

Claude-Michel Schonberg

"Wedding Chorale/Beggars At The Feast"

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WEDDING CHORALE

(Marius and Cosette lead a wedding procession)

CHORUS

Ring out the bells
Upon this day of days!

May all the angels
Of the Lord above

In jubilation
Sing their songs of praise!

And crown this
Blessed time with
Peace and love.

(The procession becomes a dancing celebration. A waltz is played)

MAJOR DOMO

The Baron and Baroness de Thénard wish to pay
their respects to the groom!

THENARDIER

I forget where we met
Was it not at the Chateau Lafarge
Where the Duke did that puke
Down the Duchess's de-coll-etage?

MARIUS

No, 'Baron de Thénard'
The circles I move in are humbler by far.
Go away, Thénardier!
Do you think I don't know who you are?

MME. THENARDIER

He's not fooled. Told you so.
Show M'sieur what you've come here to show.

Tell the boy what you know!

(Applause from the dancers as the waltz finishes)

MARIUS

When I look at you, I remember Eponine.
She was more than you deserved, who gave her birth
But now she is with God and happier, I hope,
Than here on earth!
The waltz starts up again.

THENARDIER

So it goes, heaven knows
Life has dealt me some terrible blows.

MME. THENARDIER

You've got cash and a heart
You could give us a bit of a start!
We can prove, plain as ink
Your bride's father is not what you think.

THENARDIER

There's a tale I could tell

MME. THENARDIER

Information we're willing to sell...

THENARDIER

There's a man that he slew
I saw the corpse clear as I'm seeing you!
What I tell you is true!

MME. THENARDIER

Pity to disturb you at a feast like this
But five hundred francs surely wouldn't come amiss.

MARIUS

In God's name say what you have to say.

THENARDIER

But first you pay!
What I saw, clear as light,
Jean Valjean in the sewers that night.
Had this corpse on his back
Hanging there like a bloody great sack.
I was there, never fear.
Even found me this fine souvenir.

(Thenardier shows Marius a ring)

MARIUS

I know this! This was mine!
This is surely some heavenly sign!

THENARDIER

One thing more, mark this well
It was the night the barricades fell.

MARIUS

Then it's true. Then I'm right.
Jean Valjean was my savior that night!

(Marius punches Thénardier and then throws money
at him)

As for you, take this too!
God forgive the things that we do.
Come my love, come Cosette,
This day's blessings are not over yet!

(Marius and Cosette leave)

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BEGGARS AT THE FEAST

THENARDIER

Ain't it a laugh
Ain't it a treat?
Hob-nobbin' here
Among the elite?
Here comes a prince
There goes a Jew.
This one's a queer
But what can you do?
Paris at my feet
Paris in the dust
And here's me breaking bread
With the upper crust!

Beggar at the feast!
Master of the dance!
Life is easy pickings
If you grab your chance.
Everywhere you go
Law-abiding folk
Doing what is decent
But they're mostly broke!
Singing to the Lord on Sundays
Praying for the gifts He'll send.

M. & MME. THENARDIER

But we're the ones who take it
We're the ones who make it in the end!
Watch the buggers dance
Watch 'em till they drop
Keep your wits about you
And you stand on top!
Masters of the land
Always get our share
Clear away the barricades
And we're still there!
We know where the wind is blowing
Money is the stuff we smell.
And when we're rich as Croesus
Jesus! Won't we see you all in hell!

(Valjean is alone in the shadows, with a bare wooden cross for company)

VALJEAN

Alone I wait in the shadows
I count the hours till I can sleep
I dreamed a dream Cosette stood by
It made her weep to know I die.
Alone at the end of the day
Upon this wedding night I pray
Take these children, my Lord, to thy embrace
And show them grace.

God on high
Hear my prayer
Take me now
To thy care
Where You are
Let me be
Take me now
Take me there
Bring me home
Bring me home.

(Fantine's spirit appears to Valjean)

FANTINE

M'sieur, I bless your name
M'sieur, lay down your burden
You raised my child in love
And you will be with god.

VALJEAN(interjecting)

I am ready, Fantine
At the end of my days
She's the best of my life.

(Marius and Cosette rush into the room; they do not see Fantine)

COSETTE

Papa, Papa, I do not understand!
Are you alright? They said you'd gone away.

VALJEAN

Cosette, my child, am I forgiven now?
Thank God, thank God, I've lived to see this day.

MARIUS

It's you who must forgive a thoughtless fool
It's you who must forgive a thankless man
It's thanks to you that I am living
And again I lay down my life at your feet.

Cosette, your father is a saint.
When they wounded me
He took me from the barricade
Carried like a babe
And brought me home to you!

VALJEAN(to Cosette)

Now you are here
Again beside me
Now I can die in peace
For now my life is blessed...

COSETTE

You will live, Papa, you're going to live
It's too soon, too soon to say goodbye!

VALJEAN

Yes, Cosette, forbid me now to die
I'll obey,
I will try.
On this page
I write my last confession.
Read it well
When I at last am sleeping.
It's the story
Of those who always loved you.
Your mother gave her life for you
Then gave you to my keeping.

(The other spirits, including Eponine appear)

FANTINE

Come with me

Where chains will never bind you
All your grief
At last, at last behind you.
Lord in Heaven,
Look down on him in mercy.

VALJEAN
Forgive me all my trespasses
And take me to your glory.

FANTINE & EPONINE
Take my hand
And lead me to salvation.
Take my love,
For love is everlasting.

VALJEAN, FANTINE & EPONINE
And remember
The truth that once was spoken
To love another person
Is to see the face of God!

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