

The World's Most Popular Musical

And for very good reason. Who would have thought that a high school in small, rural Northwest Ohio could stage a production of *Les Miserables* and for a lot of it make you forget that you were indeed watching a high school production in small, rural Northwest Ohio. I have previously seen two professional productions of the show and I can say with certainty that the young men and women involved in this did not miss the mark by much. I cannot even begin to state who was the best performer on stage.

At the end of Val Jean's signature piece ("Bring Him Home"), the actor was positively shaking from the emotion of the song. Megan and I were in the back of the balcony and I could see his hands trembling as he knelt beside Marius in prayer. GOOD STUFF!

Poor Eponine playing the part of the best friend who longs to be with the handsome Marius. I always thought that she got a raw deal. Her duet with Marius ("A Little Fall of Rain") always sends chills down my spine. Cosette (the character) is not all that much... kind of plain Jane and boring if you ask me.

I always find it difficult who to root for in this show. I can see and understand the frustration Inspector Javert goes through as he tries again and again over 27 years to capture Jean Val Jean and bring him to justice. Another amazing performance.

Fantine's on stage time may be brief but her role within the show as a whole is vital. One could see the anguish she felt as she struck out at her would-be "customer" and sold her locket and hair to make money for her daughter.

BUT... the real stars of the show... the reason I told Megan that I would sit through another performance... THE THENARDIER'S...WHOOO HOOOO. Forget Val Jean. Javert take a hike. Cosette, Marius, and Eponine...eh. The owners of the inn are comedic villains at their finest and the high school students who gave life to them were remarkable. "Master of the House" is bar none the best all-out, give it everything you got number in any musical I can think of. *Les Miserables* with all its high drama, teary eye moments would fall flat if these characters were not performed well. The accent of M. Thenardier was sleaze from the first line. His sneaky, weasly, movements across the stage were stupendous. The couple's waltz at the end of the show also was a highlight.

As I said, I could not put a finger on any one performance in the show. There were different levels of brilliance displayed by all of the young stars on the stage tonight. It really took the concept of a "high school musical" to a whole new dimension.