

VICTOR HUGO'S

*The Intervention*

**PROGRAMME**

**WORLD PREMIERE  
IN ENGLISH**

**Guernsey • 23rd June 2018**



**The Victor Hugo in Guernsey Society**

## Thank You

The Victor Hugo in Guernsey Society's raison d'être is to promote and celebrate Victor Hugo and his link with Guernsey, and we are proud to have brought this play, written in the island, to the English-speaking public's attention.

Having the support of the Guernsey Amateur Dramatic and Operatic Society has been invaluable, and we thank them sincerely, as we do the Guernsey Arts Commission, Connie and Charles Wilkinson and our private sponsors, without whose financial support this project would have been impossible, and we applaud the translators and the team of actors, producers, and crew who have given their time in order to bestow a new kind of life on this fascinating work by one of the world's giants, Guernsey's most famous resident, Victor Hugo.

## The Victor Hugo in Guernsey Society

Victor Hugo wrote many of his greatest works on the island of Guernsey, a small British dependency 20 miles off the coast of France. Hugo was in exile, but despite his grief for his family and his homeland he was inspired by the beauty of the rocky landscape and seas that surrounded him to produce magnificent novels – including *Les Misérables*, and *Travailleurs de la mer* – artworks, poetry, and theatre.

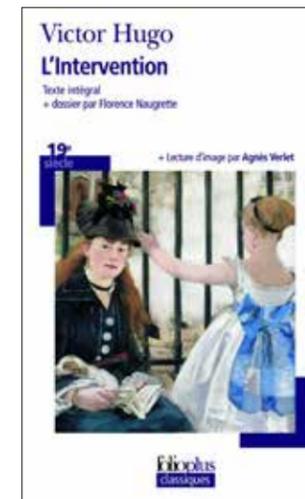
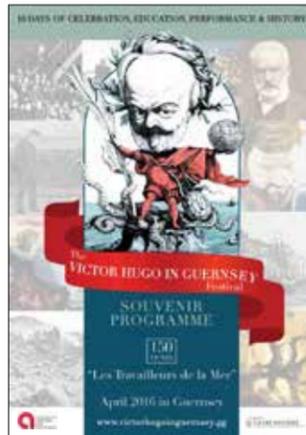
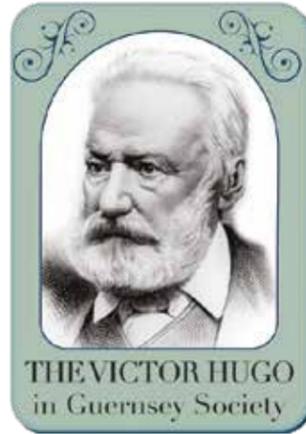
It was the 150th anniversary of *Travailleurs* in 2016 that inspired Gregory Stevens Cox and Roy Bisson to found 'The Victor Hugo In Guernsey Society' and with the help of friends from Guernsey and France, organise a celebratory week-long Festival. There were exhibitions, performances, lectures, stamps, tours and visits with Islanders and guests spreading the word about Hugo's creative exile in our island.

Since then, the Society has organised visits, lectures, exhibitions and new publications - all stimulating world-wide interest among children and adults in Victor Hugo. In spring 2017 twenty Islanders visited Paris - including Place des Vosges, La Bibliothèque Nationale, and Le Sénat where private collections were opened to members.

Now the Society has arranged for the translation of *L'Intervention* into English and will perform the 1 Act comedy for the first time in the town where it was written. This will be part of a weekend conference where, once again, leading authorities on Victor Hugo will gather to present their recent studies on Hugo and discuss some of the many facets of the great poet.

The Victor Hugo In Guernsey Society thanks its many supporters and members and encourages you to visit its website where you can learn, participate and join in!

[www.victorhugoinguernsey.gg](http://www.victorhugoinguernsey.gg)



## The Intervention & Guernsey

Victor Hugo found time and inspiration in Guernsey to create many things: poetry, novels, political pamphlets, drawings of striking modernity, interior decoration of the most extraordinary kind. He had at one time planned to build a theatre in his garden at Hauteville House to stage another and less well-known part of his exile output—the Théâtre en Liberté.

Theatre in 19th-century France reached a wide and diverse audience. In the 1830s Hugo had used historical drama to comment upon the political situation. While in exile in Guernsey he began to write plays of a somewhat different kind that reflected and responded critically to contemporary French theatrical style, which itself tended towards the lighter genres favoured by the regime. Elements of this, Hugo's 'Second theatrical period' are innovative and surprisingly modern. He found it unacceptable that in France he was subject to unofficial censorship, and thus in principle did not want these pieces to be produced there. Although he would have been quite prepared for them to be put on elsewhere, this never in the end came to pass, and the plays were not performed or published until after his death.

The Victor Hugo in Guernsey Society has chosen one of the most accessible of these plays, *The Intervention*, to present in English for the first time at their Conference in June 2018. Help in understanding the background to the play was provided by Florence Naugrette of the Paris-Sorbonne University, whose edition of the play with its accompanying notes published by Folioplus (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 2012) we recommend for further reading, and who kindly agreed to introduce the play on its first English performance in Guernsey. Two members of the Society, one a native English speaker, one a native French speaker, translated Hugo's text, and their translations were then adapted into a script. All these materials will be made available in an online archive.

Hugo as always crafts a work that despite being intensely personal still carries a universal message. This short one-act play with its five scenes, each of which can be thought of as a stand-alone playlet, its four characters, each with a distinct personality, and its straightforward social commentary means that it is very suitable for schoolchildren from the age of about thirteen: it even has some singing and dancing. It also lends itself to more subtle interpretation and its socio-historical, theatrical and literary aspects can be studied in the later school years. Its being written in Guernsey and its autobiographical aspects only add to its interest. The Victor Hugo in Guernsey Society intends to produce materials for schools based on the play, making the script freely available, and to create an online archive to include a film of the première and other associated materials which will be free to access.

**Dinah Bott  
Chairman**



## Summary of the Plot

Life in a Paris garret is hard for Edmond and Marcinelle, artisans who work to provide luxuries - lace work and painted fans - for the rich. They love each other, but they are struggling to make ends meet and contact with these finely dressed clients is a cause of anxiety to both. Edmond is a proud revolutionary who rails against handsomely-dressed dandies, but Marcinelle knows him better than that: he is jealous. Marcinelle defends herself: she is innocent and honest. It turns out that they are both right about the other but wrong about themselves.

Whilst Marcinelle goes out to deliver her work, Eurydice, an actress and courtesan, comes into their humble home to collect her lace shawl. Mesmerised by her charms, Edmond hears his wife returning and he makes off in fright. By the time he returns, Marcinelle has fallen under the spell of Eurydice's lover, Baron Gerpivrac.

The young couple quarrel bitterly and agree to part, but there is a last minute twist, an intervention ...

**Jill Sproule**



## Victor Hugo's 'Theatre In Exile' An introduction by Florence Naugrette

The theatre Victor Hugo wrote during his exile was imaginative and fanciful. He interacted in a satirical way with contemporary Parisian productions, with which his friends kept him up to date.

Very diverse in form (from a brief poetical monologue to a large-scale prose melodrama via a symbolist 'fairy-play' and socially-relevant vaudeville), these plays, which would be later collected together as 'Theatre in freedom' (the title itself cocks a snook at exile) have a common theme which aligns them with another work written during the same period, *La Légende des Siècles*: both feature as heroes society's powerless - children, beggars, workers, old people, prostitutes, witches, exiles, forest spirits - who, thanks to their intelligence, their sincerity, their indignation, and the energy of their despair, find the power, paradoxically, to change their future and that of the world.

### **Florence Naugrette**

*Florence Naugrette is a Professor of French literature, history and theory of theatre at the Paris-Sorbonne University.*

*Her past posts include the University of Rouen, University Paris III, and Stanford University.*

*She directs the electronic edition of the Letters of Juliette Drouet to Victor Hugo. The website features over 6,000 of Juliette's letters and will eventually publish Juliette's entire epistolary diary from 1833 -1883.*

More information: <http://www.juliettedrouet.org/>



## Director's Notes on 'The Intervention'

This is an intimate piece, concerning Hugo's deep personal feelings as well as showing the humanity and universality which characterises his work. We wanted to create the confinement, squalor but homeliness of the garret. The window to the outside world opens out onto danger and the desire for freedom.

All four characters have in common a desire for attention, as do we all. Marcinelle and Edmond love each other. They have a heart - we see they do. Both of them in their weakness are led to the edge, the point at which they want to throw themselves over:

EDMOND: 'I'm so attracted to this woman! I feel as if I am on the edge of a precipice.' (Sc II)

MARCINELLE: 'I see a luxurious life beckoning to me. Jealousy is urging me on from behind. I feel myself being pulled as if by a mighty hand...My poor Edmond! But I do still love him. It is him that I love. Oh, who will come to my aid?' (Sc IV)

Eurydice and Gerpivrac worship money; they have bowed down to another god. They are different in that Eurydice dances with the devil but she sees how precarious her future is. She tells herself in vain that she can still choose to go back to the world of love. Gerpivrac is a Mephistophelean character who depends on secure and serious power in this world.

The play opens with playful banter. The dialogue flows naturally in a familiar way, with undercurrents of discontent. Marcinelle resents her cheap ugly things, Edmond is frustrated that no matter how hard he works, he can't provide anything nice. They love each other, but they are caught in a cycle of childish jealousy, full of indignation. Each perceives the weakness of the other, but not their own!

Enter Eurydice carrying a bouquet of flowers which is going to cause a lot of trouble!

She speaks plainly to audience: 'Big, hard-working hands, a workman's smock, he's handsome just the same.' She fancies a bit of that - a nice change from her usual - 'another bite of coarse bread' such as she enjoyed in her youth.

Like most men, Edmond falls under her spell. Suddenly he hears his wife. He is afraid of her! He warns Eurydice she is coming back :

EDMOND: 'It's my other half...'

EURYDICE: 'His other half ...He didn't say 'wife'.

This allows her to dream that she can go back to her old life. Even when Eurydice learns Marcinelle is a properly married woman she brushes it aside, nothing need stand in her way. Hugo, however, shows us that there are things we prize more than money and the luxury it affords.

Eurydice is enjoying her stardom but sees how precarious her position is:

EURYDICE: "'I'm on course for the abyss'". (*day dreaming*) Oh, I wish I could live an honest life again.'

Sc III presents the two girls who have such different fortunes. Eurydice feels superior and tries to manipulate Marcinelle. She can't, so she sets the Baron on her.

In Sc IV Baron Gerpivrac wields his worldly knowledge to dominate. He humiliates his mistress in a desultory way in an unequal relationship of which they are both tired. Now Marcinelle takes his fancy and he dazzles the naïve object of his lust. He spouts endless jargon about fashion, horse racing and toiletries, a challenging role for the actor!

Marcinelle is dizzy with flattery in Sc IV mirroring moon-struck Edmond in Sc II. The narcissistic pair strut about the attic home in their finery, seeing what they fancy and assuming they have a right to it:

EURYDICE: 'I have a foolish yearning to live in a garret!'

GERPIVRAC: 'This little one would suit me very nicely.'

Edmond is right to be hopping mad when he gets back to find his home has been invaded. Marcinelle caught in the midst of her temptation gets out of it by being furious with him. The windows are banged shut again and the couple turn to face each other and sort out their future.

**Jill Sproule,  
Director**

## Production Team

### Jill Sproule, Director

'The Intervention' première has provided me with a first too: first time I have directed a play in English! In my teaching career in St Albans and at Ladies' College I have directed from plays by Racine, Molière, Jean Anouilh, Jean Genet and Camus - but always in French. To tell the truth, it does make life easier!

In 2016 I dramatised and directed a multi media show for The Victor Hugo in Guernsey Society called 'Soul of the Sea'. The script was Marcus Buchanan's poem based on 'Toilers of the Sea', we projected Charlie Buchanan's beautiful paintings and Michael Sproule wrote and played amazing music which enhanced the narration, dialogue, dancing and mime.

This year I was intrigued when Dinah, our Chairman, presented me with her clever choice of play from the 'Théâtre en Liberté' collection, written in Guernsey. As I got to know the play I became obsessed as usual with the great man's words, lying awake at night wondering what he meant by this, or why he chose to do that. I referred often to the splendid job done by Margaret and Agnès, our translators, as I prepared the Script.

I have been lucky enough to cast four intelligent and wonderfully talented local actors who give these words air. But most importantly I managed to secure Chris, one of our best and most experienced Producers and his 'A' team to help me bring my vision into the theatre. It's incredible to hand over set building, stage management and props to experts who deliver what you want and more. I am not used to it and compare the experience to my new electric bike. I want to thank each one of them for being so energetic and offering their skills to the project and dramatically reducing the pedalling I've had to do! It has been an absolute pleasure and privilege to work with you.

We aim to make this world première of Hugo's play a brilliant event and I hope you will enjoy being part of this evening.



### Chris Oliver, Producer

Occasionally, you are delivered an opportunity that deserves the best you can give it, this evening's performance is one of those moments. The journey to the stage has been enriched by a Director whose understanding, drive and enthusiasm of the man and his works is infectious to all those who she surrounds.

The challenges to getting this particular production to the stage have been enormous and often felt as obstacles had been placed to deliberately test our collective metal. As always, my thanks must go to the very professional members of the cast whose sheer talent and experiences from film, television and theatre will bring this to life for you this evening. Do not be surprised by the quality of their performances and how they complement Hugo's work.

My real heroes, as always, are led by Emma Hodge and are the men and women you will not see this evening. I have been lucky to work with many of them before. A production cannot exist on what the audience sees alone, a special thank you to the production, technical team and crew for their continued dedication to theatre in Guernsey.

It is not often we have the chance on this small island to host a world premiere, by being here this evening, you become part of a group of stakeholders that will make a small part of theatre history. On behalf of us all, we hope you enjoy this evening and it will remain a story for you to tell.

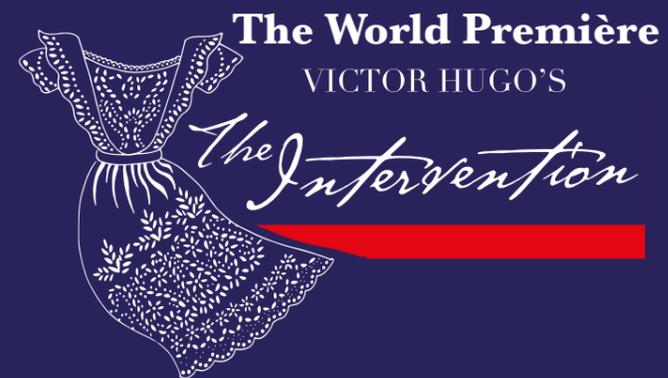


## Programme

**Victor Hugo's 'Theatre In Exile'**  
**An introduction by Florence Naugrette**

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**A medley of songs from GADOC's production of**  
***Les Misérables, by the original cast.***

•  
**Interval** (30 minutes only please)



The first presentation on the English stage on 23rd June 2018.  
At the Princess Royal Centre for Performing Arts, Guernsey,  
by the Victor Hugo in Guernsey Society with the following cast and crew:

#### Characters

Edmond Gombert	Michael Sullivan
Marcinelle Gombert	Lydia Pugh
Mademoiselle Eurydice	Martine Wallbridge
Baron de Gerprivac	Chris Oliver
James, a young footman	Marcus Meredith

#### Production

Directed & adapted for the stage	Jill Sproule
Producer and Designer	Chris Oliver
Stage Manager	Emma Hodge
Properties	Fleur Rowe
Costumes	Jill Sproule
Set Production & Crew	Stuart Horsepool, Andrew Gethin-Jones
Lighting	Samantha Le Noury
Sound	Russell Kellaway

Music composed and performed by Michael Sproule

#### The production team would also like to thank

Dave Hodge, Sound effects and projection  
Clare Milner, Props  
Margaret Jones, Agnès Perry, translators  
Jenny Falla, Alpha Wearing, Costume  
Guernsey Amateur Dramatic & Operatic Club for rehearsal space  
Pierre Bisson, Videographer & Photographer  
John Fitzgerald, Photographer (*Les Misérables*)  
Chloe Mellor, aged two years

## Production Team

### Emma Hodge, Stage Manager

Emma has been a Stage Manager for over twenty years, with a wide range of experience having overseen all manner of genres; from pantomime to farce, musicals to melodrama. Her experience in Stage Management allows her to multitask from wielding a paintbrush, marking a script to directing the crew...all in the same breath.

Rather than literally sitting on her hands when a production is going well, Emma is often juggling other work whilst cueing the scene changes and technical effects. She briefly considered taking up lace making specifically for this play, but decided the combination of poor eyesight, pins and darkness was perhaps not for the best and to leave it to the experts.

She is happy to be reunited with crew members with whom she has worked previously and who have a wealth of experience. Working alongside them and the production team has meant she is confident this play will live up to all its expectations. She is relieved that Hugo's prose has been expertly translated into English, removing the additional challenges of providing cues in French.

Emma thanks Jill Sproule and Chris Oliver for inviting her to be part of this World Premiere in Guernsey, she and the team hope you enjoy this evenings performance.

### Fleur Rowe, Properties

Fleur has been involved with local theatre for twenty-five years in a wide range of roles both on and off stage, but she is now back stage sourcing properties and a member of the stage crew.

Properties is challenging in many ways not just in sourcing items needed by each actor but also in the set dressing, as well as dealing with "moving props" .... and yes, that means the actors! With props, there is always something that pushes the boundaries and requires a bit of creativity which keeps you on your toes and can help finish off a scene.

Fleur is delighted to be involved in her second Victor Hugo production, the first being Les Miserables in 2016. Like Les Miserables, the props for The Intervention take just as much effort, if not more, in making things look dirty, especially when purchasing brand new items and having to make them look aged. Fleur considers the research side of the props role to be the most interesting part of the job, finding out how people lived and trying to ensure that the time period and culture of the show is accurately reflected.

### Stuart Horsepool, Set Manager

Stuart first became involved with making props and sets for Eisteddfod scenes and various shows 10 years ago. He was asked to stage manage and set build and has been doing this since 2013. His most memorable build was the flying carpet in Aladdin.

His credits include Shrek The Musical, Sister Act, Joseph, Musical Encore and Les Miserables where they first set up and used the revolving stage. Last year Stuart jointly headed up the car design team for Chitty Chitty Bang Bang with the not so easy task of creating and building the iconic flying car. The car, of course, stole the show. Stuart is pleased to be involved with another Victor Hugo production and be part of a team with many years' experience on and back stage. Although a small set, a lot of thought has gone into creating an authentic look as possible.

### Michael Sproule, Composer and Guitarist

Michael's life in French music has taken him to the Berlioz Festival in Lyon to perform operas, the Aix-en-Provence Festival and venues in Normandy, Brittany and Paris.

As a composer for the theatre, he has written preludes, songs, choruses and dances for productions of Shakespeare's 'Twelfth Night'. 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and 'The Tempest'. His romantic orchestral overture "Hugo in Guernsey" was performed by the ECSOC Orchestra.

'The Intervention' is, he says, a gem for a musician. Hugo embeds clear musical demands in the script, but, like the reluctant opera librettist he undoubtedly was, leaves open the door for the composer to explore freely the mysteries of feelings expressed without and beyond words.



## Cast

### Lydia Pugh, Marcinelle

Over the past 10 years Lydia has established herself as an award winning vocal coach, performer and composer. Her music has taken her overseas to Australia and the USA. She recently won the Young New Yorkers Chorus, Young Composers Competition with a piece written around the central theme of the evacuation of children from Guernsey, entitled 'Adirai' (meaning Mislplaced). In 2017 Lydia was awarded the PJ Proby Award by The Voice College for excellence in her work.

Her stage credits include roles as Eva Peron in 'Evita' and Fantine in Les Miserables as well as voice-over work. Lydia was in UK band The Hallows music video Cardboard Love.

Thrilled to be a part of The Intervention, she embraced the opportunity to be in this world premiere of the English translation of this remarkable author.

### Michael Sullivan, Edmond Gombert

Michael has been involved in theatre from a young age, attending or participating. His passion for performing has seen him involved in acting and singing to becoming a semi-professional magician. He studied Theatre Arts at Middlesex University managing to find a love of all aspects including directing, writing, technical disciplines and of course performance. Michael is also a voice over artist for MUD radio advertisements, as well as recording for local media with fellow cast member, Lydia Pugh.

He is well known throughout the local theatrical scene, having performed in a variety of clubs and societies, including being John Merrick in The Elephant Man and Jean Valjean in the musical adaptation of Les Miserables. Michael is proud and honoured to be performing once again in a Victor Hugo performance with an impressive team and cast.

### Martine Wallbridge, Mademoiselle Eurydice

The first musical Martine saw was Les Miserables, aged 8, and she was captivated by the well written characters and their plight, particularly Eponine.

Playing the role of Eurydice has been challenging yet stimulating. At first glance it is easy to form a rather harsh opinion of her. However, throughout the rehearsal period and with the help of a great cast and director, we have managed to strip away all the grandeur to find her soul beneath the "almond cream" and "shawls"

Martine's main passion is musical theatre. She obtained a BA (Hons) from King Alfred's College, Winchester in performing arts and has been lucky enough to play a variety of roles over the years in both London and local theatre. Her credits include Chess, West End Men, Fame and the world premiere of Good for Today. Locally, Beauty & The Beast, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, One Man Two Guvnors and Macbeth. In 2006 she was shortlisted in Andrew Lloyd Webber's TV series 'How Do You Solve A Problem Like Maria?'.

### Chris Oliver, Baron de Gerpivrac

Chris has been involved in theatre on Guernsey with credits as an actor, producer, director and even a set painter. He has been involved with 'Dad's Army', 'Carrie's War', 'Fawlty Towers', and 'One Man, Two Guvnors' professing comedy as his one true love.

He has previously had the fortune to be involved in screen and production work since his university years, through his family involvement with the film and television industry. Based at Pinewood Studios his minor acting and production credits include such films as 'Bridge Too Far', 'Indiana Jones & The Last Crusade' and more recently 'Fury'.

He has also worked with vehicle teams on Eon productions classic 007 franchise. Chris has been a member of Equity for over twenty years.

### Marcus Meredith, James, a young footman

Marcus Meredith is studying Philosophy and English at Edinburgh University. He is a long time patron of performing arts in Guernsey. In his free time he can be found singing and playing guitar in the Cock and Bull, and hopes to pursue his art further.

## Guernsey Amateur Dramatic & Operatic Club ~ GADOC

### Lisa Johnston

Lisa moved to Guernsey in 1982, which is when she first joined GADOC. As well as taking part in many productions onstage, she also taught musical theatre to children aged 4 to 16, before making her directorial debut in 2009 with the musical, *Little Women*. Since then she has directed many shows for GADOC, varied across both musical genres and decades, but each one a new and exciting venture for Lisa and for GADOC: Disney's *Beauty & the Beast* (2010), *Hello, Dolly!* (2011), *Peter Pan* (2012), *RENT* (2012), *Grease* (2013), *Shrek* (2015), *Sister Act* (2015) *Les Misérables* (2016), *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (2017), and GADOC's 90th celebratory production last year, *Musical Encore!*. In 2017 she was recognised in the Queen's New Year's Honours list and awarded a British Empire Medal for services to the Arts.

Of course, there is one very special production listed above, which the people of Guernsey took to their hearts. After lengthy negotiations with Josef Weinberger in London, Lisa was offered the performing rights to the full stage version of the iconic musical *Les Misérables*. This show presented great challenges in all areas: costumes were not costumes per se, but realistic clothes that offered an insight into the tragic lives of the characters; the set had to command the stage, its impact equal to that of any character; and the music had to allow the story to breathe, to rise in defiance, and to fall in defeat. *Les Misérables* also demanded something more from the cast, crew and orchestra - extraordinary commitment, unsurpassed dedication and a willingness to allow this show quite simply to move in and take over the lives of all those involved.

In short, *Les Misérables* is a show like no other, and for GADOC to be able to perform it here in Guernsey where the great Victor Hugo wrote his masterpiece was an honour for everyone involved. *Les Misérables* continues to live on with opportunities to perform at special events across the island. We are therefore delighted and honoured to be singing for you this evening at the premiere of *The Intervention*.

**Lisa Johnston**  
**Director of *Les Misérables***



## Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* ~ GADOC





*The Intervention*