

Les Misérables
The Memoirs of Jean Valjean

Audition information pack

Genre/ medium = Historical drama

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Medium

This is a full length theatre production, using the original novel of *Les Misérables*, by Victor Hugo, as the basis for our own dramatised production, performed first on tour to sell-out venues in 2013.

The story

The convict Jean Valjean is released from a French prison after serving nineteen years for stealing a loaf of bread and for subsequent attempts to escape from prison. When Valjean arrives at the town of Digne, no one is willing to give him shelter because he is an ex-convict. Desperate, Valjean knocks on the door of M. Myriel, the kindly bishop of Digne. Myriel treats Valjean with kindness, and Valjean repays the bishop by stealing his silverware. When the police arrest Valjean, Myriel covers for him, claiming that the silverware was a gift. The authorities release Valjean and Myriel makes him promise to become an honest man. Eager to fulfill his promise, Valjean masks his identity and enters the town of Montreuil-sur-mer. Under the assumed name of Madeleine, Valjean invents an ingenious manufacturing process that brings the town prosperity. He eventually becomes the town's mayor.

Fantine, a young woman from Montreuil, returns to her home village with her daughter, Cosette. On the way to Montreuil, however, Fantine realizes that she will never be able to find work if the townspeople know that she has an illegitimate child. In the town of Montfermeil, she meets the Thénardiens, a family that runs the local inn. The Thénardiens agree to look after Cosette as long as Fantine sends them a monthly allowance.

In Montreuil, Fantine finds work in Madeleine's factory. Fantine's coworkers find out about Cosette, however, and Fantine is fired. The Thénardiens demand more money to support Cosette, and Fantine resorts to prostitution to make ends meet. One night, Javert, Montreuil's police chief, arrests Fantine. She is to be sent to prison, but Madeleine intervenes. Fantine has fallen ill, and when she longs to see Cosette, Madeleine promises to send for her. First, however, he must contend with Javert, who has discovered Madeleine's criminal past. Javert tells Madeleine that a man has been accused of being Jean Valjean, and Madeleine confesses his true identity. Javert shows up to arrest Valjean while Valjean is at Fantine's bedside, and Fantine dies from the shock.

Valjean escapes and heads to Montfermeil, where he is able to buy Cosette from the Thénardiens. The Thénardiens turn out to be a family of scoundrels who abuse Cosette while spoiling their own two daughters, Eponine and Azelma. Valjean and Cosette move to a run-down part of Paris.

Marius Pontmercy is a young man who lives with his wealthy grandfather, M. Gillenormand. Because of political differences within the family, Marius has never met his father, Georges Pontmercy. After his father dies, however, Marius learns more about him and comes to admire his father's democratic politics. Angry with his grandfather, Marius moves out of Gillenormand's house and lives as a poor young law student. While in law school, Marius associates with a group of radical students, the Friends of the ABC, who are led by the charismatic Enjolras. One day, Marius sees Cosette at a public park. It is love at first sight, but the protective Valjean does his utmost to prevent Cosette and Marius from ever meeting. Their paths cross once again, however, when Valjean makes a charitable visit to Marius's poor neighbors, the Jondrettes. The Jondrettes are in fact the Thénardiens, who have lost their inn and moved to Paris under an assumed name. After Valjean leaves, Thénardier announces a plan to rob Valjean when he returns. Alarmed, Marius alerts the local police inspector, who turns out to be Javert. The ambush is foiled and the Thénardiens are arrested, but Valjean escapes before Javert can identify him.

Thénardier's daughter Eponine, who is in love with Marius, helps Marius discover Cosette's whereabouts. Marius is finally able to make contact with Cosette, and the two declare their love for each other. Valjean, however, soon shatters their happiness. Worried that he will lose Cosette and unnerved by political unrest in the city, Valjean announces that he and Cosette are moving to England. In desperation, Marius runs to his grandfather, M. Gillenormand, to ask for M. Gillenormand's permission to marry Cosette. Their meeting ends in a bitter argument. When Marius returns to Cosette, she and Valjean have disappeared. Heartbroken, Marius decides to join his radical student friends, who have started a political uprising. Armed with two pistols, Marius heads for the barricades.

The uprising seems doomed, but Marius and his fellow students nonetheless stand their ground and vow to fight for freedom and democracy. The students discover Javert among their ranks, and, realizing that he is a spy, Enjolras ties him up. As the army launches its first attack against the students, Eponine throws herself in front of a rifle to save Marius's life. As Eponine dies in Marius's arms, she hands him a letter from Cosette. Marius quickly scribbles a reply and orders a boy, Gavroche, to deliver it to Cosette.

Valjean manages to intercept the note and sets out to save the life of the man his daughter loves. Valjean arrives at the barricade and volunteers to execute Javert. When alone with Javert, however, Valjean instead secretly lets him go free. As the army storms the barricade, Valjean grabs the wounded Marius and flees through the sewers. When Valjean emerges hours later, Javert immediately arrests him. Valjean pleads with Javert to let him take the dying Marius to Marius's grandfather. Javert agrees. Javert feels tormented, torn between his duty to his profession and the debt he owes Valjean for saving his life. Ultimately, Javert lets Valjean go and throws himself into the river, where he drowns.

Marius makes a full recovery and is reconciled with Gillenormand, who consents to Marius and Cosette's marriage. Their wedding is a happy one, marred only when Valjean confesses his criminal past to Marius. Alarmed by this revelation and unaware that it was Valjean who saved his life at the barricades, Marius tries to prevent Cosette from having contact with Valjean. Lonely and depressed, Valjean takes to his bed and awaits his death. Marius eventually finds out from Thénardier that Valjean saved Marius's life. Ashamed that he mistrusted Valjean, Marius tells Cosette everything that has happened. Marius and Cosette rush to Valjean's side just in time for a final reconciliation. Happy to be reunited with his adopted daughter, Valjean dies in peace

Equal Opportunities statement

Unless stated in a specific character description enforced by the original text, we welcome people of all backgrounds to audition, and to be considered on an equal basis.

Basic Requirements

(stated after misunderstandings in the past)

We cast on ability, quality of audition, enthusiasm & commitment, and looking at good pleasant social / professional skills. Regardless of your previous experience, we look for your enthusiasm and ability to participate in a professional quality production.

You will need to be able to learn your role, including script, cues, and movement/ action etc, as required for the character.

You will also be expected to wear provided costume in the productions.

Timely attendance at the vast majority of rehearsals, excluding unexpected emergencies, is also a requirement. We rehearse and perfect the show as a team and cannot achieve that if people miss rehearsals or are late on a regular basis. We expect a minimum of 75% attendance.

“Sensitive content inclusions”

We always state upfront what content in the script may cause concern, or offence, or which some people may wish to know in advance.

- Description of and on stage depiction of violence in act 2, during the revolution scenes (actors taking on those roles will be expected to attend scheduled training for action scenes)
- Mention of prostitution, and scene of women soliciting. (all women cast in this scene will be aged over 18 on audition day. No nudity or sexual scenes are involved).

Character list and breakdown

Please note that unless specifically stated on a character, we are flexible on ages, and racial appearance in order to find the best possible team of actors.

Roles which only appear in part of the show, may also have that actor participating in another role as well, at a further point in the show. Roles open to children (persons under age 16) are clearly marked by “C”. Please be aware that child performers are required to have a parent or legal guardian present at rehearsals and shows.

(Key: *= roles we may be able to combine, L= large roles, C= open to performers aged under 16)

Roles spanning both acts

Jean Valjean (middle-aged or older male) L
Javert (middle-aged or older male) L
Thenadier(male)
Madame Thenadier (female) L

Roles in Act 1

Brevet (male, convict)
Fantine (female, single mother) L
Factory Boss (male or female) L
Bambataois (male roustabout and fop) *
Little Cosette (female child around 10-13 years -Fantine’s daughter) C*
Bishop (male) *
Mlle Baptistine (female, Bishop’s housekeeper) *
Innkeeper in Digne (Male or female) *
Petit Gervais (child, age 9 - 13, ideally male, otherwise female) C*
Factory girl 1 (female) C *
Factory girl 2 (female) C*
Sister Simplicie (female, nun who takes care of Fantine after her rescue) *
“Gendarme” (male, policeman) *
Estella (female, prostitute) *
Bernardo (Male, sailor)*
Sailor (male, sailor) *
Landlord (Ideally male, otherwise female, who tells Jean to leave his inn) *
Prosecutor (Male, at the trial of Champmanthieu) *
Champmanthieu (male, convict, needs to be a similar build to Jean, as mistaken for Jean) *

Crowds:

Factory workers (female) C*
Prostitutes (female) *

ACT 2

Marius (male. Law student, revolutionary) L
Enjolras (male, student, revolutionary, very dedicated to his cause) L
Grantaire (male, student, revolutionary but more interested in a few drinks) L *
Mlle Gillenormand (female, Marius’s aunt) L *
Coufeyrac (law student, friend of Marius) L *
Eponine (female, almost destitute, in love with Marius, but her interest is not returned) L
Gavroche (child, street urchin with an attitude age 8 - 13 – male) C*
Jean Prouvaire (male, student, revolutionary, much quieter spoken than the others) *
Madame Mabeuf (female – male in the book, but changed to female for ease of casting, elderly bookshop owner whose shop went out of business) *
Le Cabuc (Ideally male. revolutionary and a generally not very nice person!)*

Toussaint (female, Jean and Cosettes housekeeper.)
Madame St Just (female, homeowner killed by Le Cabuc) *

Crowds:
Revolutionaries (Male and female) C*
Soldiers (ideally male, otherwise playing as male)*

Audition process (and how to find us)

NOTE: Once you have read the character list above, please email us on southdevonplayers@gmail.com for audition sides, from the script, for the characters which interest you. Please note that we will also have copies available at rehearsals if needed. We do not expect you to learn the script for auditions, but are making the sides available in order to allow interested cast to prepare before the audition day, if they wish. We also welcome people who want to cold-read from the script on the day. (either is fine).

Free tea, coffee, squash and biscuits are on hand for all.

You are more than welcome to audition for more than one role. (in fact, we prefer it). Do note that if you were not selected for one role, but we feel that you would be excellent in another, you may be offered that other role. If you have any specific preferences with regard to types of role, please add them on your audition form so that they can be taken into account.

We are casting the entire production. If you cannot attend the stated audition, please contact us to arrange an audition during the week before.

We do not accept video auditions, or IMDb links, we like to meet you, and for you to meet us. This is also so that we can look at how you work with other actors in scenes where you may be cast together.

Auditions begin at the stated time. We will start with a brief discussion about the production, where you have the opportunity to ask any questions about the production and team. You will also get to meet the admin team, and director .

The auditions will run in reading in groups from script excerpts. We may ask you to read in as well for other roles.

If you are concerned about visiting and meeting new people, you are welcome to bring a friend to the auditions

Please keep phones switched off at auditions, so as not to distract yourself or others.

Key things that we look for in auditions

- 1) Timely arrival
- 2) Bringing diary, and pen, and completed audition form.
- 3) Reading the script with expression. (you do not need to second guess what we might have in our minds eye,) only read with expression as you interpret it. Expressionless reading; treating the script as a list of words, is something that will take down a lot of marks.
- 4) Being pleasant and civil to everyone. In our team we often have everyone from complete beginners who have never acted before, through to actors who have appeared in named Hollywood roles. We all work together as a pleasant team. We also have a strong ethos of respect, appropriate social behaviour both in our team and when out and about among the public.
- 5) Enthusiasm.

We also will audition everyone who attends , so please be aware this could take any amount of time.

We expect to be able to inform you of your success or otherwise , within a couple of days. We decide on the same day so you are welcome to wait and find out there and then.

Castings, and rehearsals are at
Chestnut Community Centre, 1-3 Poplar Close, Brixham, Devon TQ5 9NJ



Rehearsals & Times

Rehearsals will commence on Sunday Feb 24th. In the first rehearsal, which is mandatory for all, we will distribute printed scripts, sort out actors agreements, and have a full-team readthrough.

Due to this production involving French names and places, the first read through will be a session where everyone who needs assistance with pronunciation or meanings, can get requisite help .

We do expect a high amount of attendance at rehearsals, 75% or above. This is because not only is it important for you to perfect your performance, but other people need to practice with you.

Everyone learns at different speeds and in different ways, so even if you have your role perfect, it is still your duty to attend to assist your fellow cast (we are a team!).

Sometimes things happen, and you cannot make it (someone is ill, the car or bus broke down...) in which case it is common courtesy to let us know. If you no-show more than once, or are missing a high percentage of rehearsals, we reserve the right to re-cast the role without further consultation

With most of us being professional or aspiring professional actors, we understand that sometimes you may need to be at another performance or film shoot. If this is the case, please let us know as soon as you can in advance.

Attendance at the performances, is of course mandatory.

We love to promote what we are doing – in fact it is necessary in order to get shows out and about, and the audiences in, but please do not share the scripts outside the team without permission, or production/ rehearsal images other than those shown on our public social media.

Rehearsals take place at Chestnut Community Centre (where you came to audition) . Doors are always open half an hour before so that you can arrive and get ready for the start!

Wednesday evenings – 6.30pm – 9.30pm

Sunday afternoons – 12.30pm – 5.00pm

Coffee, tea, squash and biscuits are available at all rehearsals. .

The centre has toilets, a small kitchenette with fridge, and outside parking spaces.

Free wifi access is also available (please ask committee member for the passcode).

Castings, and rehearsals are at

Chestnut Community Centre, 1-3 Poplar Close, Brixham, Devon TQ5 9NJ.

Performances

These are still in the process of being booked but will take place over Fridays & Saturdays in June 2019

Brixham Theatre (confirmed)

Exeter, Torquay, Plymouth to be confirmed

Remuneration and expected timelines

Photos, videos, audio recordings (available as soon as possible, still images on ongoing basis)

Watermarked promotional photos and videos used on our public social media can be used for the portfolios and demoreels of those persons in the images. These are made available on an ongoing basis.

We will get the theatre show filmed and photographed, with the footage not only being added to our site and social media, but also being made available to you.

Images, and recordings provided for portfolio use, are for the use of those people depicted in them, only.

Copies of press reviews and articles about the production

Personalised character poster

Other

We are happy to provide references, upon completion of the production, for your ongoing work/ shows/ college & University.

Profit-share: Theatre

Profit shares are the ticket-take for the shows, less the venue hire. This will be made available to the

cast, as soon as we have received our money from the theatres/ ticket-sales sites. Sales reports will be available on request once the shows are finished.

About us

The South Devon Players is a collaborative team of dedicated, career-orientated performers, of all ages, who are working on creating careers in theatre and film, and showcasing the very real talent that exists in Torbay and South Devon.

We always welcome new members, who share our professional aims, and who, regardless of previous experience, want to join a lively, friendly, hardworking team of performers, hone old skills & develop new ones, and create professional quality new stage and film productions.

We perform theatre shows in Brixham, around Torbay, and South Devon, based on historical events, classical stories and mythology. We also make period drama films and web-series productions, around Devon and Cornwall. .

The South Devon Players was founded in late 2005 by two Brixham-based performers who were seeking performance opportunities in the Southwest, and performed our first production in the summer of 2006. Since then we have gone from strength to strength, and are now growing rapidly, with awards won and a rapidly increasing member and audience base.

We pride ourselves on creating new ambitious projects, and on the international following that we are developing, as well as on our dedicated, enthusiastic team of performers.

Audition form

Please fill this out and bring to auditions. This remains confidential and is only seen by the director, and casting panel. Contacts are only used to contact you about theatre group show news/updates

Name

Stage name if preferred:

Age (if under 18)

Postal address

Email address

Phone number

Please list any roles you would especially like to be considered for, or write "any".

Role preferences; would you prefer a larger or smaller role, and do you have any other preferences?
(Please note we cannot guarantee that you will get exactly the kind of role you are looking for, but the casting panel will do their best to take your preferences into account).

(tick as appropriate) Do you have any of the following skills:

Dance (please write genre)

Singing

Speciality act (please specify)

Please list any dates between in the next 6 months that you expect to be away.

If under 16, this statement should be signed by a parent.

I (name) hereby give (child name) permission
to appear in this production, if successful at auditions. I will arrange for myself or (name of
designated guardian) to attend with (child name) at all
rehearsals and show performances, and to ensure the safe travel of the child to and from said events.

I do/ do not (delete as appropriate) give permission for (child name) to appear
in cast photos/ film clips for rehearsals and shows, which may be distributed to the press and to
official South Devon Players online sites for the purpose of show/ group publicity.

Signed: (parent or legal guardian)

Contact details if different from above

WHAT PERFORMERS CAN EXPECT FROM US

A strict ethos of professionalism, reliability, positivity, respect, pleasantness, and teamwork. (and love of theatre/ film production)

Promotion online and other media for all productions in which you are involved.

Photographs and video clips of performances.

Clear online information on rehearsals, workshops, other opportunities, etc.

Clear communication (via the internet) from the team. Queries will be answered within 24 hours, Access to our casting agency once you have completed one show or film in a reliable professional manner.

The opportunity to audition for, and perform in theatre and film productions of a professional standard

To have an equal share in all profits (less production costs/ venue hire) from main theatre and film projects that you are involved in, as a speaking role, with us.

The likelihood of invitation to social events among our members (please note that we are not a social club and while we like to socialise and make friends in the team, that it is an added enjoyment., not a reason to run, and attendance is optional.

WHAT WE EXPECT FROM PERFORMERS

- The ability and willingness to communicate with regard to rehearsal/ show attendance.
- When agreeing to be in a film or stage production, to keep yourself available for rehearsals and performance dates.
- Excellent timekeeping on any performance, rehearsal or audition. Not showing up, or willfully letting a production down, results in removal from the team. Please be aware that being late or no-showing can result in the production company incurring wasted costs, those will be reimbursed in full to the production company by the person who incurred them .
- The ability to keep details of a production, confidential.
- Professional and pleasant behavior towards all those others with whom you have to work.
- To have relevant literacy, personal and communication skills to complete whatever role that you agree to take,. And the willingness/ ability to learn new skills needed.
- To have the ability to travel to and from wherever you are required to perform, by yourself, either by your own transport, or public transport.
- To declare any earnings made to HMRC within that time required by law.
- To act within the law at all times when you are representing our team.
- To have due regard for health and safety when on set.
- To take full care of any costumes and props, supplied for your role, and to return them in good condition, at the end of the show “run”.
- To keep the internal operation, castings, etc of the the team confidential, unless given express administrative approval from the South Devon Players officers in writing.
- To attend at least 75% of all rehearsals for a production unless notified in advance. If the attendance target is not reached, or you miss more than one rehearsal with no prior notification, you will be considered to not be interested in the production, and your role may be recast without notice.
- To act in accordance with the members rules of conduct for our team as set out on our website www.southdevonplayers.com (“about” tab)
- Helping to keep rehearsal and performance venues tidy after use.
- - To not attend rehearsals, shows or filming under the influence of any behaviour-altering substances (unless a serious medical reason discussed with the director beforehand)
- The development of performance, and communication (verbal/ non-verbal) skills consummate with those required for a professional performance on stage and/or film.