

# Theatre Review: Les Miserables – Mitchell Memorial Theatre, Hanley

Wednesday, November 12, 2008,

POVERTY, revenge and sacrifice are perhaps not the most obvious themes for a youth theatre production.

But at times it was easy to forget that Stoke Youth Musical Theatre Company's production of Les Miserables, at the Mitchell Memorial Theatre, in Hanley, was being performed by a cast consisting largely of teenagers.

Les Mis, a complex musical by anyone's standards, was an ambitious project for them to undertake. But it worked.

There were no signs of nerves, no wobbly notes and not so much as a bayonet out of place on the set.

The lead characters were well cast, with a number of very creditable performances among them.

Matt Bateman shone in his role as Jean Valjean, belting out rousing numbers such as Who Am I? and Bring Him Home with a passion, while Elliot Clay and Olivia Birkin extracted the full comedy potential from their innkeeper characters the Thenardiers.

There really was little in the way of weaknesses during the evening.

The full house was drawn into the atmosphere of revolutionary Paris by clever lighting and musical numbers full of light and shade.

Les Mis is a credit to its cast of 40, the dedicated team who run the youth theatre.

Jenny Amphlett