



[Les Misérables](#) at [The Lowry](#)

Based on the novel by Victor Hugo, presented by Cameron Mackintosh, directed by Laurence Connor and James Powell

Reviewed by [Jane Turner](#) August 2010

## Introduction

Hooked on “musicals” since Gene Kelly danced over a sofa singing “it’s great to stay up late” and then splashed and danced his way down the high street “singing in the rain”, I’ve long since enjoyed this particular genre and have occasionally been known to impersonate Kelly splashing about in a downpour. I always manage to find a big puddle, but the rest? Well, Kelly was a genius in tap-shoes and me, I just get very wet.

Yet despite my fondness for a “musical” and a lengthy run of 25 years on the stage (it is the world’s longest running musical), I’d never got around to seeing Les Misérables, it being dubbed “The Glums” by the critics. I couldn’t quite marry the magic of a musical to such a heart-wrenching epic tale. What next I reasoned “The Recession” – the musical, “Tsunami” – an opera? But, then I suppose social and political issues and various tragedies have been put to music before – there’s been Showboat, Fiddler on the Roof, West Side Story to name but a few. Anyway, the tickets were a surprise present, so I gave in to my misgivings...

But, after watching the final performance of Cameron Mackintosh’s 25th anniversary production at the Lowry Theatre in Salford Quays, I wish I’d gone to see it sooner; it was first-class and I was wrong! Prolonged and great dramatic intensity and misery can be performed perfectly well to music.

It didn’t make me want to dance down the streets though (and it was temptingly pouring with rain in Manchester – again), but it did make me dab my eyes surreptitiously with a tissue many times throughout the performance. So be prepared, there’s hardly a laugh in over 3 hours – it really is “The Glums”!

**Victor Hugo**



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