

LES MISERABLES – 2025

For TheatreLife by Christine Davidson

For WOW's February production, Director Nikki Mundell-Poole chose this time to direct the huge youth production of Les Misérables. She pulled out all the stops to give us such a professional show with fabulous costumes, clever set and lighting. The amount of hard work and dedication that she and the whole cast and crew had put into this production showed in reams. The audience reaction at the end giving a standing ovation proved this. With musical director Susannah Edom and her superb orchestra this really was a treat for everyone to watch.

I remember the first time I went to see this musical in 1985 where it received negative reviews. I was dubious that I would enjoy it. How wrong I was, it just goes to show how the critics can get it so wrong. Since then I have been numerous times to see this show and have never been disappointed. I am still in tears at the end of the first act when the whole cast sing 'One Day More'.

With so many in the cast I cannot mention everyone but there were some standout performances from the leads and for me Frank Thornton as Javert stole the show. This young man apparently was seventeen on the night I saw it and the maturity he showed on stage and his stunning singing made me forget just how young he was. He definitely stood up against many that I have seen doing that role. His song 'Stars' was superbly done and yes I did shed a tear.

Fionn Crickett as Valjean had a lot to live up to as like Javert this is a huge role, His singing was spot on but would have liked to have seen him immerse himself in the role and act through his singing. The aging of his character was cleverly done and his song 'Bring him home' was well delivered.

Poppy Taylor as Fantine definitely came into her own in this role. What a beautiful voice and her acting when she sung 'I dreamed a dream' was truly mature and again made me cry with the emotion of the piece. This is Poppy's last show with WOW and I think they miss her a lot as she gives so much to any show.

The romantic couple of Marius (Alex Batt) and Cosette (Niamh Cullen) were well matched and their song 'A heart full of Love' was beautifully sung. Her voice was pure and crystal clear. Alex also brought the house down with 'Empty Chairs at Empty Tables'. I understand that Alex was not well on stage so huge kudos to him that he managed to get through the show.

Natalie Cowan as Eponine sung the classic song 'on My Own' from the heart and her duet with Marius 'A little drop of rain' was really well done.

Enjolras the leader of the students played confidently by Sam Howard was another role that showed just how mature he was on the stage. He had great stage presence, giving a rousing rendition of 'Red and Black' and 'Do you hear the People Sing'. Another young actor to watch out for.

Young Max Midgley as the cheeky Gavroche was a great find by the director. With a pure voice and acting through the song he was extremely confident on stage for such a young actor. I do hope that he will go on from strength to strength as he truly has a lot of talent that should be nurtured.

Last but not least the fabulous Thenardiers. Both had such a ball on the stage and Luc Roberts as Master and Madison O'Grady as the Mistress of the House gave their all.

They expertly personified the roles, commanding the stage from the moment they appeared. Wonderfully funny they played to the audience and the audience loved it. Surely '*Master of the House*' is one of the best comic songs in the business and all the cast enjoyed every minute of it on stage, where they were singing their hearts out in fine form.

The ensemble young cast worked so hard and should all be proud of their achievements. Always involved you could see just how much they were enjoying being part of such a special show.

This was an excellent production so get your tickets if there are any left. Congratulations to you all.