thenardier has enlisted his daughter Eponine, now a young lady, to lead his illicit activities against the poor. Eponine is in love with Marius, one of Enjolras' friends. However, Marius does not return her romantic affection. When Marius sees Cosette for the first time he falls in love with her. Thenardier recognizes Valjean, and Javert arrives to intercede; Valjean flees. Javert vows to catch the fugitive Valjean, and he will not rest until he does. Eponine realizes that the girl with Valjean was Cosette. Marius begs her to help him find Cosette again, and though she is filled with jealousy, Eponine agrees.

As the students sit in a café to plan an insurrection, they learn of the death of General Lamarque, a popular military leader. Enjolras says that Lamarque's death will kindle the flame of revolution. Enjolras says they must decide whether or not they are willing to die for their beliefs.

Lost in their individual thoughts, everyone reflects on the future. Valjean sees himself as being trapped on an endless road, Cosette and Marius feel their new-found love slipping away, and Eponine mourns her unrequited feelings for Marius. Enjolras enters and asks Marius to join the insurrection. Marius agrees. The students sing of their glorious days to come, and everyone prepares for this fateful "one day more."

## ABOUT THE SHOW - ACT 2

The students are planning to build their barricade and hope that their people will support them. When Eponine enters, Marius asks her to deliver a letter to Cosette in which he says goodbye in case he were to die in battle. Eponine has now alienated her father by protecting Marius and has nowhere to turn. She has nothing but her dreams of a love that can never be returned.

Back at the barricade, the students are told to give up their guns or die. Javert pretends to be on the student's side, but when Gavroche reveals Javert's identity to the others they tie him up planning to shoot him after the battle is done. When Eponine returns and tells Marius she has delivered the letter to Valjean, he realizes she has been wounded. She dies in his arms. Valjean appears and announces he has come to aid the students. When he meets Javert, Valjean releases him even though Javert assures him that he will continue to pursue him until the day he dies. Realizing the depth of Marius' devotion to Cosette, Valjean prays for his safety in battle, and offers to die instead.

The students refuse to surrender, and the army mounts a fierce attack. Only Marius and Valjean survive. When Javert finds the two collapsed, Valjean asks Javert to allow him to take Marius to safety. This time, Javert agrees to Valjean's request and says he will be waiting. As Javert waits for Valjean he realizes his own life has no meaning because Valjean has proven that a man can be redeemed and should be forgiven. Javert jumps to his death.

Marius sings a song of mourning for his dead companions. He begs their forgiveness that he survived. He still does not know who carried him from the barricade. Cosette and Marius plan to marry. Valjean confesses his past to Marius, and explains that he must keep running. Marius agrees to never tell Cosette of the truth of her adoptive father's past.

Cosette and Marius go and visit Valjean, now close to death. Valjean tells Cosette the truth of her mother. As he dies he reminds Cosette of the power of love telling her "to love another person is to see the face of God. With overwhelming conviction, the entire company sings, "Even the darkest night will end and the sun will rise."

## A SPA TRADITION

Following tonight's curtain call, there will be a final musical number. The rest of the students in the Summer Performing Arts Company will join the cast to perform "I Sing the Body Electric." This song has closed all SPA performances for the past 20 years. This symbolic song ties the entire program together. It has different meanings to different students, but a common theme can be found in the literal text. The students are celebrating not only the arts, but their growth in the arts yet to come. They will go on to create their own tomorrows as they continue in music and theatre. The song also symbolizes the passing of a class. This is the last summer program in which the class of 2008 will be able to participate. This "passing of the tradition" is represented by the two soloists selected to sing. Zach Spicer, a senior, will sing the first verse then turn the spotlight over to ninth-grader Jacy Thibert, a student new to the High School SPA company.

*"And in time we will all be stars."*



## The SPA Program reaches a milestone this year!

**2007 marks the 20<sup>th</sup> season of the Summer Performing Arts Company. For twenty years, SPA has provided over 10,000 area students with summer arts opportunities and over 100,000 people have been in attendance for SPA's performances over the years.**

**The following is a breakdown of the past twenty years.**

Year	Productions
1987 <small>(pre-SPA)</small>	<i>Recital: Les Miserables</i>
1988	<i>An Evening With A.L. Webber</i>
1989	<i>Sullivan to Sondheim, Traditions in Theatre</i>
1990	<i>Bye Bye Birdie, Chorus Line, Best of Broadway</i>
1991	<i>Music Man, Cole Porter Revue, HMS Pinafore</i>
1992	<i>Pirates of Penzance, Joseph...Dreamcoat, Our Town</i>
1993	<i>Oklahoma, Anne of Green Gables, The Hobbit</i>
1994	<i>Guys &amp; Dolls, You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown!, Loesser &amp; More Revue</i>
1995	<i>Robber Bridegroom, Joseph...Dreamcoat, Best of Broadway Revue</i>
1996	<i>Anything Goes, Oliver!, Get Smart, Best of SPA Revue</i>
1997	<i>Keep the Faith</i>
1998	<i>West Side Story, Park Players, Anchors Aweigh, HMS Pinafore</i>
1999	<i>Oklahoma, Music Man, Broadway Babes, Our Town</i>
2000	<i>Joseph...Dreamcoat, The Boyfriend, Jerry's Girls, Still Crazy</i>
2001	<i>The Wiz, 42<sup>nd</sup> St., Don't Drink the Water, And Now Something Completely New</i>
2002	<i>Brigadoon, Annie, It Runs in the Family</i>
2003	<i>South Pacific, Cinderella, A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>
2004	<i>Crazy for You, Oliver!, Theatre Stories</i>
2005	<i>Pirates of Penzance, Seussical Revue</i>
2006	<i>The Music Man, Joseph...Dreamcoat</i>
2007 <small>(April)</small>	<i>Keep the Faith</i>
2007	<i>Les Miserables, HMS Pinafore, 20 Years of SPA Revue</i>

## PRODUCTION DIRECTORS AND CREWS

Director.....	Connie Sherwood
Assistant Directors.....	Jolly Sherwood, Brad Sherwood, Ken Sherwood
Music Director.....	Dr. Mike Weber
Assistant Music Director .....	Paul Barta
Vocal Coach.....	Maria Williams Kennedy
Choreography .....	Teran Ferguson
Stage Manager.....	Lori Young
Student Stage Manager.....	Dalton Lilley-9-RR
Rehearsal Pianist.....	Kathi Dykstra
Costumes .....	Amanda Hill, Amy Sanner, Sarah Winger, Katie Sanner
Hair and Makeup.....	Angie Black Erickson, Allie Hoistad, Michaela Hill
Technical Director .....	Josh Anderson
Technical Head.....	John Holten
Junior Tech Assistants.....	Joey Freestone, James Freestone, SPA Tech Staff
Junior Tech Crew.....	Anna Nikle, Mike Cornell, Brett Ault, Justin Barth, Lukas Opp, Daniel Ewens, Jake Dunham, Genna Olson, Eric Jacobsen, Courtney Young, Nick Curtis, Ben Houska, Steven Houska, Anna Tandberg, Chris Decker, Luke Strom
Lights.....	Lindsay Escobar-12-RR(head), Katelyn Pribula-12-RR, Jake Borgstrom-11-RR
Spotlights .....	Jake Gunderson-11-RR, Chris Laffen-11-RR (co-heads), Daniel Green-11-RR, Tyler Voegele-11-RR, Alex Hovey-10-RR
Sound .....	Philip Anderson-12-RR, Scott Amundson-11-RR, Andy Parr-12-RR
Catwalk Crew .....	Chris Dingle-10-RR, Dalton Lilley-9-RR
Video.....	Ashley Gross-12-RR (head), Miranda Alexander-10-RR, Ross Carlson-12-RR Michael Hovet-11-Community, Mirinda Wood-11-RR
Projection .....	Peter Abrahamson-12-RR
Ushers .....	SPA Parent Volunteers
Box Office.....	Allison Peterson, Allie Hoistad, Michaela Hill, Jake Geffre
House Managers/Crew Managers.....	Allie Hoistad, Michaela Hill
Lobby .....	Katie Sanner, Michaela Hill, Amanda Hill, Brad Sherwood, Jake Geffre, Allison Peterson, Cosmo Cooper

## PIT MEMBERS

Conductor .....	Dr. Michael Weber
Flute .....	Shari Boschee
Clarinet.....	Don Craig
Oboe/English Horn.....	Phil McKenzie
Trumpet.....	Herb Thomson
French Horn .....	Bruce Morlock
Saxophone .....	Paul Barta
Trombone.....	Melanie Craig
Violin.....	Jennie Dahl, Rebecca Starr
Cello.....	Kirsten Peterson
Bass.....	Jeff Seabloom
Guitar .....	Jeff Anvinson
Percussion .....	Paul Barta, Tony Peterson
Keyboard .....	Kathi Dykstra, Geoff Mercer, Ruth Ann Tuseth

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

### “To love another person is to see the face of God”

If you have limited time before the show for reading, go to the synopsis first and save these notes for later. This musical is based on a novel by Victor Hugo that is 1400 pages long. There is far too much story to fit into a 2-hour production. The story is too wonderful and too important to be missed. A basic understanding of the fact that this story spans 40 years in the life of one man is essential to grasp. The fact that time passes and the location changes is important to grasp. Few people “get it” on simply seeing it cold, and it is a story well worth “getting”. The dates and places that appear on the screens will help you if this is your first Les Miz experience.

I was first introduced to *Les Miserables* by my mother and my grandmother. Grandma read me the classics illustrated comic book and mom read me the story of Little Cosette. I loved it. I would also say to you that if you are a lover of this music read the novel. The novel is an even greater masterpiece. I have found myself wishing that there were more than 1400 pages so that I could know more about these wonderful characters.

*Les Miserables* is a story of transforming grace. It begins with the bishop and the candlesticks he uses to buy the soul of Jean Valjean for God. That grace is passed on to those who come in contact with Valjean in wonderfully dramatic ways. The story may seem hopeless and dark. It may appear that character after character will die. In death, they live on. They are transformed. It is only one man, Javert, who cannot let go of the law and reconcile himself to the transforming power of forgiveness and grace.

*Les Miserables* is the most challenging music that we have ever attempted. It requires a depth in our singers that we have waited 20 years to find. Thanks to Maria Williams and the Bel Canto studio, we have a cast capable of this challenge. Our singers and our technicians have dedicated themselves to this project with a passion that I know will show in their performance. This wonderful score and beautiful story mean a great deal to all of us. This is one of those experiences that make life fuller. SPA is very proud to be presenting *Les Miserables* in our 20<sup>th</sup> year celebration. We do it in memory of Grandma Sherwood, who would have been as thrilled as Victor Hugo himself to see this story set to music, and for Gene Durieux, our own man of grace, who has gone to be with God ahead of us.

*Connie Sherwood, Director*