

Media Release

Victor Hugo: Les Misérables – From Page to Stage now open

18 July 2014

The extraordinary story behind *Les Misérables* is revealed in the world-first exhibition **Victor Hugo: Les Misérables – From Page to Stage**, which opens at the State Library of Victoria today.

Victor Hugo: Les Misérables – From Page to Stage takes visitors on a journey from the inception of this iconic French novel to the life of its famous author and the incredible and continuing global impact of *Les Misérables*.

CEO and State Librarian, Sue Roberts, says the exhibition is a major cultural coup for Melbourne and a must-see for all those inspired by the universal appeal of *Les Misérables*.

‘*Les Misérables* is quite simply one of the greatest stories of all time. Since its publication in 1862 it has sold countless copies, been translated into 20 languages, adapted for cinema at least 50 times, and has inspired 3 major musical theatre productions. This exhibition lets us explore the events that led to the story’s creation and how it has remained part of the popular consciousness for over 150 years,’ Ms Roberts said.

The exhibition, developed and presented by the State Library of Victoria, showcases a collection of rarely seen material from around the world, featuring original writing and artwork from playwright and author Victor Hugo, including his original 1862 manuscript of *Les Misérables*. The 945 page volume is a national treasure of France and a prized item in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France collections. This is its first showing outside Europe.

Victor Hugo: Les Misérables – From Page to Stage coincides with the Australian premier of Cameron Mackintosh’s stage production of Boublil and Schönberg’s *Les Misérables* now showing at Her Majesty’s Theatre, Melbourne. *Les Misérables* is one of the most popular musicals of all time, seen by over 65 million people worldwide.

‘Melbourne is the only city in the world where you will get this experience of being immersed in the world of *Les Misérables*, literally from page to stage.’

The exhibition draws together remarkable material from the Maison de Victor Hugo in Paris and Guernsey, the Bibliothèque nationale de France, the Musée Rodin and, for the first time,

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material from the Cameron Mackintosh archives, making this an exhibition of world significance for lovers of *Les Misérables*.

Ms Roberts says the exhibition combines fascinating historical material with interactive displays that will give visitors the experience of being part of the musical production.

'We explore the life of Victor Hugo, the Paris of his day and the writing of his masterpiece and its many adaptations. We have also created a highly interactive gallery dedicated to the musical with unique behind the scenes insights into its creation, music, performances, sets and costumes. This is the biggest exhibition ever staged at the State Library and will be a true delight for our visitors.'

A program of events, an education program for schools and free public talks will complement the exhibition, exploring themes of history, politics, French language and culture, literature, music, film and theatre.

Tickets are on sale now through Ticketek: Adult \$15, Concession \$12, Child (3-16) \$12, Family (two adults + 3 children) \$42, Group \$11 per person, min 10 people, +1 complimentary ticket for groups over 20, School group \$9 per student, minimum 10 people, +1 complimentary. Note: Ticket prices include GST and booking fees. Transaction fee applies.

For more information and exhibition updates go to **www.victorhugoexhibition.com.au**

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