

## Character Breakdown

### **Jean Valjean**

Jean Valjean is the hero of the show. It is his life journey that we follow. Jean Valjean is supposed to be stronger than other men, and so he should physically appear robust. He should carry himself confidently onstage and come across to the audience as reasonably mature and paternal. Valjean's capacity for change is his greatest asset throughout the story. The key to his character is his great humanity and compassion. Jean Valjean is a vocally demanding role, so cast your best male singer and actor.

Gender: Male

Vocal range top: A4

Vocal range bottom: G#2

### **Javert**

Javert is the inspector who serves as antagonist to Jean Valjean. Javert is unswerving in his belief that men cannot change for the better. "Once a thief, always a thief" is his mantra. At first glance, Javert might appear to be the villain of the story, but upon closer examination, it is clear that he is not an evil man. He is a dedicated policeman with a profoundly strong sense of duty. Unlike Valjean, Javert's attitudes are rigid and unmovable. He is stern, forbidding, and lacking in compassion. Your Javert should be a talented actor who can convincingly stand up to Jean Valjean. Javert should have a rich baritone voice and be a good singer.

Gender: Male

Vocal range top: F#4

Vocal range bottom: F2

### **Bishop Of Digne**

The Bishop is a good man who saves Valjean's soul through showing compassion. Don't overlook the importance of this role. The Bishop of Digne's kindness carefully establishes the premise of the show by literally buying Jean Valjean's soul for God. This powerful role requires a nice baritone voice and a good actor.

Gender: Male

Vocal range top: E4

Vocal range bottom: A2

### **Fantine**

Fantine is the beautiful, young girl who, abandoned by her lover, is left to fend for herself and her daughter, Cosette. She is rejected by society and forced through circumstances to sell herself. She is a brave woman defeated by life who clings to her dignity and is sustained by her love for her daughter, sacrificing everything for the young Cosette. The audience witnesses her descent through a series of terrible events leading to poverty, hunger, cold, loneliness, destitution, and death from consumption. Cast a performer with a powerful voice that is more mezzo (or alto) than soprano.

Gender: Female  
Vocal range top: Eb5  
Vocal range bottom: F3

### **Foreman**

The Foreman begins Fantine on her desperate, downward spiral. He should be virile, commanding, and a bit sleazy around the edges.

Gender: Male  
Vocal range top: D4  
Vocal range bottom: D3

### **Factory Workers**

The Factory Workers include the following characters with solo lines: Workers 1 and 2, Woman, Factory Girls 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Gender: Female  
Vocal range top: C5  
Vocal range bottom: E4

### **Young Cosette**

Young Cosette is Fantine's daughter and the Thénardiers' ward. She has been forced into child labor. She is underfed, beaten by Madame Thénardier, and bullied by Eponine. Make sure your Young Cosette is small and looks properly pathetic yet warms the audience's hearts. They should be sympathetic to her plight. It is essential that your Young Cosette be as physically small as possible, especially against Jean Valjean and the Thénardiers. Young Cosette sings "Castle On A Cloud," so make sure she has a nice voice and can tap into the emotion in the song.

Gender: Female  
Vocal range top: C5  
Vocal range bottom: A3

### **Madame Thénardier**

She is married to Thénardier. Together, Madame Thénardier and Thénardier con the world as partners in crime. They were made for each other, and although she complains about him, she loves him dearly. She is coarse and vulgar, unhappy in her existence without knowing why. She is romantic, greedy, manipulative, evil, and larger than life. She is mean and nasty to Little Cosette and able to improvise in nearly any situation. You need an actress with excellent physical comedy skills who is also a good musician with a good sense of rhythm.

Gender: Female  
Vocal range top: D5  
Vocal range bottom: G#3

## **Thénardier**

Thénardier is the true villain of *Les Misérables School Edition*. He is the embodiment of evil. That said, he should also possess a wicked sense of humor. He delights in cheating, robbing, defrauding, and blackmailing, and relishes every aspect of his schemes with glee. He is tough, greedy, brutal, lowbrow, crafty and yet irresistible. He hates society and blames it and everyone else for all his misfortune. Thénardier is also the opportunist and realist of the show. He is a thief, a liar, a cheat, and steals valuables from the dead with no remorse. He is also the comic relief of the production. However, his comedy is based in reality and shouldn't be too exaggerated. He is married to Madame Thénardier and is father to Eponine and Gavroche (although he abandoned Gavroche to the streets of Paris). Cast an excellent comedic actor who can portray a nasty edge. Vocally, the role is not incredibly demanding; a character voice is best.

Gender: Male

Vocal range top: G4

Vocal range bottom: C2

## **Young Eponine**

Young Eponine is the pampered daughter of the Thénardiers. She does little except taunt Young Cosette. The role requires no singing or speaking. She should be a smaller version of grown Eponine and resemble Eponine in appearance and features.

Gender: Female

## **Gavroche**

Gavroche is Thénardier's son. He is left to fend for himself and lives by his wits in the streets of Paris. His archenemy is Javert, the policeman. Gavroche is brave, witty, and arrogant, with a fantastic, unchanged voice. For comparison, think of a young Artful Dodger. Gavroche is best played by the smallest boy available. Gavroche has a very dramatic death at the barricade. Make sure your Gavroche is a good enough actor to believably die onstage.

Gender: Male

Vocal range top: G5

Vocal range bottom: B3

## **Eponine**

Eponine is the Thénardiers' daughter. Living hand to mouth, she survives by helping her father in his life of crime. She is a young girl who is streetwise and tough but also sensitive and lonely. This tragic character is hopelessly in love with Marius, knowing that he will never love her. She bravely follows Marius to the barricades in the hope that they will die there together. She sings one of the most famous numbers in the show, "On My Own," and should be an excellent actress and singer with a contemporary edge to her voice.

Gender: Female

Vocal range top: E5

Vocal range bottom: F3

## **Enjolras**

Enjolras is the student leader. He is handsome, brave, and daring, although youthful. He combines his revolutionary ideals with strong, charismatic leadership. Victor Hugo described him as “a thinker and a man of action.” On the barricade, he should dominate everyone else physically and vocally. Enjolras is one of the more difficult roles to cast. He should be a natural leader oozing with charisma and have a very strong high baritone or a tenor voice. The role is also difficult to cast because many young actors do not perceive it as a coveted role like Marius or Jean Valjean; remind them that the original Enjolras won a Tony Award® for his performance. Casting a true leader from your organization in this role is one way to ensure the character is believable. Remember, Enjolras must inspire the students to fight and, ultimately, to die for their beliefs. His death at the barricade is one of the dramatic highlights of the show.

Gender: Male

Vocal range top: G4

Vocal range bottom: A2

## **Marius**

Marius is the romantic hero of the story. He is impulsive, passionate, willful, and headstrong. His moods change according to his circumstances. He is sweet and tender but also capable of great courage and compassion. In Act I, Marius plays Romeo to Cosette’s Juliet. Marius matures after “The Café Song” as a result of his experiences on the barricade. Marius should have a lovely, lyrical voice with a contemporary edge.

Gender: Male

Vocal range top: Ab4

Vocal range bottom: A2

## **Cosette**

Cosette is Fantine’s strong-willed, loving daughter. She is an intelligent, inquiring, personable girl; she is not in any sense a sappy, romantic heroine. Once she is adopted by Jean Valjean, Cosette lives a comfortable, if secluded, life. She falls instantly in love with Marius, changing her world and her priorities. The role calls for an excellent singer with a lovely, lyrical soprano voice.

Gender: Female

Vocal range top: C6

Vocal range bottom: Bb3

## **Brujon**

Montparnasse, Babet, Brujon and Claquesous are members of Thénardier’s gang of thieves. Men played these roles on Broadway, but for the School Edition, you may cast them as a mix of males and females.

Brujon is physically very strong. He has the body of a bear and a pea-sized brain. A genuine gangster, he is stupid and evil.

Gender: Any  
Vocal range top: C#4  
Vocal range bottom: B3

### **Babet**

Montparnasse, Babet, Brujon and Claquesous are members of Thénardier's gang of thieves. Men played these roles on Broadway, but for the School Edition, you may cast them as a mix of males and females.

Babet is physically frail but lean and cunning.

Gender: Any  
Vocal range top: E4  
Vocal range bottom: E3

### **Claquesous**

Montparnasse, Babet, Brujon and Claquesous are members of Thénardier's gang of thieves. Men played these roles on Broadway, but for the School Edition, you may cast them as a mix of males and females.

Claquesous is tough, dangerous, and secretive.

Gender: Any  
Vocal range top: E4  
Vocal range bottom: C4

### **Montparnasse**

These are members of Thénardier's gang of thieves. Men played these roles on Broadway, but for the School Edition, you may cast them as a mix of males and females.

Montparnasse is a teenager who is handsome and dangerous (he kills with a knife). He is well dressed, strongly built, and agile.

Gender: Any  
Vocal range top: C#4  
Vocal range bottom: C#3

### **Combeferre**

Members of the ABC society: Combeferre, Feuilly, Courfeyrac, Joly, Prouvaire, Lesgles, and Grantaire. These characters compose a secret society of students and workers. The letters A, B, and C, as pronounced in French, make the word "abaisse," which means "the underdog" or "the people below." The members are drawn from wealthy families and have chosen to fight for freedom, in stark contrast to the poor who have no choice due to their downtrodden circumstance. Additional characters in the ABC Society, besides Enjolras and Marius, include the following:

Combeferre is the philosopher and believer in peace. He is gentle, humane, strong, and brave.

Gender: Male

Vocal range top: D4

Vocal range bottom: E3

### **Feuilly**

Members of the ABC society: Combeferre, Feuilly, Courfeyrac, Joly, Prouvaire, Lesgles, and Grantaire. These characters compose a secret society of students and workers. The letters A, B, and C, as pronounced in French, make the word "abaisse," which means "the underdog" or "the people below." The members are drawn from wealthy families and have chosen to fight for freedom, in stark contrast to the poor who have no choice due to their downtrodden circumstance. Additional characters in the ABC Society, besides Enjolras and Marius, include the following:

Feuilly is a worker who is a self-educated orphan. He is an affectionate, warm, and poetic believer in "nationality."

Gender: Male

Vocal range top: D4

Vocal range bottom: D3

### **Courfeyrac**

Members of the ABC society: Combeferre, Feuilly, Courfeyrac, Joly, Prouvaire, Lesgles, and Grantaire. These characters compose a secret society of students and workers. The letters A, B, and C, as pronounced in French, make the word "abaisse," which means "the underdog" or "the people below." The members are drawn from wealthy families and have chosen to fight for freedom, in stark contrast to the poor who have no choice due to their downtrodden circumstance. Additional characters in the ABC Society, besides Enjolras and Marius, include the following:

Courfeyrac is a youthful, passionate, and fearless student.

Gender: Male

Vocal range top: Eb4

Vocal range bottom: E3

### **Joly**

Members of the ABC society: Combeferre, Feuilly, Courfeyrac, Joly, Prouvaire, Lesgles, and Grantaire. These characters compose a secret society of students and workers. The letters A, B, and C, as pronounced in French, make the word "abaisse," which means "the underdog" or "the people below." The members are drawn from wealthy families and have chosen to fight for freedom, in stark contrast to the poor who have no choice due to their

downtrodden circumstance. Additional characters in the ABC Society, besides Enjolras and Marius, include the following:

Joly is an eccentric and light-hearted (although sometimes morbid) medical student. His name is derived from the English word "jolly."

Gender: Male

Vocal range top: G4

Vocal range bottom: D3

### **Prouvaire**

Members of the ABC society: Combeferre, Feuilly, Courfeyrac, Joly, Prouvaire, Lesgles, and Grantaire. These characters compose a secret society of students and workers. The letters A, B, and C, as pronounced in French, make the word "abaisse," which means "the underdog" or "the people below." The members are drawn from wealthy families and have chosen to fight for freedom, in stark contrast to the poor who have no choice due to their downtrodden circumstance. Additional characters in the ABC Society, besides Enjolras and Marius, include the following:

Prouvaire is a kind, soft-spoken, and, at the right moments, strong and masterful poet and student of social studies.

Gender: Male

Vocal range top: Eb4

Vocal range bottom: D3

### **Lesgles**

Members of the ABC society: Combeferre, Feuilly, Courfeyrac, Joly, Prouvaire, Lesgles, and Grantaire. These characters compose a secret society of students and workers. The letters A, B, and C, as pronounced in French, make the word "abaisse," which means "the underdog" or "the people below." The members are drawn from wealthy families and have chosen to fight for freedom, in stark contrast to the poor who have no choice due to their downtrodden circumstance. Additional characters in the ABC Society, besides Enjolras and Marius, include the following:

Lesgles is a cheerful, laughing-at-life (but unlucky) student. He is a close friend of Joly.

Gender: Male

Vocal range top: G4

Vocal range bottom: B3

## **Grantaire**

Members of the ABC society: Combeferre, Feuilly, Courfeyrac, Joly, Prouvaire, Lesgles, and Grantaire. These characters compose a secret society of students and workers. The letters A, B, and C, as pronounced in French, make the word "abaisse," which means "the underdog" or "the people below." The members are drawn from wealthy families and have chosen to fight for freedom, in stark contrast to the poor who have no choice due to their downtrodden circumstance. Additional characters in the ABC Society, besides Enjolras and Marius, include the following:

Grantaire is the opposite of Enjolras. He believes in nothing. Although he admires Enjolras, he loves to mock him. Witty and drunken, Grantaire is happy being with the group, and they put up with him because of his good humor. He also keeps a watchful eye on Gavroche, the mascot of the group, and is the most heartbroken when Gavroche is killed. He is so devastated by Gavroche's death that Grantaire abandons his cynicism and rushes to die on the barricade.

Gender: Male