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## Ending on a high note 'Les Miserables' slated as last show for LMS auditorium

By Chalan Harper  
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For the last nine years, CenterStage Theatre Company faithful have grown older with the Louisville Middle School auditorium that will be torn down early this summer to make way for new renovations to the school.

As a final hurrah, director Amy Austin and her troupe of 94 local students will send the auditorium off with a production of 'Les Miserables,' premiering on Friday, April 18.

The subject of renovating the school has come under scrutiny by local residents in the months since Principal Adam Fels and his team unveiled design plans that include tearing out the facade on the historic building.

But for CenterStage actors like Monarch High School senior Michael Ciaglo, who starred in the theatre company's first production of 'Sneakers' in 1999, he has grown up in the company and also in the auditorium.

Back then, Ciaglo said, the company was small, with 35 kids starring in the show and a few small items — such as a couple of flats, a bench, chalkboard and a chain-link fence — for sets.

For 'Les Mis,' as it's referred to by the actors and actresses, the production (much like the auditorium's notoriety as of late) has become much, much bigger.

This production has two casts of 47 kids, ranging from middle school to high school age

Austin said the company has performed nine productions at LMS, and many of those with the 15 senior students that will graduate this year and leave CenterStage behind.

"They do such amazing things," Austin said of the student actors.



CenterStage Theatre Company director Amy Austin demonstrates dying for the final scene of 'Les Miserables,' Monday, April 14, at the Louisville Middle School Auditorium. The production will be the last in that location until after the auditorium is renovated early this summer. **Colorado Hometown Newspapers/Chalan Harper**

But what a production to end on, as ‘Les Mis’ is one of the top-grossing and longest running musicals in theatre history — and certainly one Austin is excited to tackle.

“It just feels like such an honor to be the ones to have the final, celebratory show in here,” Austin said.

What will happen after the renovations are complete is still unclear, as the new auditorium will likely draw many new users, and because CenterStage has no permanent rehearsal space, Austin said she hopes to continue to put on productions in the new theater.

For now, Austin, actors, her co-directors, and all the stage help have a lot to prepare for — a final farewell to the LMS auditorium that has stood for decades and seen any number of actors, plays and audiences.

It’s no easy task, but Austin and her team aren’t daunted. In fact, they’re having all the fun in the world.

“OK, I don’t care what else you do, just die behind the curtain!” Austin calls to the laughing actors practicing the production’s final scenes.

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