



A DRAWN LEADER: The original stage costume for Javert, played in the film by Russell Crowe, top centre

HAPPY DAYS FOR LES MISERABLES

A musical. Two words. One syllable each ... you would never get further than this in Charades without everyone shouting the answer: Les Mis.

The world's longest-running musical, *Les Misérables* has been seen by more than 60 million people in more than 40 countries since it opened in London in 1985 and the hit film version, starring Anne Hathaway, Hugh Jackman and Russell Crowe, has already won four Baftas and is in the running for eight Oscars tonight.

With its trademark wide-eyed urchin peering forlornly from countless posters, the stage version is a phenomenon that would have astonished Victor Hugo, whose original story was first published in 1862.

Now Carlton Books have produced a lavish tribute, *Les Misérables: From Stage To Screen*, by Benedict Nightingale and Martyn Palmer (£30 ↗ £25 inc p&p). This large-format book has behind-the-scenes shots, background stories and facsimiles of posters, theatre tickets and other memorabilia to delight fans.



FULL CRY: Geronimo Rauch, below, plays Valjean in the London stage version. Below left: The musical's programme

PAPERBACKS



Fifty Years In The Fiction Factory
by Julia Jones
Golden Duck £17.99
☎ £15.99 inc p&p
★★★★★

Herbert Allingham was one of Britain's most prolific and popular authors a century ago, but you will never have heard of him. The reason is that he wrote stories anonymously for the weekly magazines so common in his day and none was ever reprinted in book form. He would have been forgotten had his daughters, one of whom was the author Margery Allingham, not preserved his work. Julia Jones has sifted through this archive and succeeded brilliantly in bringing to life both Allingham and the literary form in which he excelled.



Johnson's Life Of London
by Boris Johnson
Harper Press £8.99
☎ £8.49 inc p&p
★★★★★

In between running one of the world's great cities, getting stuck on a zip wire and rousing delirious crowds to a state of pre-Olympic frenzy, Boris Johnson found time to write this tribute to London. How was he able to do it and, more to the point, how was he able to do it so well? Johnson is fascinating because he is so fascinated by his diverse array of subjects, who include his namesake Samuel Johnson, the 17th Century scientist Robert Hooke and Keith Richards. Johnson writes about them all with wit and generosity.

Simon Shaw



David Rose

Inside the mind of the martyrs

The Myth of Martyrdom

by Adam Lankford
Palgrave
Macmillan £16.99
☎ £14.99 inc p&p
★★★★★

Although suicide bombing dates back at least as far as the Russian nihilists of the late 19th Century, it is only in the past 30 years that it has transformed both terrorism and security. In the Eighties, the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, followed shortly by the Palestinian group Hamas, inaugurated a new and bloody era that shows little sign of abating.

The challenges this poses are obvious. The Provisional IRA was capable of mayhem but those who planted its explosives in pubs, cars and shopping centres always left themselves a way out – and often failed as a result. This has not been the case more recently: had the 9/11 attackers tried to parachute from their planes before they hit their targets, they would not have been likely to succeed.

Journalistic and academic accounts of this shift have usually, as Professor Adam Lankford points out, accepted the characterisation of such killers put out by their leaders as martyrs driven by ideological zeal and hatred of their victims.

This, he suggests, is woefully mistaken. Terrorist organisations want us to think their members are willing to die because of the strength of their beliefs for very simple reasons: it makes them more frightening, so we are more

likely to address their grievances. In fact, writes Lankford, most suicide terrorists are suicidal anyway, for reasons that have nothing to do with political commitment. They are usually depressed and socially isolated, and their organisations 'have often deliberately targeted unstable individuals because they are consistently easier to exploit'.

According to Lankford, this applies to some of the most notorious suicide murderers: Mohamed Atta, leader of the 9/11 group, for example. His father was emotionally abusive, rendering his childhood miserable and leaving him unable to form adult relationships. At 24, nine years before the attacks, he already felt desperate that he hadn't married, a situation he never remedied.

Likewise Major Nidal Hassan, who killed 13 and wounded 31 at the Fort Hood military base in Texas in 2009. He was failing in his career, suffering racial prejudice and arousing concerns among his superiors that he might well be 'psychotic'.

Hassan knew that in Islam, lone suicide was a great sin, which would condemn him to eternal torment. But as he wrote on an internet forum weeks before his death, martyrdom would be very different: if he killed others when he killed himself, he could both escape his own problems and save his soul.

Similar observations can be



DEADLY: Mohamed Atta was a disturbed man even before 9/11

made in many less well-known cases, such as those of two unmarried Palestinian teenagers who were pregnant – a terrible humiliation for their families – when they blew themselves up.

Lankford compares suicide terrorists to the mass shooters who have wreaked such havoc in America, most recently at Newtown, Connecticut, and finds they have much in common.

However, he does not neglect the evil phenomenon of 'coerced suicide terrorism': the youths, usually from poor families, kidnapped or suborned by the Taliban in Pakistan and Afghanistan, brutally abused by their captors, and warned that if they do not fulfil their missions, their parents will suffer reprisals.

Lankford doesn't have a pat solution to suicide terrorism, but he does draw attention to new, quick psychometric tests which purport to spot those with suicidal tendencies and could be a useful tool in places such as airports.

There is a possible pitfall here: even if most attackers are suffering from some form of mental illness, it is probably overstating the case to suggest that all of them are: there might well be some who really are driven by the force of their ideology.

But as Lankford writes, we cannot expect to stop such attacks until we properly understand them – and here this book makes an important contribution.

Most suicide terrorists are suicidal anyway