

French masterpiece hits the Rome stage

Ongoing

● Chieftains Museum and Major Ridge Home will present “**Stand Watie, Cherokee Planter and Confederate General**” through March 15. Admission is \$3 for adults, \$2 for seniors and \$1.50 for students. Call 706-291-9494 for more.

● Rome Little Theatre will continue “**Saturday Cinema at the DeSoto**” with “Gone with the Wind” at the DeSoto Theater on March 10. Admission is \$2. The funds raised from this promotion will be used for the DeSoto’s restoration project. Call the Downtown Development Authority at 706-236-4520 if interested in sponsorship.

● The Rome Area History Museum, 305 Broad St., will host a special photography exhibit through March. “**Elysium: A Gathering of Souls, New Orleans Cemeteries**” is a collection of photographs by Sandra Russell Clark. Call 706-235-8051 for more information.

● The Rockmart Civic Arts Commission is hosting “**Through the Eye of the Needle**,” an exhibit of unique quilted and fabric pieces by Terumi, through Feb. 24. Call 770-684-5888 for more information.

● Brian Barr’s “**Superhero Mundane**” is up at Berry College’s Moon Gallery until Friday. Call 706-236-2219 for more information.

● **Crystal McBrayer and Rob McDonald** will present their work in the Arnold Gallery at Shorter College, ending today. Call 706-233-7247 for more information.

● Berry College will host a **French film festival** through February, a three-film series called “Coming of Age.” View each film for free. “L’Esquive (Games of Love and Chance)” will play today, and “Le Huitieme Jour (The Eighth Day)” will play Feb. 22. Films will be in the science auditorium at Berry and will start at 7 p.m. Call 706-593-9310.

● The Berry College Moon Gallery will host “**Boon Dance Baby Pants**,” a correspondence art show, through March 9. Hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. Admission is free. Call 706-236-2219 for more information.

Today

● Berry College will host “**All Bartok Concert**,” featuring guest musicians from Jacksonville State University at 8 p.m. in the Ford Auditorium. Admission is free. Call 706-236-2289 for more information.

● Cobblestone Shoppe on Second Avenue will host **Open Poetry and Coffee Night** from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Admission is free. Anyone interested in reading will have 10 minutes and should sign up at the checkout counter. Call 706-378-8848 for more information.

Friday

● The 1902 Stock Exchange and Public Square Opera House in Adairsville will present “**The Matchmaker**” through Saturday and Feb. 23-24, beginning at 7 p.m. Admission is \$45, plus tax, and includes dinner. Call 770-773-1902 for reservations.

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By Severo Avila
Staff Writer

At a Glance:

Who: Darlington fine arts department

What: “Les Miserables”

When: Friday and Saturday, 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, 3 p.m.

Where: Rome City Auditorium

How much: \$10 for adults; \$5 for students, seniors and Fine Arts Booster Club patrons

Victor Hugo could not have envisioned his masterpiece being brought to life on the Rome stage. But Darlington student actors are doing their best to make sure the French author would be proud to see his acclaimed novel adapted to a school production.

Under the direction of Morgan McCrary, more than 75 students will attempt to make the performance a musical memorable for local audiences.

“We are fortunate that the only licensed version of the ‘Les Mis’ script is one adapted specifically for high school voices,” McCrary said. “This has made it easier for our actors, though it still takes quite a bit of stamina for them to sing through the entire show.”

With no spoken lines, the production will be more like an opera than a musical since everything is sung.

Among the best-known novels of the 19th century, “Les Miserables” follows the lives and interactions of several French characters during a 20-year period that includes the Napoleonic wars and subsequent decades.

Focusing on the struggles of ex-convict Jean Valjean who seeks to redeem himself, the novel examines the nature of good, evil and the law in a sweeping story.

“The students have done a remarkable job of digging into these characters,” McCrary said. “I have been amazed at how they have each found a way to connect with the situ-

ation. There are some things they cannot empathize with, like being that poor or desperate. But everyone can understand what it’s like to love someone and not be loved in return.”

But characters are only one element of the production.

Lighting and stylized setting make for an interesting backdrop as music

takes center stage.

“We are trying something new with this show by having the orchestra behind the stage rather than in front of it,” McCrary said. “We have found that it creates a more intimate space between the actors and the audience, though it’s quite a challenge for both the musicians and the actors because they cannot cue each other.”

With students working on the music since October and rehearsals going smoothly, McCrary said she expects a very special production — one she hopes the community will enjoy.

Due to adult themes, the production is rated PG-13.

“Les Miserables” runs Friday through Sunday at the Rome City Auditorium. Friday and Saturday shows begin at 7:30 p.m. Sunday’s show starts at 3 p.m.

General admission tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for students, seniors and Fine Arts Booster Club patrons.

Tickets are available at Bella Luna, Kroger, The Music Room, Rome Area Council for the Arts, Traditions of Rome and the offices of Darlington Lower, Middle and Upper schools.



William T. Martin / staff

Darlington School’s production of “Les Miserables” includes more than 75 students.

ON THE COVER: Katherine Eid as Fantine and Ross Langley as Jean Valjean rehearse for Victor Hugo’s famous story of love, war, poverty and injustice. The show is rated PG-13 for adult themes.