



T.C. KÜLTÜR VE TURİZM BAKANLIĞI
DEVLET OPERA VE BALESİ GENEL MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ
İZMİR DEVLET OPERA VE BALESİ

Victor Hugo'dan Hareketle

NOTRE DAME'İN KAMBURU

Müzik

Cesare Pugni

Müzik Düzenlemesi

Bujor Holnic

Koreografi ve Libretto

G. Armağan Davran- A. Volkan Ersoy

Orkestra Şefi

Tolga Tavş

Dekor Tasarımı

M. Çağda Çitkaya

Kostüm Tasarımı

Gülay Korkut

İşık Tasarımı

Fuat Gök

Koreograf Asistanı

Sanem Subaygil

Video Prodüksiyon

Ahmet Şeren

Quasimodo

Sertan Yetkinoglu / Selahattin Erkan / Yiğit Olataş

Esmeralda

Burcu Olguner / Cansu Polat / Oben Yıldırım

Şair Gringoire

Çağın H. Özideş / Ali E. Topçu / Can Alıcıçek

Yüzbaşı Phoebus

A. Doruk Demirdirek / Oliver M. Spence

Çağın H. Özides / Ş. Boğaçhan Bozcaada

Fleur de Lyns

Sülin Duyulur / Çisil Bozcaada

Rahip Frollo

H. Altan Kılıç/Güçlü Kılıç

İzmir Devlet Opera ve Balesi Orkestrası

Başkemanı Kemal Tören



Bale 2 Perde
1 Saat 40dk.

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Notre Dame'ın Kamburu (bale)

Notre Dame'ın Kamburu balesi, Fransız yazar Victor Hugo'nun Notre Dame'ın Kamburu romanından baleye uyarlanmış iki perdelik bir eserdir.

Yazılışı

Libretto ve koreografisi Armağan Davran ve Volkan Ersoy'a aittir. Bale eserinde konu, Hugo'nun romanından farklı bir şekilde gelişmektedir. Eser, tamamen bir Türk yapımı olarak 2011 yılında Ankara Devlet Opera ve Balesi tarafından yaratıldı.

Müzik

Bale müziği, Fransız besteci Cesar Pugni'nin aynı romandan uyarlanan "Esmeralda" adlı bale müziğinin bazı parçaları ile Bujor Hoinic'in yeni eser için yaptığı bestelerinin düzenlenmesinden meydana gelir.

İçerik

Eserde, 19. Yüzyılda Paris'te "Esmeralda" adındaki güzel çingeneye büyük hayranlık besleyen ve onu Notre Dame Katedrali papazının entrikalarından korumaya çalışan kambur zangoç Quasimodo'nun hikâyesi, Quasimodo'nun gözünden sahneye aktarılıyor.

Yaratıcı kadro

Müzik

- Bujor Hoinic
- Cesare Pugni

Koreografi ve libretto

- G. Armağan Davran
- A. Volkan Ersoy

Temsil

Prömiyer: 24 Mart 2011, Ankara Devlet Opera ve Balesi, Opera Sahnesi, Ankara

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Ballet

- *La Esmeralda* (1844) – choreography by Jules Perrot, music by Cesare Pugni. First performed at Her Majesty's Theatre in London. The ballet has a long performance history in Russia via the revivals of the choreographer Marius Petipa in St. Petersburg throughout the late 19th century.

La Esmeralda (ballet)

La Esmeralda is a ballet in three acts and five scenes, inspired by the 1831 novel *Notre-Dame de Paris* by Victor Hugo, originally choreographed by Jules Perrot to music by Cesare Pugni, with sets by William Grieve and costumes by Mme. Copère.

It was first presented by the Ballet of her Majesty's Theatre, London on 9 March 1844, with Carlotta Grisi as Esmeralda, Jules Perrot as Gringoire, Arthur Saint-Leon as Phoebus, Adelaide Frassi as Fleur de Lys, and Antoine Louis Coulon as Quasimodo. Today the complete ballet is performed only in Russia, Eastern Europe, and by two ballet companies in the United States. The New Jersey Ballet introduced the full-length version for the first time in the United States in 2004, and the Russian Ballet Orlando performed *La Esmeralda* for the first time in 2021. Most Western ballet companies only perform two *Esmeralda*-related pieces—*La Esmeralda pas de deux* and *La Esmeralda pas de six*—and the *Diane and Actéon Pas de Deux*, which is actually not excerpted from the ballet, but often mistakenly credited as having been added by Marius Petipa to his 1886 revival of *La Esmeralda*. Variations from the ballet are still commonly performed by students at ballet competitions.



Plot

Plot outline based on the full synopsis translated by Professor Roland John Wiley:¹ The beautiful Romani girl Esmeralda marries the poet Pierre Gringoire, to save him from death in the hands of the Romani king. The groom is smitten with his new bride, but she makes it clear that the marriage is strictly one of convenience. Gringoire is not the only one infatuated with Esmeralda, the archdeacon of Notre Dame cathedral, Claude Frollo, is dangerously obsessed with the girl and orders his deformed henchman, Quasimodo, to abduct her. When Quasimodo attacks Esmeralda in the street, she is rescued by the King's Archers, led by their handsome captain Phoebus de Chateaupers, who capture Quasimodo. They plan to torture him, but Esmeralda asks for his release. The hunchback is deeply touched by her kindness. Phoebus is enchanted by the girl and gives her a scarf that was given to him by his fiancée, Fleur de Lys.

The next day, Fleur de Lys and her mother hold a grand celebration for her engagement to Phoebus, who is distracted by thoughts of Esmeralda. She arrives to entertain the guests, but is left heartbroken when she sees that Fleur de Lys' fiancé is none other than her beloved Phoebus. Fleur de Lys notices that Esmeralda is wearing the scarf that she gave to Phoebus and realising that he has fallen in love with another, angrily calls off the engagement. Phoebus leaves with Esmeralda. Alone in a tavern, the two declare their love for each other, unaware that the archdeacon Frollo

is also there, eavesdropping on them. Taking a dagger that he stole from Esmeralda's room, Frollo sneaks up behind the lovers and stabs Phoebus, who falls unconscious to the ground. Frollo calls for the authorities, shows them the body of Phoebus and the dagger that was used to stab him, which is identified as Esmeralda's. The poor girl is taken away and sentenced to death.

At dawn the following morning, the Festival of Fools is under way and Esmeralda is due to be hanged for the murder of Phoebus. Her friends and Gringoire are all present and bid her farewell, while Frollo watches in triumph. Just as Esmeralda is led to the gallows, Phoebus arrives alive and well, having survived and recovered from the stabbing. He reveals the true culprit to be Frollo and announces that Esmeralda is innocent of any crime. Frollo takes a dagger and attempts to do away with them, but Quasimodo wrests the dagger from his master and stabs him to death. Esmeralda and Phoebus are happily reunited.

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SYNOPSIS

Act I

In Paris, in the year 1482, a company of actors emerges, intoning a Latin chant with the onstage Choir (**Olim**). The Congregation begins to recount a story (**The Bells of Notre Dame**): Dom Claude Frollo and his beloved brother Jehan were taken in as orphans by the priests of Notre Dame Cathedral. While Frollo thrived under the rules of the Church, fun-loving Jehan took up with Gypsies (Roma) and was expelled. Many years passed until one day now-Archdeacon Frollo was summoned to his estranged brother's deathbed. Jehan's dying wish was for his brother to care for his Romani baby. Grief-stricken, Frollo agreed and kept the child, whom he named "Quasimodo" for his non-normative features, secluded in the cathedral bell tower for many years...

Now grown, Quasimodo is the lonely bell-ringer at Notre Dame, physically strong but partially deaf from the bells, and staunchly obedient to Frollo, his uncle and master. Frollo continues to offer him safety within the cathedral (**Sanctuary**), but Quasimodo longs to be part of the world (**Out There**). Encouraged by his inner voices – his "friends," Notre Dame's stone Statues and Gargoyles – Quasimodo sneaks out of the tower to attend the Feast of Fools, a day when all of Paris indulges in debauched celebration. In the square, Clopin, King of the Gypsies, leads the festivities (**Topsy Turvy – Part 1**). Captain Phoebus de Martin arrives from the battlefield to take command of the Cathedral Guard – after a little holiday (**Rest and Recreation**) – but he runs into Frollo and finds himself assuming his new positon earlier than expected. Both men are instantly captivated by the dancing Esmeralda, a young Romani woman, as is Quasimodo, peering at her from the shadows (**Rhythm of the Tambourine**). The crowd then gathers to select and crown the King of Fools, the ugliest person in Paris. After her initial shock at his appearance, Esmeralda warmly encourages Quasimodo to step up for the honor (**Topsy Turvy – Part 2**). But the drunken crowd brutally abuses Quasimodo while Frollo looks on in cold silence. Esmeralda alone shows kindness to the bell-ringer and rescues him before she disappears from the enraged mob in a flash of smoke. Frollo then steps forward to chasten Quasimodo, who promises he will never again leave the bell tower (**Sanctuary II**).

Concerned for Quasimodo, Esmeralda ventures into the cathedral (**The Bells of Notre Dame – Reprise**), offering a different prayer from the other Parishioners (**God Help the Outcasts**). Phoebus happens upon her, and there is a palpable spark between them. Then, Esmeralda sees Quasimodo and follows him to the bell tower (**Transition to the Bell Tower**). Quasimodo shows Esmeralda his view of Paris (**Top of the World**) while his "friends" attempt to deal with her presence. Frollo arrives and discovers them. Taken with Esmeralda, he offers her sanctuary in the cathedral under his tutelage and protection, but she refuses.

As his obsession with Esmeralda grows, Frollo begins prowling the streets at night, until he comes upon a tavern where the Gypsies spiritedly sing and dance (**Tavern Song – Thai Mol Piyas**). He sees Phoebus with Esmeralda, and watches in turmoil as their flirtation escalates to a kiss. Back in the bell tower, Quasimodo remains infatuated by Esmeralda's kindness (**Heaven's Light**). Meanwhile, Frollo convinces himself that Esmeralda is a demon sent to tempt his very soul (**Hellfire**).

The next morning, Frollo convinces King Louis XI to put out a warrant for Esmeralda's arrest, and a search commences. Frollo targets a brothel known to harbor Gypsies (**Esmeralda – Act 1 Finale**). When Phoebus refuses a direct order to burn it down, Frollo has him arrested. Esmeralda appears to try to save Phoebus, and in the ensuing confusion, Frollo stabs Phoebus and blames her. Esmeralda and Phoebus escape, and Frollo continues the hunt while an increasingly distraught Quasimodo watches the burning chaos from above.

Act II

The Choir opens with a Latin **Entr'acte**. In the bell tower, Esmeralda implores Quasimodo to hide the wounded Phoebus until he regains his strength (**Agnus Dei**). Quasimodo agrees, and she offers him an amulet that will lead him to where she hides – the Gypsies’ mysterious Court of Miracles. Prompted by an encounter with a statue of Saint Aphrodisius, Quasimodo envisions himself as Esmeralda’s protector (**Flight into Egypt**). But Frollo arrives to tell Quasimodo that he knows the location of the Roma’s hideaway and that his soldiers will attack at dawn (**Esmeralda – Reprise**). Quasimodo and the injured Phoebus use the amulet to find Esmeralda before Frollo does (**Rest and Recreation – Reprise**).

Arriving at the secret lair, Phoebus and Quasimodo are captured by Clopin and the Gypsies, who sentence them to death (**The Court of Miracles**). Esmeralda intervenes, and the two men warn of Frollo’s impending attack. As the Gypsies prepare to flee, Phoebus decides to go with Esmeralda. She consents and matches his commitment to a life together while Quasimodo watches, heartbroken (**In a Place of Miracles**). Having tricked Quasimodo into leading him to Esmeralda, Frollo storms in with his soldiers, arrests Esmeralda and Phoebus, and sends his ward back to the bell tower (**The Bells of Notre Dame – Reprise II**).

In the prison, Frollo confesses his love to Esmeralda and forces himself on her (**The Assault**). When Esmeralda fights him off, Frollo threatens Phoebus’s life unless she yields to him, and he has Phoebus brought into her cell as an inducement. Esmeralda and Phoebus spend their final doomed night together hoping for a better world (**Someday**).

Meanwhile, a devastated Quasimodo, now bound in the bell tower (**While the City Slumbered**), refuses the entreaties of his “friends” to save Esmeralda (**Made of Stone**).

In the square the next morning, a captive Phoebus watches as Esmeralda is tied to a wooden stake (**Judex Crederis, Kyrie Eleison**). Frollo again offers to save her if she will be his. Esmeralda spits in his face, and enraged, Frollo lights the pyre himself. Witnessing the horror from above, Quasimodo is galvanized into action; breaking free of his bonds, he swoops down to free Esmeralda, claiming “Sanctuary!” for her. He bars the doors of Notre Dame and returns her to safety in his tower. Violence breaks out in the square as Clopin frees Phoebus and together they rally the crowd against Frollo. When the soldiers break down the doors and are about to enter, Quasimodo pours molten lead down on them. Quasimodo returns to Esmeralda, thinking he has saved her, but she dies in his arms (**Top of the World – Reprise**). Frollo enters and tries to persuade the grieving bell ringer that they can now return to the way they were, but Quasimodo finally sees the archdeacon for the monster he has become and throws him from the tower to his death (**Esmeralda – Frollo Reprise**). Phoebus arrives and collapses on Esmeralda’s body in grief. Quasimodo comforts him then picks up Esmeralda and carries her into the square, where the crowd, gathered to mourn, sees the bell-ringer in a new light (**Finale Ultimo**).



CONTEXTUALIZING THE “OTHER”

The *Hunchback of Notre Dame* offers a rich and rewarding tapestry of themes to explore. To help you unpack three of the most prominent themes, we've gathered outside experts to discuss representations of disability, women, and Roma (“Gypsies”) – or, as they are depicted in the story, the “other” – in the stage musical:

- **Jan Valle**, an associate professor and disabilities scholar at The City College of New York, discusses the history of disability – specifically its existence and treatment in medieval times – in relation to how Quasimodo appears within the musical.
- **Stacy Wolf**, one of America's foremost scholars on musical theater and director of the music theater program at Princeton University, explores how women, particularly Esmeralda, are represented in the musical and how these representations speak to our understanding of other female characters in the musical theater canon.
- **Ronald Lee**, a Canadian-Romani author and advocate for Roma, offers a history of the Roma – an oft persecuted and stereotyped people – and discusses Hugo and the musical's portrayals of “Gypsies.”

These complex themes are important to the understanding of Hugo's story and the Disney musical, and all production members can benefit from engaging with these essays (as well as Gregg Mozugala's essay, “Performing Disability” on pp. 39-42) in the rehearsal room or classroom. The essays are referenced throughout this handbook – they are utilized in Rehearsal Exercises and recommended for distribution to your actors – and it is our hope that they will open up the characters and the world of the musical for you and your cast, allowing for fruitful critical discussion and shedding light on what it means to be “other” in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and in the world today.



Quasimodo steps out from the Congregation.
The Henegar Center; Melbourne, FL

DISABILITY IN *THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME*

by Jan Valle

Disability is a prominent theme in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Its title character, Quasimodo, hearing impaired, facially different, and humpbacked, is best understood within the context of medieval beliefs about disability. The concept of disability as a category of impairment did not exist in medieval times as we know it today; however, the medieval lexicon did contain words to describe specific physical conditions, such as *blynde*, *deaf*, *dumbe* (lacking oral speech), *hunchbacked*, *lame*, and *crippled*. Those with physical differences within the population were more generally referred to as the infirm (including the aged), the debilitated, and/or the impotent (those rendered powerless in social and economic position). Thus, the play provides an interesting lens through which to consider medieval responses to disability as well as connections to present-day disability beliefs and assumptions.

The Middle Ages: An Era of Ridicule

Public ridicule of persons with disabilities is widely documented as having occurred during the Middle Ages; however, the origins of the practice can be traced to early Greek and Roman cultures. For example, Aristotle, who endorsed the Greek practice of leaving disabled infants out in the elements to die, described people with disabilities as *lusus naturae* ("jokes of nature") and a burden to society. Roman citizens enjoyed viewing people with various disabilities in cages; among the most famous, Balbus Blaesus, a stutterer, would try to speak when people threw coins into his cage. While this kind of humiliation did not begin during the Middle Ages, its practice continued unchecked throughout the era.

Perhaps most symbolic of medieval cruelty toward the disabled is the "idiot cage," suspended in town squares where crowds gathered to view people with disabilities. The "idiot cage" also might have served as a civic means for keeping persons with disabilities from "making trouble" in society.

The Hunchback of Notre Dame is set in Paris in 1482. A Parisian diary written around this time gives historical evidence of abuse of the disabled for public amusement. The diarist reports observing a very strange battle: Four blind men, each armed with a stick, were led to a public park where they were told there was a pig they could have if they killed it. There was no pig, and spectators delighted in watching the blind men, mistaking one another for the pig, beat each other with sticks.

Cruelty as a response to disability is embodied within the play's namesake, who is given the name Quasimodo, meaning "half-formed." In the play, Frollo, the archdeacon of Notre Dame and Quasimodo's uncle, forbids his nephew to leave the safety of Notre Dame for his own protection. Consistent with historical documentation of medieval cruelty toward the disabled, Frollo explains to Quasimodo that the public would revile him as a monster because he is "ugly" and "deformed." Quasimodo later defies Frollo and ventures outside to join the crowd of bawdy revelers celebrating



An "idiot cage" in Rothenburg, Germany
"Wooden Gibbet" by Thomas Quine
licensed under CC BY 2.0 <https://flic.kr/p/NwUiWA>

CONTEXTUALIZING THE "OTHER"

the annual Feast of Fools, a mock religious procession in which commoners gleefully upend the dignity and solemnity of the Church and select a King of Fools to preside over festivities. Upon laying eyes on Quasimodo, the revelers become frenzied about having found the ugliest face in Paris to serve as their king. They shout and jeer, holding down Quasimodo and tearing off his clothes to view his naked and hairy humpback. Terrified and confused by the incident, Quasimodo laments the truth of Frollo's warning.

Not unlike the medieval commoner's fascination with disability, European and Russian royalty likewise indulged in viewing disabled bodies for entertainment. Court jesters in medieval France, the historical context for the play, were called *fous* or *bouffons*. Most jesters were men with humpbacks, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, or epilepsy.

Dwarfs (the medieval term for little people) were highly desired by medieval aristocrats as household "pets" and signifiers of wealth; European and Russian nobility exchanged dwarfs as gifts. Given their social position outside mainstream medieval society, dwarfs were not considered to be threats in any way to the royal court, where they entertained with biting commentary on social conventions and human foibles and often had the ear of royalty. Despite their captive and demeaning status, these dwarfs enjoyed privileges unattainable for commoners with disabilities – not the least of which were safety and security.

Medieval Religious Understanding & Response to Disability

Christianity dominated the lives of peasants and nobility alike during the Middle Ages. In Judeo-Christian tradition, disability at birth was understood to be a sign of parental sin and evidence of God's displeasure. Moreover, disability was linked with sin in the common belief that people with disabilities, particularly those with epilepsy or mental illness, were possessed by the devil.

This belief appears at the beginning of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* in a verbal exchange between Frollo and his dying brother, Jehan. In the scene, Frollo is surprised to learn that his brother has an infant son who will be orphaned upon his death. In response to seeing the baby's face, Frollo, a medieval priest, calls the baby a monster and tells Jehan that the baby is God's judgment upon him for his sins.

Along with religious ideas about disability as the embodiment of sin, the medieval Church also practiced New Testament teachings of charity toward the disabled. Jesus's acts of love for people with disabilities contributed to the emerging idea of a "holy innocent" deserving of sympathy and care. The New Testament offers numerous accounts of Jesus's miraculous healing of the disabled. Although such miracles reflect Jesus's sympathy and care toward the disabled, healing miracles can be interpreted as people with disabilities being "defective" and in need of having both their bodies and souls saved. "Saviorism" had the effect of positioning people with disabilities to be reliant upon the Church for survival. Early Christians, in their zeal to perform good works for those deemed in need of "saving," fostered dependence by creating patriarchal relationships between clergy and people with disabilities who had little choice but to accept charity in exchange for clerical control over their lives. This "saviorism" trope is pervasive even today and can be seen in literature and media featuring individuals with disabilities.

As a refuge for those in need (e.g., the aged, poor, disabled, orphaned), the medieval Church provided food, shelter, and protection in the name of Jesus. In the play, Frollo demonstrates this by taking in his brother's orphaned child to live within the confines of Notre Dame. Although such acts were a welcome humanitarian advancement during the Middle Ages, charity placed its recipients in a position of gratitude, thereby opening space for domination over those in need. An example of this dynamic is illustrated when Frollo brings Quasimodo a strawberry as a special treat, positioning Quasimodo as the recipient of charity; food is held out as a treat to be given (or not). In fact, Frollo withholds the treat until he is satisfied with Quasimodo's response. Expected gratitude for charity is revealed in Quasimodo's compliance and

thanks to his uncle whom he calls “master.” Despite his disability, Quasimodo is intelligent and physically stronger than most men. Yet the interaction between the two suggests that Frollo, and by extension, the Church, sees Quasimodo as something less than human that must be contained and protected.

Disability & Everyday Life in Medieval Europe

Given the dominance of the Church in medieval Europe and its exclusivity in producing written manuscripts, much of what is documented about disability in the Middle Ages reflects the perspective of the Church. It is worth considering that life was hard for all Europeans during medieval times; given the conditions of hard agricultural labor, disease, and malnutrition, acquired disabilities were most likely not considered to be extraordinary events but rather an expected consequence of living. It is probable that disability during the Middle Ages was thought of in terms of the impact upon a person’s ability to carry out work and social responsibilities.

If an injury disrupted a person’s capacity to work, they likely would have joined the ranks of medieval beggars – mostly people with disabilities and the aged – wandering Europe looking for work or charity. The association of disability with poverty is well-established during the Middle Ages. Medieval art depicting crippled beggars (e.g., *The Beggars* by Bruegel; *Cripples* by Bosch) was no doubt intended to appeal to Christian charity, but probably had the effect of reinforcing widespread fear of disability, poverty, and disease among people living and working during the Middle Ages.

Making Connections to Disability Today

Disability, as depicted within *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, appears far removed from modern society’s response to disability. Today we have laws to protect the rights of the disabled, free public education programs, public programs that assist persons with disabilities toward achieving independence at home and work, and medical advancements that have lessened the effects of disability. Yet, if we look beneath the surface, vestiges of medieval ideas about disability can be detected within our own era.

The thought of an “idiot cage” and other abuses of people with disabilities for public entertainment is shocking to our modern sensibilities. Yet, we need only look to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the “freak show” was at its height of popularity in America, for continuing evidence of disability entertainment. Lest we believe that the “freak show” is a thing of the past, Sideshows by the Seashore, a not-for-profit venue on Coney Island, advertised its 2017 show schedule on social media with the tagline: “They’re here, they’re real, and they’re alive! Freaks, wonders, and human curiosities!”

Current reality television fare includes numerous series featuring the lives of persons with disabilities, such as *Little People, Big World*, about the daily life of a family whose members include little people; *Born This Way*, about seven young adults with Down syndrome living independently; and *The Undateables*, about people with a variety of disabilities searching for love. Do such shows promote understanding and acceptance by publicly sharing the everyday lives of people with disabilities, or are they a modern equivalent of disability entertainment enjoyed in the comfort of our homes?



The Beggars by Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1568)

CONTEXTUALIZING THE "OTHER"

Much of how modern society understands disability is influenced by media representation. The two most common disability tropes in film are disability as a symbol of evil and disability as a symbol of purity or innocence. There are numerous examples of movie villains who typically (but not always) have visible disabilities, such as Captain Hook (*Peter Pan*), Doctor Strangelove (*James Bond*), Darth Vader (*Star Wars*), Ephialtes (*300: Rise of an Empire*), and Jason Stryker (*X-Men 2*) to name a few. In other words, disability functions as a cultural symbol that signifies the presence of evil within the character. Characters with disabilities can also be represented as harmless children – despite their chronological age – whose innocence provides contrast to the ills of the world. Their capacity to overcome the “tragedy” of disability with remarkable optimism functions as an inspiration for non-disabled viewers. Examples include Tiny Tim (*A Christmas Carol*), Forrest Gump (*Forrest Gump*), Lenny (*Of Mice and Men*), and Rudy (*Rudy*). Both disability tropes contribute to the circulation of stereotypes about disability within society.

Despite today's educational opportunities for people with disabilities and laws to protect their rights as citizens, on average, people with disabilities in America continue to be underemployed or unemployed, less educated, and less healthy – leading them to experience higher poverty rates than people without disabilities. There appears to be a cyclical pattern of those living in poverty being more likely to acquire a disability and those with a disability being more likely to live in poverty. The association of disability with poverty in the 21st century is a perpetuation of the plight of medieval people with disabilities wandering Europe begging for food and work.

In *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, we see numerous instances of Quasimodo being mocked and bullied because of his disability. Today, it is estimated that eight out of ten children with disabilities are targets of bullying in school. Bullying can take the form of openly mocking a disability or ostracizing a person with a disability. But there are more subtle ways in which people with disabilities are belittled and excluded – the most common being the use of disability insults. For example, the words “retard” and “retarded,” used to refer to any action or person deemed stupid, derives meaning from its linguistic origin as a disability category (mental retardation) that is no longer used. Our language is littered with disability phrases – such as “blind leading the blind,” “What’s the matter – are you deaf?,” “That’s so lame,” and “Are you off your meds?” – that are problematic because of the insinuation that being disabled is bad and undesirable. When we treat persons with disabilities differently because of their disabilities, exclude persons because of their disabilities, or use disability insults, we might ask ourselves how different our disability beliefs really are from those held during medieval times.

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Cripples by Hieronymus Bosch (1465-1516)

THE WOMEN OF *THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME*

By Stacy Wolf

The women in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* play Congregants, Gargoyles, Citizens of Paris, Gypsies, and Prostitutes, and the musical's female lead, Esmeralda, is "a free-spirited Gypsy." A thoughtful director who proactively engages with the challenging gender dynamics in this lively and intense musical can provide a valuable context for conversation and interpretation with the cast, creative team, crew, and the audience.

Before diving into these representations, let's start with some history. Musicals – especially those based on other sources – incorporate many time periods within them. Victor Hugo's novel *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* was published in 1831, and the story takes place in 1482. The animated Disney film was released in 1996, and the licensed musical premiered at La Jolla Playhouse and the Paper Mill Playhouse in the 2014-2015 season. The show now contains traces of all of these historical moments in the characters, story, score, and every other element. Some interpretations of the Disney stage musical might emphasize the 15th century time period to explain, for example, why women are portrayed mostly as sexual or romantic objects. Musical theater, though, is live performance, and audiences understand and feel a musical's effect, purpose, and meaning here (wherever you are) and now. In this way, all musicals, no matter their setting, converse with present-day notions of gender and representation.

Esmeralda's Agency

As *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*'s female lead, who is Esmeralda? What does she do and what does she represent? She enters the show at 30 minutes, which is late for a principal character – typically leads are onstage within the first few minutes of a show – but she quickly becomes central to the story. (It is worth noting that leads Phoebus and Clopin are introduced nearly as late.) We meet her dancing in the square "with colorful flowing scarves," and she is "striking" and "wild." This description seems to set her up as an object of desire, as all the townspeople gaze upon her. But from the start, Esmeralda is self-conscious and thoughtful, well aware of the seductive effect she has on men, and she holds the power of their gaze. She sings, "Hey, soldier boy / I see how you stare / Hey, butcher man / I see you admire / Come gather 'round." Her performance is cannily crafted as she notes the "flash of an ankle / flip of a skirt" and the choreography that will "excite / enflame and inspire." In other words, though the men seem to objectify her, the audience knows that she is in control of her performance.

At every turn in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, Esmeralda makes her own judgments, often contrary to society's norms, and she acts on her own. Her first spoken line, for example, is a retort to Clopin, who warns her to follow rules in Paris. She replies,



Esmeralda dances to the "Rhythm of the Tambourine."
Bradford High School; Kenosha, WI

CONTEXTUALIZING THE "OTHER"

"I'm afraid I've never been very good at following rules, monsieur," and he answers, "So I've heard." In this brief exchange, we learn that she has a reputation for doing exactly what she wants. This moment sets up expectations for her independence and also shows that she confidently knows herself.

So, too, does she show her independence in her friendship with Quasimodo. After initially recoiling at his appearance, she encourages him to participate in the competition to be King of Topsy-Turvy Day, having no idea that he'll be tormented and tortured. Perhaps she is unaware of how the crowd will behave, or perhaps she simply wants him to be included in society. Regardless, she naturally sees him as a person, not as a monster, which underlines her perceptiveness, as well as her kindness and empathy.

Esmeralda behaves bravely, which she demonstrates after the crowd pelts Quasimodo with tomatoes and attacks him, and she intervenes without hesitation. Though Phoebus, the soldier, asks Frollo's permission to protect Quasimodo, Esmeralda just acts, helps Quasimodo, and lets him leave the square.

Esmeralda also exhibits selfless generosity of spirit. Her solo in the cathedral, "God Help the Outcasts," is crucial to the audience's understanding of the character because she sings it when she imagines she is alone and expresses her innermost thoughts. The song separates her from others who pray for love, wealth, or fame, as she sings, "I ask for nothing / I can get by," and prays, "Please help my people." The song reveals Esmeralda as more concerned with others than with herself. It also shows how strongly she identifies with her community of Roma ("Gypsies") – "my people."

As the musical proceeds, Esmeralda becomes increasingly active. She saves Phoebus after Frollo stabs him, and later, when Phoebus and Quasimodo try to save her at the Court of Miracles, it's she who rescues them by intervening before Clopin tries to hang them for intruding. Then, she saves the Gypsies by warning them to leave before Frollo burns the place down. All of these actions show Esmeralda's impulse to take care of others.

Finally, Esmeralda is steadfast in her self-respect, which is repeatedly tested and affirmed with each encounter with Frollo, who cajoles and then threatens her if she doesn't succumb to his seductions, and her last gesture is to spit in his face. The musical presents her refusal and subsequent death as noble acts.

Esmeralda's Romance

Esmeralda's attraction to and affair with Phoebus render her a standard musical theater female lead, even though, in terms of musical theater conventions, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* is unusual in that it's built around three men and one woman rather than one (or two) heterosexual romantic couples. Still, the show contains a romance typical of musical theater as one of its plots.

Esmeralda and Phoebus's relationship does not structure the musical's plot overall, but it nonetheless follows musical theater's classic story: they meet, they seem to be opposites, they don't get along, and then they fall in love and sing together in harmony. Moreover, like many musical theater heroines,



Esmeralda befriends Quasimodo.
Archbishop Stepinac High School;
White Plains, NY

Esmeralda changes her man. Phoebus transforms from an arrogant womanizer to a good, ethical, morally brave person.

Many of Esmeralda and Phoebus's early scenes together are jokey and flirtatious. They fight as equals, and later they love as equals. Like Frollo and Quasimodo, Phoebus is haunted by Esmeralda, but the musical marks him – the brave soldier – as an appropriate mate. When he grabs her and kisses her, she doesn't respond with disgust but with flustered attraction: "I have to go," she says, which in musical theater terms signals to the audience that she'll surely return and fall in love with him. Later, she saves his life and their love duets soon follow.

Esmeralda's attraction to and feelings for Phoebus make her a more complex character, a desiring subject, and a true musical theater heroine. Esmeralda sings the show's beautiful climactic number, "Someday," which combines two kinds of songs: a love duet and an anthem for the future. In this way, she plays both the musical's female romantic lead and its figure of hope.

Male Desire & Female Objectification

Going back to Esmeralda's first entrance, which musical theater scholars analyze as a character's key defining moment, she appears as neither heroine nor symbol of hope. Rather, the audience meets her as seductive performer – one who is not only accustomed to being looked at, but who chooses to be looked at. Esmeralda sings "Rhythm of the Tambourine," a diegetic number (i.e., a performance within the show, or a song that a character is aware she is singing). When it begins, the stage directions read, "*Quasimodo has appeared among the crowd and is captivated by Esmeralda as she dances on the platform. Frollo and Phoebus also watch.*" This tableau demonstrates one of the show's dynamics – the men watch her and want her.

From the start, these very different men – one gentle and open-hearted, one a cad-turned-good man, and one a hypocritical priest – want her because she is a dark, seductive woman. Her desirability is presented as if it naturally emanates from her: the classic archetype of the exoticized seductress. Though Quasimodo's affection for Esmeralda strengthens after she treats him kindly at the Feasts of Fools, and Phoebus's appreciation for her toughness grows as he gets to know her, both men respond to her physical appearance first, which is conveyed in the middle section of "Rhythm of the Tambourine."

The lyrics of their "private thoughts" underline the similarities and differences among the three men. While all fetishize Esmeralda, their desire plays out differently, which reveals much about them (though little about her). Each in turn sings, "This girl ... who is she?" To Frollo, "She dances like the devil himself," and to Quasimodo, she looks like "an angel." Phoebus expresses both views: "She dances like an angel / But with such fire."

In this song, the innocent and sympathetic Quasimodo and the brave solider Phoebus are as entranced by Esmeralda as is the lecherous Frollo. Here, and in what follows, the musical employs the objectification of Esmeralda to reveal the essential nature of each man through his desire for her and its degree of appropriateness: less (Frollo), more (Quasimodo), and most (Phoebus).



Esmeralda comforts the injured Phoebus as Quasimodo looks on.
Archbishop Stepinac High School;
White Plains, NY

CONTEXTUALIZING THE "OTHER"

In this opening, then, Esmeralda occupies the role of the seductress. Soon, though, she reveals her kind heart and repeatedly sacrifices herself for others, a course of action that ultimately leads to her death. Over the course of the show, she develops into a unique manifestation of classic female archetypes in Western culture: the union of the two extremes of angel/devil or virgin/prostitute. Gender studies scholars trace this character type back to Mary Magdalene, and her contemporary manifestation is the "hooker with a heart of gold." (Importantly, a woman need not be a prostitute to signify that role; she only needs to act in a somewhat "sexual" way in public.)

As the musical proceeds, Esmeralda's kindness, faith, and idealism expand the angel side of the binary. Moreover, her refusal to succumb to Frollo's advances means that she "nobly" rises above her station. These positive qualities cut both ways; Esmeralda is valued as a good character in a terrible world, but she reinforces the trope of women as guardians of goodness. The character is caught in these binaries and dies a martyr at the end.

Other Women in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*

The other women in the show, because they are less developed characters and have less stage time than Esmeralda, seem to be more overtly sexualized; but some complexity is there, too, for actors to play with. Florika, for example, has two purposes. First, she functions as a plot device to show Frollo's antipathy toward sex. Second, and importantly, she and Jehan have a lasting relationship, and their child, Quasimodo, is born of their love. Florika willingly seduces Frollo but it's meant to be in fun, as she is committed to his brother. The Madam is also linked to sex but she defends her brothel and the women who work there.

Esmeralda & Women in Musical Theater History

Every character in a musical converses with characters in past musicals (whether or not it's conscious on the part of the creators). Finding resonances with other women in the musical theater canon allows us to place Esmeralda in a broader historical and theatrical context, noticing how she is like those figures and how she is unique. This perspective gives actors and audiences a richer understanding of her.

Most clearly, Esmeralda resembles the "feisty," impoverished women in other historically-based musicals like Nancy in *Oliver!* (which premiered in 1963), Aldonza in *Man of La Mancha* (1965), and Fantine in *Les Misérables* (1980). These women are, or are assumed to be, prostitutes because they are poor, but they're actually good, generous, even angelic – the "hooker-with-a-heart-of-gold" figure. They give voice to those who suffer and usually sing some of the best songs in the show, but they're often physically abused or killed.

Esmeralda also echoes the many women in musicals who buck tradition or who refuse to obey those in power, typically because they are perceptive and see the truth in people, both good and bad. Examples include Maria in *The Sound of Music* (1959); Belle in Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* (1994), whose story has many parallels with *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*; and Elphaba in *Wicked* (2003), who also suffers scapegoating ordered by a corrupt, powerful man. These women change the people around them, especially the men whom they reform, tame, or humanize.



Frollo propositions Esmeralda.
Jesuit High School; Portland, OR

As a charismatic performer, she is also like the eponymous *Sweet Charity* (1965), Sally Bowles in *Cabaret* (1966), and Roxy Hart or Velma Kelly in *Chicago* (1975). Finally, she is the dark, exotic, and sexy woman, recalling Anita in *West Side Story* (1957), Mimi in *Rent* (1996), and Maria Reynolds in *Hamilton* (2015). Though judged as “bad” at some point in the story, these roles often offer the best acting, singing, and dancing opportunities for female performers.

Gender and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*: Some Practical Tips

Musical theater scholars often analyze characters from different angles to capture the complexity of a character who is rendered on the page (in the libretto) but comes to life in an actor’s embodied and envoiced performance. We first ask, What does this character do in the show in terms of singing or dancing or acting? Then, What is this character’s purpose in the story and what does she represent? Finally, we ask, What must an actor do to portray this character with honesty and conviction?

Directors of this show and other musicals – perhaps especially for high school productions – might take pause at the prospect of asking young women to play prostitutes. Although acting is pretending, requiring actors to embody stereotypical characters and to portray them with commitment is not a neutral artistic act.

Without taking any of the fun out of the process, directors can use the production as an opportunity for dialogue with actors and audience. First, identify how the text presents ideas of gender. During rehearsals, the cast, creative team, and crew can discuss the musical’s representations of men and women and stay aware of how gender functions in the show (and in the rehearsal room). Second, coach actors to make performance choices that don’t compromise the intention or change the meaning of the text but that stress women’s strength and intelligence. For Esmeralda, look for opportunities to play between the polarities of good and evil. For the other female characters, perhaps stress that the actors are putting on and taking off characters, which their multiple roles as Congregants support. Production teams also can create a larger context for the show’s representation of women, whether in lobby displays and program notes, pre-show talks, or post-show discussions.

The musical theater canon offers 21st-century directors no shortage of challenges and rewards. Musicals prompt us to celebrate the undeniable richness and thrill of the art form at the same time they dare us to take seriously the profound effect representation can have on real-life attitudes and behaviors. How do we provide actors of all genders significant artistic opportunities and encourage play with sensitivity and respect? How do we support the pure pleasure of putting on a show while acknowledging discomfort around both intentional and unintentional effects of gender stereotypes? Your production of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* provides a vital opportunity to explore these questions with your company and audiences.

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ROMA: THEN & NOW

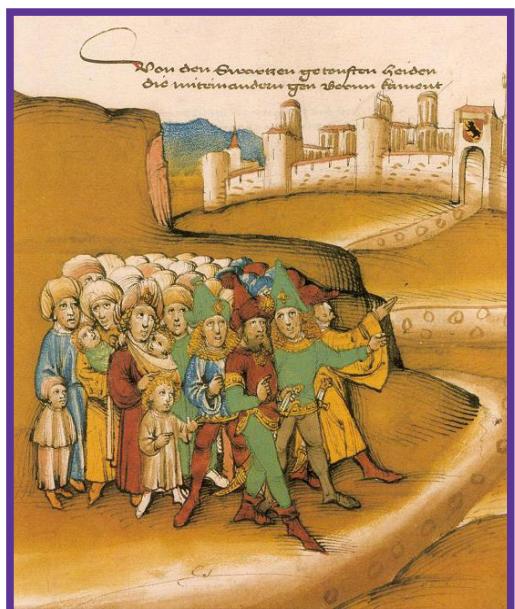
By Ronald Lee

Roma, or "Gypsies," as they are often referred to, have a prominent presence in both Victor Hugo's epic novel and Disney's new musical adaptation of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Roma are a people of rich and expansive history who were and still are persecuted today, and who are often stereotyped in popular culture. Developing an understanding of Romani history, culture, and language – and how they are represented in Hugo's tale – will help you and your cast to portray Esmeralda, Clopin, and other Gypsies with respect and complexity.

Origins of the Roma

The millennium-long history of the nomadic Roma originated in the Punjab region of India in the early 11th century CE when the Muslim Ghaznavid Empire conquered this region. The Ghaznavids forcibly recruited Hindu soldiers along with their lower-caste weapon smiths, animal herders, water and salt carriers, as well as all their wives and children. This army was sent to garrison the Khorasan region in Persia (now Iran) where the Seljuk Turks invaded and defeated the Ghaznavids in 1040. The surviving Hindu troops and camp followers fled west into Armenia where, in 1067, the Seljuks invaded, forcing them to flee further west into the Christian city of Byzantium. Those left behind lost touch with the rest of their people and became the Armenian Roma called Lom.

In 1071 the Seljuk Turks defeated the Byzantine Greeks and established the Sultanate of Roum; it was here that the refugee Hindus became the Roma. Later, they began to migrate out of Roum and were documented in Greece in the 13th century. At that time, the Ottomans who replaced the Seljuks began expanding into the Balkans, finally capturing Constantinople in 1453. The Roma who were already in Greece fled from the Turks and entered Europe in what is known as the first wave of Roma migration.



"First arrival of Gypsies outside the city of Berne, described as *getoufte heiden* (baptized heathens)"
by Diebold Schilling (1485)

Roma in the 15th Century & in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*

When, in 1831, Victor Hugo attempted to describe Roma as they were in 1482 Paris at the Feast of Fools, there would have been second-generation Romani adults in France speaking fluent French and fully acquainted with the customs and geography of the country.

Hugo aptly depicted these Roma as outcasts. Dom Claude Frollo's obsession with Esmeralda is a product of the doctrine of the medieval Christian Church that claimed a man's attraction to a woman was sinful and attributed to Satan, who used women's beauty to distract men from their Christian virtues. So, the object of this attraction, the female "temptress," had to be destroyed. This had little to do with the fact that Esmeralda was Romani, though Frollo's false charges of "Gypsy sorcery" allowed him, via permission from King Louis XI (who reigned 1461-83), to act as he saw fit.

Originally, Roma had been mistakenly identified as Christian pilgrims who had fled the Muslim invasion of Egypt. They

THE ROMANI LANGUAGE & TERMINOLOGY

The various languages and dialects spoken by the original Hindu exiles merged into one military *lingua franca* (or bridge language) that was commonly used by all Roma. This, with an admixture of Persian, Greek, Armenian, and other words borrowed from different languages became the proto-Romani language which, in its many dialects, is what Roma speak today. Below are some terms to help you identify Roma in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*:

- **Gypsy:** a contraction of “Egyptian” (the 16th century English name for Roma when they arrived in Britain), which came into use in the 17th century. Considered a racial slur by most Roma, it is no longer acceptable except when referring to quotes from literature, legal statutes, etc.
- **Roma** (noun): a group of, or all, Romani people
- **Romani** (adj): of or relating to the Romani people or their language
- **romni:** a married Romani woman
- **rom:** a married Romani man
- **shey:** an unmarried Romani girl or young woman, e.g., Esmeralda
- **shav:** an unmarried Romani boy or young man
- **sherutno:** a Romani chieftain or leader, e.g., Clopin
- **Bohémiens:** the French term to describe Roma from Bohemia (now the Czech Republic) during the time of the Feast of Fools
- **Gitans:** the French term to describe Roma in France during the 18th century (when Hugo was writing his novel); at this time, many educated people saw Roma as “noble savages,” or the last surviving remnants of what they viewed to be unspoiled primitives during the expanding and dehumanizing Industrial Revolution.

The terminology that applies to one group in one country does not necessarily apply to all Roma elsewhere. Roma are not a homogenous culture and are known by different names around the world: Romanichals in the U.K.; Manouche in France; Kaale in Finland; Cales in Spain; and *Sinti*, which derives from the German *reisende* (meaning “traveler”), are the Romani people who have lived in the German speaking regions since the 15th century.

CONTEXTUALIZING THE "OTHER"



A Gipsy Family by an unknown artist (1552)

to defile others. Since prostitutes at that time would have been considered defiling agents under Romani purity rules, Roma would never have entered a brothel – and so Hugo took an artistic liberty with Madam's hideaway. Would a "Gypsy witch" have been burned at the stake? Witchcraft trials in France took place between 1550 and 1682, much later than the reign of Louis XI. Did Roma have relations with non-Roma like Florika had with Jehan, or fall in love like Phoebus and Esmeralda? It's unlikely, but not impossible. At that time, outsiders were seen by Roma as defiling the Romani environment and were to be avoided except for business purposes.

In addition to spies and cannibals, Roma were also falsely accused of spreading the plagues of the era and were reputed to steal children, poison cattle, and commit widespread theft, while Romani women were assumed to practice sorcery. Kings and emperors began to banish Roma from their territories under pain of death or slavery in the galleys. In the United Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia (which later became Romania), Roma were enslaved from the 15th century until the emancipation in 1856. Strenuous efforts were made in many countries to force Roma to settle and abandon their culture and language.

In the 15th century, Roma like Clopin and Esmeralda would have been illiterate like most of the common people. Romani men were musicians, acrobats, artisans, and horse traders, while women like Esmeralda were dancers, fortune tellers, herbalists, and midwives; many Roma families made alliances with the landowning nobility with whom their skills were in demand. Written evidence indicates that Roma camped on the borders of countries so as to move back and forth from one to the other as persecutions waxed and waned. They also camped in forests, only visiting surrounding villages to sell their handmade items, to tell fortunes, to entertain at local weddings, and to attend fairs and festivals like the Feast of Fools. Illustrations from this period show women wearing a type of turban, and they appear to be wrapped in a kind of blanket, or *kapa*. Men wore the same clothing as non-Romani gentlemen or soldiers but with their own embellishments. It's easy to imagine Clopin dressed like an elegant French gentleman, his fingers adorned with gold rings. Romani beggars, of course, would wear rags to inspire pity and generosity.

As far as "Gypsy" theft as described in the story: Paris was full of beggars and petty criminals long before the Roma arrived. Though some Roma may have joined their ranks, Romani pickpockets, as described by the Gentleman in Scene 2, did not exist at this time (pockets were invented in the 17th century). Men carried their coins in purses over their shoulders, and cutpurses, as they were known then, worked in pairs. A woman would distract the victim while her male partner cut the purse straps and made off with the loot. Roma, however, have a saying as far as theft is concerned: "Better to steal with the head than with the hands," which means that business transactions where *caveat emptor* or "buyer beware." Thieves,

were given alms by the monasteries and churches but by the end of the 15th century, the Catholic Church had turned on them, declaring them to be heretics. The Church also claimed that Roma in Jerusalem had made the nails used to crucify Jesus though Roma were still in India at the time of crucifixion.

Roma were also declared to be Turkish spies and cannibals, even though this would be against the Romani code of defilement. Roma have a Hindu concept of cleanliness alien to Europeans: *vuzho*, meaning "clean;" *melalo*, "dirty;" and *mahrime*, "defiled," or "impure." Anyone who comes into contact with a *mahrime* substance is defiled and able

especially Roma, were usually hung in the 15th century, and as the Romani adage goes, "O Rom chorel la khainya, o Gadjо chorel e ferma" or, "The Romani man steals a chicken; the non-Romani man steals the farm."

Roma Today

As time passed, the savage persecutions gradually subsided. In the Ottoman Empire, Roma lived unbothered in settlements called *sandjuks*, and they traveled unhindered in the Russian Czarist Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire until those empires disintegrated after World War I. After 1856, when Romani slavery was abolished in Moldavia and Wallachia, the second wave of Roma migrated from the Balkans into central and Western Europe and as far as North and South America to become the modern Romani populations of the Americas. During World War II, Roma and Sinti were victims of Nazi genocide alongside the Jewish people; it is estimated that up to 220,000 Roma and Sinti were murdered in Auschwitz and other death camps. Today, rising persecution and undeclared apartheid in central and eastern Europe are forcing the third wave of Romani migrants to seek safety and a better future for their children as refugees in the free countries outside of former Communist Europe.

Since 1971, Roma have been considered to be a worldwide nation without a country, with a flag – blue above green with a red wheel in the center – and an anthem, "*Djelem Djelem*." The Romani people range from the uneducated living in settlements in eastern Europe without electricity or running water to successful professionals and business people. In the former Communist countries of central and eastern Europe, Romani children are often wrongly sent to schools for those with learning disabilities. When these children are brought to western Europe, Canada, or the U.S., they have no trouble fitting into the regular school systems or graduating from university. Their parents who were claimed by European demagogues to be "work shy," "criminals," and "welfare moochers" become successful entrepreneurs, employees, or skilled tradespeople in the Americas.

In April of 2017, Harvard University hosted an international conference of Romani academics and artists, and there have been many other such gatherings around the world. Each May, in Sebastopol, California, there is a Romani celebration open to the public called the Herdeljezi Roma Festival attended by Romani music and dance groups. There is also a World Roma Festival every August in Prague called Khamoro, and Romani artists are well-represented on the international popular music scene.

Despite all of this, Romani children continue to be bullied at school, while petty crimes committed by Roma are plastered across the newspapers and the Internet. No one reports when a Romani person obtains a Ph.D. and starts their own business and creates employment or gives a lecture at Harvard or Oxford; and when a little blond girl was seen with a Romani family in Greece she was immediately reported to have been "stolen by the Gypsies" even though her DNA later identified her as the child of Romani parents. Even today, Roma still hear, "Oh, I didn't know you were a Gypsy. I'd better watch my wallet!" We must all work to combat these misconceptions and stereotypes that are still far too common in the 21st century.

Ronald Lee is a Canadian-Romani author, lecturer, and advocate for the Roma. He is a founding member of the Roma Community Centre in Toronto, taught a seminar on the Roma at University of Toronto, and holds an honorary degree from Queens University for his civil rights work.



Gypsy Girl by Boccaccio Boccaccino
(1516-18)

DRAMATURGY

There's a lot more to *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* than what you see onstage each night. This chapter offers some insight into the show, such as helpful information on medieval France and words and historical references that may be unfamiliar to you and your cast. While some professional theaters have dramaturgs on staff to explain foreign words or details in a script, actors who do their own character, period, and text research are always one step ahead; and such cultural explorations can be a very helpful to an actor's creative process.

Perhaps there is one cast or production member who wants to take on the role of dramaturg – making a more comprehensive glossary complete with places (e.g., the Court of Miracles) and historical information about the medieval period (How would citizens of Paris have dressed? What would they be eating and drinking in a tavern? What were the streets of Paris like – how did people get around? What types of jobs did citizens have?). They could also create and moderate an online forum for the cast and designers to share their own relevant research. The more your cast and creative team understand their characters and the world of the play, the better their portrayals and designs will be!

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The following pages offer some historical insight into the world of the play – specifically, Notre Dame Cathedral and Catholicism – to get your actors or dramaturg(s) started on their own research. Life was exceedingly difficult in 15th century Europe – full of disease and brutal battles – so encourage your cast to dig deep into additional topics to obtain an appreciation for the harshness of medieval life. Such subjects might include: medieval soldiers, Paris in 15th century, sanctuary, and the Feast of Fools. For information on Roma (or “Gypsies”), as well as disability in the Middle Ages, refer to the Contextualizing the “Other” chapter of this handbook (pp. 62-75). More sources on a variety of topics can be found in the next chapter, Resources.

Notre Dame Cathedral

The Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, widely considered one of the finest examples of Gothic architecture in France and in Europe, was built on the ruins of two other churches and is the seat of the archbishop of Paris. The first stone was laid by Pope Alexander III in 1163, and construction continued until the mid-13th century, eventually adding elements including the nave, choir, and chapels.

The cathedral's thin walls (which were a popular style at the time) were redesigned to be higher than planned, causing stress fractures. In response, architects built arched exterior supports around the walls, and thus Notre Dame became one of the first buildings in the world to use flying buttresses. Many of the cathedral's sculptures and stained glass windows depict a strong influence of naturalism, giving them a more secular look than earlier Romanesque architecture.

In the 16th century, rioting Huguenots vandalized and changed much of the contents of the cathedral, removing many exterior features which they considered idolatrous and destroying tombs and stained glass windows. During the French Revolution at the end of the 18th century, the cathedral suffered further desecration: It was converted into a storage warehouse for food and the heads of many statues were removed. These events led to an extensive restoration that began in 1844 under the supervision of the famous architect Eugène Viollet-le-Duc who believed that restoring a building meant more than merely



Photograph of Notre Dame by Édouard Baldus (c. 1860)

fixing or recreating it; his restoration built Notre Dame to a fuller state than it had ever existed in before. It was Viollet-le-Duc who added the central spire to the cathedral and a new series of statues – or chimeras, as he called them – for the galleries surrounding both towers.

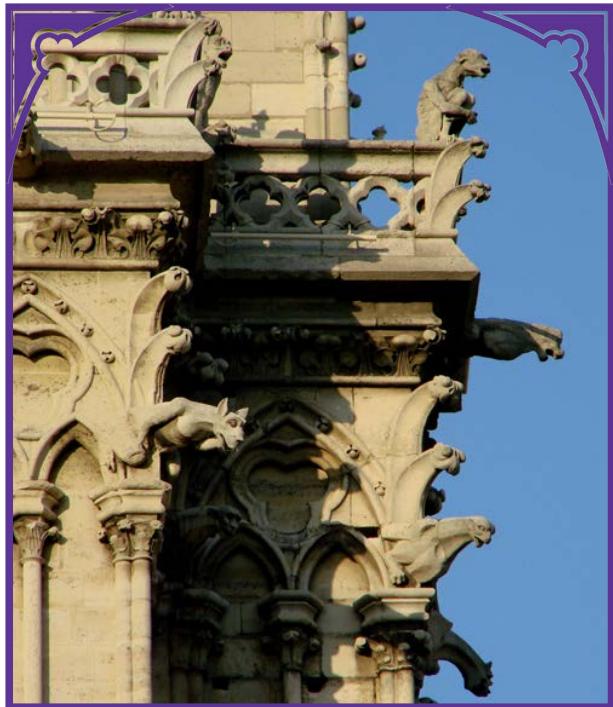
The Gargoyles

On Catholic churches, gargoyles originally were used to convey the concept of evil to a congregation that was almost entirely illiterate, in the same way stained glass images of saints and martyrs taught stories of the Bible. Gargoyles also are believed, superstitiously, to scare away evil spirits; facing away from the building, they supposedly keep goodness and purity inside the walls of the church.

By the 19th century restoration, Notre Dame's original gargoyles had largely crumbled and fallen off the building. Eugène Viollet-le-Duc replaced these structures with chimeras, and though they quickly became symbols of Gothic representation, these statues are neither Gothic or gargoyles.

Common cathedral fixtures include:

- Chimera: In Greek mythology, this is a creature with a lion's head, goat's body, and dragon's tail. On Notre Dame, it is a sculpture that is purely decorative and generally depicts a monster or other mythical beast – a demon watching over the city of Paris. Types of chimeras on Notre Dame Cathedral include:
 - Wyvern: a winged, two-legged dragon with a barbed tail
 - Stryga: Greek for “bird of the night” and often called the “Spitting Gargoyle,” this is one of the most famous external statues on the cathedral.
- Gargoyles: carved gutters that draw rainwater away from the walls of the cathedral.



Viollet-le-Duc's chimera and gargoyles look out from Notre Dame (2008).

The Bells

Notre Dame's bells are some of the most famous in Europe. During the French Revolution, the originals were melted down and turned into cannons, with the exception of Emmanuel, the great 13-ton bell in the south tower. In 1856, these were replaced with bells made of cheap metal which were never tuned accurately to one another, making for rather discordant sounds. In 2013, on Notre Dame's 850th anniversary, nine new bells, all named after religious figures – plus Emmanuel! – pealed out from the cathedral in beautiful harmony.

Traditionally, the bells were rung by hand, but electric motors were installed in the early 20th century. These bells denote the hours of the day, the beginning of important liturgical services (such as Christmas and Easter), and key events at the church (such as a visit from the Pope or the coronation of a French king). They were rung to denote the liberation of Paris after both World Wars and as a sign of unity on September 12, 2001.

Catholicism

Catholicism is the central sect of Christianity, begun by the followers of Jesus Christ in the first century. Catholics believe in the Trinity of God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) and the direct and continuous organization of the Church as founded by Jesus and entrusted to Saint Peter, the first Pope. Catholics also believe that each person is created in the image and likeness of God and therefore should be protected and cared for as if they were Jesus himself.

During the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church was the center of life for most Europeans, becoming the state religion of France in 511. From 1364 to 1825, the king was crowned by the clergy and many churches remained outside of royal jurisdiction.

The majority of the medieval population was illiterate, so the Church taught its catechism pictorially, with the lives of Jesus and the saints depicted through sculptures, paintings, and stained glass windows. Mystery plays – biblical stories enacted by members of the faithful, often presented outdoors on mobile stages called pageant wagons – were another teaching tool. The presentations reached their height of popularity in the 1400s.

Medieval Archdeacons

The highest diocesan position below the bishop, the archdeacon acted as lead deacon in the performance of Mass at the cathedral church and as the bishop's vicar in councils and church visitations. Archdeacons administered church property, were associated with a specific episcopal city, and resided in their cathedral. During the 12th century, the archdeacon's power increased tremendously. It was by his authority that churches were restored or parishes were defined. He had his own ecclesiastical courts, at which he would act as premier judge, and could levy taxes. In the 13th century, the bishops began appointing vicar generals and auxiliary bishops, thus lessening the need for archdeacons. In 1553, the archdeacons were stripped of power and essentially removed from the Church in all but name. The office does not exist in modern Roman Catholicism.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH HIERARCHY

