

## Book Musical- Les Miserables

**Book Musical-** This is a musical that has been based on an original book, sometimes from a different language.

The story of Jean Valjean a French peasant who wants redemption after his 19 years in jail for stealing bread for his sisters starving child. It set in the revolutionary period within France.



Example

## Forms

### Act 1

"At the end of the Day"- This song is sung by the people on the streets talking about how they live by the day and how life is a 'struggle and a war', also how each day people are only colder and older. This is a strong song forcefully sung by passionate people on the streets.

"I Dreamed a Dream"- Fantine sings this song as a solo, it occurs when Fantine has been fired from her job. It has a dramatic emphasis on the depression of Fantine.

### Act 2

"On my Own"- This is also a solo however sung by Eponine, She is expressing her unrequited love for Marius. She dreams of being by his side even though she knows his love is for Cosette.

"Do you hear the People Sing?"- This song is sang during however also at the end as the finale number as a reprise. It talks about how people of France have risen and there is a real sense of pride within the song.

## Structure

- Within Les Mis I feel it is extremely weighted by acting and songs, and therefore there is less dance weighted element to the musical.
- A lot of the story and feeling is through music and singing especially spoken word over the orchestra for example the beginning of 'One Day More' it can often very much be spoken.

## Themes

- **Importance of Love-** Within this storyline many people only have love and it is what helps them through the hardest times and the most depressing times of their lives when living on streets. Love is shown also through on my own and how Eponine longs for the love she struggles to get.
- **Poverty and Suffering-** A example of poverty is the life of Eponine, where she has sadly been plunged into poverty at the age of 16 due to her parent's actions. She witnesses some horrors due to her social situation. Another example of where it is explored is 'At the end of the day' where many poor people share the horrors of poverty.

## Characters

Jean Valjean, Javert, Fantine, Cosette, Marius, Enjolras, Eponine, Thénardier, Madame Thénardier, Gavroche.

## Musical and Drama Elements

- **Set Change-** The set within Les Mis is extraordinary with huge pieces of set such as, the barricades and housing. The set moves very smoothly often behind smoke as this is a large part of the set.
- As explained beforehand Les Mis is very heavily based with Singing and acting and general movement such as the walks in one day more the dancing doesn't get much more. Much drama is spoken through the sings and a lot of songs have dialogue and spoken word within them.

## Roles

- Music- Claude- Michel Schonberg
- Book- Victor Hugo
- Set Design- Jon Napier
- West End- 4 December 1985- Palace Theatre

## Impact on Audience

- As a past audience member I can gain draw from personal experience the effect which the musical has on the audience. The realistic portrayal of the storyline and the use of live music and performance draws you in even more creating a emotional atmosphere. As I watched it felt like it was the first time they were performing even though they do it 8 times a week, it felt fresh and not put on.