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## First All-State Theatre to hold auditions for Les Misérables

By Andrea Miller  
Staff Reporter

Posted Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Imagine being 15 years old and performing in one of this generation's most powerful Broadway musicals on the very stage where greats like Audrey Hepburn and Henry Fonda stood. Where Robert Redford, Bette Davis, Julie Andrews, James Earl Jones and Leslie Uggams made audiences laugh, cry and return home humming a favorite tune.

Hundreds of Delaware students are hoping to sing their way to that larger-than-life chance as they prepare to audition for Les Misérables Student Edition at the DuPont Theatre on Rodney Square in Wilmington this week and next week.

With an expected 300 – 500 auditions to be judged by a New York City casting professional and a

### All-State Theatre auditions for Les Misérables Student Edition

**Who:** Open-call auditions (first come, first served) are for Delaware middle and high school students to age 19

**Where:** DuPont Theatre, 11th and Market streets in Wilmington

**When:** January 24, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. (4th to 8th grade only) January 27, 5 p.m. – 9 p.m. January 28, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. January 29, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. January 31, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

**Bring:** A current head shot or photo Sheet music to sing 16 bars of a Broadway musical A pianist will be available to accompany you No pre-recorded tracks

**Registration:** Box office window, day of audition. Free

**Callbacks:** February 3, 5 p.m. – 9 p.m.

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GREENVILLE



MILL CREEK



HOCKESSIN



Broadway actor who regularly performs at the world-famous "Don't Tell Mama's;" and with Broadway and regional acting stars scheduled to lead numerous workshops with the 75 students who win a spot in the cast, organizers are aiming make a big impression with the Delaware All-State Theatre program's first production.

"The buzz around the state is huge. Everyone so jazzed about this," says Jeffery Santoro, co-founder of the program.

In its infancy, Delaware All-State Theatre is a proud accomplishment for Santoro and co-founder Lisa Nowicki, who have been working for two years to establish programs to bring together the "best of the best" from elementary, middle and high school drama students throughout the state for the first time.

There was so much talent putting out memorable drama and musical productions, it was high time for theatre to take its place in the spotlight, Santoro says. It was time for a theatre program to rival existing All-State Band, Orchestra and Choir.

The DuPont Theatre and J. Alexander Productions are co-presenting Les Misérables Student Edition -- a slightly shorter version of the full Broadway production.

Santoro, the show's director, producer and owner of the Wilmington-based independent production company, says the partnership with the legendary theatre is a "huge thrill and great honor."

DuPont Theatre General Manager John Gardner says the three-tiered 1,250 seat Victorian theatre – the exclusive venue of Broadway shows in Delaware -- is the perfect place to showcase Delaware's top student acting talent together on one stage.

In the few short weeks since publicity for the All-State program was launched on MySpace, Facebook and in school drama programs, Santoro has been inundated by the enthusiastic response of kids, teens and teachers.

A.I. du Pont High School drama teacher Lindsey Taylor says it will be a great experience.

"You can tell the caliber of a program by what musicals it does. Les Mis is one of the most difficult there is, in league with Phantom of the Opera. The talent you need for the orchestra alone is incredible," she says. Santoro hopes to work with the Delaware Music Educators Association to assemble a slate of accomplished All-State musicians and professionals for the pit orchestra.

Students will have barely five minutes to make an impression on the judges as the actors sing 16 bars from their choice of Broadway music, so Taylor's students are

**Rehearsals:** Begin mid-March and will not conflict with school rehearsals

**Shows:** Last two weekends in June, 2008 at the 1,200-seat DuPont Theatre

**Information:** Managing Director Jeffery Santoro (302) 559-6667 info@jalexanderproductions.com www.jalexanderproductions.com

BRANDYWINE WEST



BRANDYWINE EAST



BETTER YEARS



organizing after-school sessions to prepare for the auditions, and she is coaching them on projection skills, stage presence, site reading, and audition techniques that help banish the jitters.

Cab Calloway School of the Arts drama teacher Stephanie Smith calls the new All-State program forward thinking. As a high school student, Smith was involved in A.I. DuPont's productions, but there weren't many other opportunities to win recognition that could help aspiring actors stand out when they applied for college. That may be one reason so many of her students are trying out, she says.

"The other reason they are so excited: it is a musical they know and love."

The All-State program also has a social mission: low-income families will be invited to attend preview performances for free, and several local nonprofit organizations will receive a percentage of production profits.

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