

Media Release

World-first exhibition to hit Melbourne

EMBARGOED UNTIL MONDAY 14 October 2013 1PM AEST

The story behind one of the most popular musicals of all time comes to life in *Victor Hugo: Les Misérables - From Page to Stage*, a world-first exhibition at the State Library of Victoria.

Timed to coincide with the return of *Les Misérables* to the Melbourne stage in July 2014, *Victor Hugo: Les Misérables - From Page to Stage* brings together an extraordinary collection of rarely seen material from around the world including original writing and artwork from Victor Hugo himself.

First published in 1862 *Les Misérables* is considered to be one of the greatest novels of the 19th century. The story follows the plight of downtrodden and dispossessed characters in Paris and culminates in the dramatic events of the 1832 June Rebellion.

Victor Hugo (1802 – 1885), a prolific author, playwright, poet and artist, was an extraordinary larger than life character whose work touched upon the key political, artistic and social issues of his times, leading at first to his exile and later to widespread popularity and success.

The exhibition takes visitors on an exploration of Hugo's life and the Paris of his day and shows how his personal experiences shaped his masterpiece, *Les Misérables*. It brings together rarely seen original manuscripts, photographs, paintings, drawings and publications, to reveal Hugo's passions and politics, family and social conscience.

CEO and State Librarian Sue Roberts says a partnership with theatre producer Cameron Mackintosh brings another level to the exhibition that will be of huge interest to fans of the book, musical and film.

'This partnership means for the first time fans will get to see original *Les Misérables* scripts, scores, costumes, set designs, posters, photographs and film taking them backstage and into the heart of this extraordinary production.'

Recognising the partnership Cameron Mackintosh said:

'I am delighted to partner with the State Library of Victoria as they bring together a world-first exhibition that showcases the life of Victor Hugo and featuring his literary masterpiece, *Les Misérables*. For the first time items from our archive will be on display giving fans the opportunity to witness iconic moments from my production of Boublil and Schönberg's phenomenal musical adaption of Hugo's great novel, since its sensational debut over 28 years ago. This is an exciting international exhibition that I'm sure you will not want to miss.'

The exhibition will be on show when Cameron Mackintosh's acclaimed new production of Boublil and Schönberg's legendary musical hits Her Majesty's Theatre in 2014, with the new Australian cast announced today. *Les Misérables* has been seen by over 65 million people worldwide in 42 countries and in 22 languages and is one of the most popular musicals of all time.

Sue Roberts said that Melbourne is the ideal setting for this unique exhibition:

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'Melbourne is a great city of literature and the heart of musical theatre in Australia. This exhibition really brings these two passions together.'

'*Les Misérables* is a French story but it has become a symbol for justice and equality around the world. The exhibition shows the power of the written word and how stories can transcend the page to become a phenomenon. Melbourne is in for a treat.'

Victor Hugo: Les Misérables - From Page to Stage will be on display at the State Library of Victoria from 18 July until 9 November 2014.

To register interest in the upcoming exhibition and receive updates go to slv.vic.gov.au/victor-hugo-les-miserables

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