

"This is all I have lived for!"

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Jason Dowies will sing "This is all I have lived for!" as he makes his debut on the [Summer Lyric Theatre](#) stage at Tulane University in the lead role of Jean Valjean in *Les Misérables*, opening on June 19.



Newcomer Jason Dowies, right, plays Jean Valjean with Colby McCurdy as Javert in *Les Misérables* on the Summer Lyric Theatre stage June 19-22. (Photo by Michael Palumbo)

Based on Victor Hugo's classic novel and set in 19th-century France, *Les Misérables* is an epic and uplifting story about the survival of the human spirit. The story focuses on Jean Valjean, who has spent 19 years on a chain gang after stealing a loaf of bread. He decides to start his life anew, adopting a prostitute's daughter, all the while being pursued by a police inspector, Javert.

Of the role of Jean Valjean, Dowies says, "I can identify with the role ? struggling, being misunderstood, and, there's the daughter aspect." Dowies has a daughter who is 14.

B. Michael Howard, artistic director of Summer Lyric Theatre and Tulane music professor, who directs the production, knew immediately during the auditions for the play that Dowies was perfect for the role.

"After only 12 measures of his audition song, I knew that he was what I was looking for," says Howard.

Dowies says about the audition, "I was scared to death. This is one of the more challenging roles there is, requiring a lot of vocal stamina. But, if you're not nervous, you're not doing it right."

Dowies has played Jean Valjean before: in Theatre Baton Rouge's production of *Les Misérables* last summer. His other Louisiana stage credits include Stone in *City of Angels* and John Wilkes Booth in *Assassins*. He also was recognized with a Beaux Arts Award for Best Supporting Actor in a Musical for his portrayal of Lt. Joe Cable in *South Pacific*. His film credits include parts in *Bonnie and Clyde* and

Cryptid: The Swamp Beast, and he continues to audition for Hollywood South movies filming in Louisiana.