

The Staying Power of *Les Misérables*

By Theresa Kellar-Tonner

Les Misérables has been performed thousands of times in over 40 countries, 438 cities, and has been translated into 21 languages, and yet audiences seem to always want more. When *Les Misérables* was performed at The Phoenix Theatre Company in 2009, it became the highest-grossing show in the theatre's history at the time. "The presale on this show is unlike anything we've ever seen at The Phoenix Theatre Company,"



Cast of the 2009 production of *Les Misérables* at The Phoenix Theatre Company

Brian Kunnari, then marketing director, said. "The fact that the five week run will be sold out by opening night in this economy is incredible. It's surpassing all of our already high expectations."

Fast forward to 2014, after the success of the 2009 production in collaboration with Arkansas Repertory Theatre, the production was remounted in the Mainstage Theatre (now Hormel Theatre) to sold-out crowds once again. Then the 2014 Broadway revival began, and regional theatres across the country were no longer eligible to produce *Les Misérables*. Instead, the show was put on tour, and *Les Misérables: School Edition* allowed youth theatres and schools to bring this story to their stages.

Finally, in 2026, select theatres across the country have been given the chance to produce new productions of this beloved musical, and *Les Misérables* will be closing out the 2025/2026 Season here at The Phoenix Theatre Company in The Dr. Stacie J. and Richard J Stephenson Theatre. The reasons to produce this show at this time are much more than financial. *Les Misérables* has stood the test of time; the story of love and revolution is always relevant, with new pieces of the story being brought to the forefront with each new adaptation. This iteration of *Les Misérables* is directed by Brandon Stackhouse, who previously served as the resident director for the touring production. Brandon stated that what he loves about *Les Misérables* and what he hopes audiences take away from it is this: "You have the power to make the world a

better place in small ways by the choices you make. What I love about this show is that there is not a single superpower or force at play. It is all driven by human choice. I can just choose to be a better person today.”

Les Misérables will live on long after this production just as it lived for many years before this one, but what audiences take away from the show in July or August of 2026 will never be the same. *Les Misérables* is a living piece of art that allows an audience member to grieve a life that could have been with Eponine, celebrate love in times of toil with Marius and Cosette, learn that life cannot be seen as only black and white from Javert, understand a mother's love and sacrifice from Fantine, be wary of the corruption of vice and greed with the Thénardiens, encourage and demand change with Enjolras, and embarked on the incredible journey of redemption and love with Valjean. These lessons will always be relevant, and the music of Claude-Michel Schönberg, accompanied by the lyrics of Herbert Kretzmer, brings a captivating artistry to Victor Hugo's immortal words.

Details

Dates: July 15 – August 30, 2026

Location: The Phoenix Theatre Company, Dr. Stacie J. and Richard J Stephenson Theatre

Tickets: phoenixtheatre.com | (602) 254-2151

Audio Description and American Sign Language interpretation are available for this production. Performance dates and details can be found at phoenixtheatre.com.