

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

Chain Gang

The Chain Gang consists of Jean Valjean's fellow prisoners. There are five soloists (Convicts 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5). The overall vocal range of the Convicts is low, and they should be able to sing in a rich baritone range if possible.

Gender: Male

Vocal range top: Eb4

Vocal range bottom: F2

Constables

There are two solo Constables (Constables 1 and 2) in the show. Consider keeping the same actors as Constables throughout the entire show to save a bit on costumes, since period uniforms tend to be expensive to build.

Gender: Male

Vocal range top: E4

Vocal range bottom: E3

Farmer

The Farmer has solo lines that are a bit difficult to sing.

Gender: Male

Vocal range top: Db4

Vocal range bottom: C3

Laborer

You may cast as many Laborers as you like, but only one Laborer has a solo line. This particular solo line is a bit difficult to sing.

Gender: Male

Vocal range top: D4

Vocal range bottom: A#2

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

Girl 5 (Factory Girl)

Girl 5 (Factory Girl) is the shop girl who fights with Fantine. She is mean, spiteful, and selfish. She also is most likely having an affair with the Foreman and is jealous of his affection for Fantine. Often, Girl 5 will serve as Fantine's understudy or as a Fantine double.

Gender: Female

Vocal range top: Eb5

Vocal range bottom: F4

Prostitutes

The Docks are a depressing and dangerous place to be, occupied by prostitutes and their customers. Prostitutes 1, 2, 3, and Sick Prostitute have solo lines.

Gender: Female

Vocal range top: Db5

Vocal range bottom: C4

Sailors (Sailors 1, 2, 3)

Three sailors begin the docks scene. All three have solos but do not need to be great singers.

Gender: Male

Vocal range top: Db4

Vocal range bottom: Eb3

Bamatabois

Bamatabois is the customer who taunts Fantine into violence. He is a wealthy, dissolute young man who thinks of himself as a gentleman, even dressing in expensive clothes. He is drunk and in a sadistic mood. He chauvinistically feels it is his right to buy anything, even Fantine.

Gender: Male

Vocal range top: D5

Vocal range bottom: D3

Old Woman

The Old Woman is a nice featured role who purchases Fantine's hair. Her vocal solo is a bit tricky, so cast a strong singer if possible.

Gender: Female

Vocal range top: D5

Vocal range bottom: E4

Pimp

The Pimp controls the prostitutes at the docks. He is mean, aggressive, and abusive. The Pimp has a small solo line in "The Docks."

Gender: Male

Vocal range top: C4

Vocal range bottom: Eb3

Onlookers and Bystanders

These characters make up the crowd of people onstage that witness the cart crash.

Onlookers 1, 2, 3, and 4 have solo lines.

Gender: Any

Vocal range top: C5

Vocal range bottom: G4

Fauchelevant

Fauchelevant is the victim of the cart crash. The role requires little of the actor: a few solo lines and some painful yelps.

Gender: Male

Vocal range top: Eb4

Vocal range bottom: B3

Judge(s)

The Judge or Judges are non-singing roles. They appear once in a courtroom to preside over a trial against Jean Valjean.

Gender: Male

Mistaken Jean Valjean And Family

These characters are also non-singing. Mistaken Jean Valjean is the man who Javert believes to be Jean Valjean.

Gender: Any

Nuns

The two Nuns are non-singing and non-speaking roles. They serve to take care of Fantine in her sickness.

Gender: Female

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 Thénardiens. 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

Gavroche's Gang

If you have young children (ages 7–9) who'd like to be involved in the show, you may add a gang of kids to follow Gavroche around. Remember that Paris at this time would be full of orphans (due to years of wars and revolutions), and representing these young people onstage is a nice addition. Do not include Gavroche's Gang in the barricade scenes, as it will negatively impact the dramatic arc of the show, taking away from Gavroche's death. One member of Gavroche's Gang could have a solo line if cast as Solo Urchin.

Gender: Any

Vocal range top: G4

Vocal range bottom: C4

Eponine

Eponine is the Thénardiens' 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

Revolutionaries

An ensemble of Revolutionaries at the barricade scenes.

Gender: Any

Sentries

In addition to the ensemble of Revolutionaries, the barricade scenes need actors to serve as Sentries 1 and 2.

Gender: Any

Army Officer

The barricade scene needs an actor to play the Army Officer. This actor only needs to be heard from offstage; as he's never seen onstage, this is an easy role to double cast.

Gender: Male

Women

There are also four soloists for working-class Women in Scene 6 (Women 1, 2, 3, and 4) who sing about the events at the barricade.

Gender: Female

Vocal range top: Db5

Vocal range bottom: Eb4

Major Domo

Major Domo is a great role for a young person with little performing experience; the role only requires one spoken line. He does not have a solo singing line.

Gender: Male

Wedding Guests

Wedding Guests form a chorus that celebrates the wedding of Marius and Cosette. They do not have any solo singing lines.

Gender: Any