

## MASTERPIECE and BBC One Announce Esteemed Ensemble Cast for Epic New Event Drama *Les Misérables*

Cast of Andrew Davies' six-part drama adaptation of Victor Hugo's 19th-century classic will be led by Dominic West and David Oyelowo

A Lookout Point and BBC Studios co-production for BBC One and MASTERPIECE on PBS, it is directed by Tom Shankland

Dominic West (*The Affair*, *The Hour*, *Appropriate Adult*) will star as Jean Valjean, and David Oyelowo (*Selma*, *A United Kingdom*, *Spooks*) as Javert, in BBC One's landmark drama adaptation of *Les Misérables*.

They are joined in the epic new event drama by Lily Collins (*Rules Don't Apply*, *Love, Rosie*, *Tolkien*), in the role of Fantine.

The distinguished British cast also includes Adeel Akhtar (*The Night Manager*, *Murdered By My Father*, *Utopia*) and Olivia Colman (*Murder On The Orient Express*, *The Night Manager*, *Broadchurch*) as Monsieur and Madame Thénardier, Ellie Bamber (*Nocturnal Animals*, *Pride And Prejudice And Zombies*, *The Nutcracker And The Four Realms*) as Cosette, Josh O'Connor (*The Durrells*, *God's Own Country*, *Ripper Street*) as Marius and Erin Kellyman (*Raised By Wolves*, *Uncle*, *The Coopers Vs The Rest*) as Éponine.

Multi award-winning screenwriter Andrew Davies will go back to the original novel and delve deep into the many layers of Hugo's story, revelling in Jean Valjean and Javert's cat-and-mouse relationship, against the epic backdrop of France at a time of civil unrest. With a striking intensity and relevance to us today, the novel is testimony to the struggles of France's underclass and how far they must go to survive. The six-part television adaptation of the renowned book will vividly and faithfully bring to life the vibrant and engaging characters, the spectacular and authentic imagery and, above all, the incredible yet accessible story that was Hugo's lifework.

Dominic West says: "Jean Valjean is one of the great characters in world literature. His epic journey of redemption is one of the extraordinary roles an actor can take on, and I can't wait to get stuck in to bringing Andrew's brilliant adaptation to the screen."

David Oyelowo says: "To play an iconic role like Javert is any actor's dream, but to play it as written by Andrew Davies goes beyond my wildest dreams."

Lily Collins says: "I'm so thrilled to be playing Fantine. She is an iconic character, her tragic story feels as relevant to tell today as when *Les Misérables* was first published. Andrew's wonderful dramatisation opens up the character in fresh ways that I've never seen before in previous adaptations. And with this amazing cast coming together it really feels like it could be something very special indeed."

Andrew Davies says: “This is such an intense and gut-wrenching story and I am delighted that this esteemed ensemble of actors will be bringing it to life – led by Dominic West and David Oyelowo in the iconic roles of Jean Valjean and his nemesis Javert. In Valjean, we see the terrifying anger and resentment against society but also the tenderness that is hidden deep in his complex psyche. And in Javert, the ferocious dedication to duty that takes him from obsession to madness.”

Executive Producers will be Andrew Davies, Faith Penhale for Lookout Point, Bethan Jones for BBC Studios, Mona Qureshi for BBC One, Rebecca Eaton for MASTERPIECE, Dominic West and David Oyelowo. The 6x60’ series will be produced by Chris Carey and directed by Tom Shankland. The drama was commissioned by Charlotte Moore, Director of BBC Content.

It will be globally distributed outside the US by BBC Worldwide. MASTERPIECE is presented on PBS by WGBH Boston.

Filming will begin in February 2018 in Belgium and Northern France.

Charlotte Moore, Director of BBC Content, says: “This impressive line-up of world-class actors clearly signals the huge ambition behind the retelling of this epic masterpiece for BBC One.”

Rebecca Eaton, MASTERPIECE, says: “Imagine an epic, romantic story told by BOTH Victor Hugo and Andrew Davies....how could we not be proud to co-produce it with our friends at Lookout Point and the BBC?”

Faith Penhale, Lookout Point, says: “What a stellar ensemble, we couldn't be happier. It's testament to the enduring power and relevance of Hugo's searing novel, Andrew's utterly engaging scripts and Tom's vision to bring them to life, that we have attracted such a powerhouse of British acting talent. This will be a true telling of *Les Misérables* and a *Les Misérables* for now.”

Bethan Jones, BBC Studios, says: “Hugo said of his great novel that it was “written for all nations”. It's a work that resonates today and I can't wait to see our extraordinary ensemble of brilliant acting talent combined with director Tom Shankland's bold vision, bring to life the wonderfully visceral and exuberant world of Andrew's powerful adaptation.”

Director Tom Shankland says: “Working with this incredible cast on Andrew Davies' fantastic adaptation of *Les Misérables*, really is a dream come true. We want to capture the thrilling spirit of passion and protest in Victor Hugo's novel and make it feel more relevant than ever. The conviction, intensity and authenticity that all of these actors bring to their work, is going to be a massive part of making this story speak to audiences everywhere.”

## About MASTERPIECE

The top-rated primetime show on PBS, MASTERPIECE celebrated its 45th anniversary in 2016. MASTERPIECE is presented on PBS by WGBH Boston. Funding for MASTERPIECE on PBS is provided by Viking and Farmers Insurance® with additional support from public television viewers and contributors to The MASTERPIECE Trust. MASTERPIECE is known for presenting iconic shows such as *Upstairs Downstairs*, *Prime Suspect*, *The Forsyte Saga*, *Poldark*, *Sherlock*, *Downton Abbey*, and *Victoria*.

## About Lookout Point

Lookout Point is an independent drama production company working with the UK's leading writing, directing and on screen talent to produce bold and innovative television drama.

## About BBC Studios

BBC Studios is the BBC's main TV production arm, producing award-winning, bold, British, creative content across TV and digital platforms. It creates a wide range of programming across drama, comedy, entertainment, music, events and factual.

## About BBC Worldwide

BBC Worldwide is the main commercial arm and a wholly owned subsidiary of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). Its vision is to build the BBC's brands, audiences, commercial returns and reputation across the world.

[pbs.org/masterpiece](http://pbs.org/masterpiece)

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