

Broadway performer haunted by Rome

By Jae-Ha Kim
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Tony nominated singer and actor Melissa Errico said she remembers being unsure at first when she was asked to join the cast of "Les Misérables."

"I had to drop out of Yale to do it (which) sounds more dramatic than it was," said the Broadway star. "I was cast as Cosette on the national tour while still a student. Suddenly, I had a choice between the life I was planning and the life that had come knocking at the door. I took a leave of absence, packed a suitcase and joined the company. It was thrilling and terrifying. I was young enough to think adventure was a perfectly reasonable life plan. Looking back, it may have been the moment I learned that sometimes you don't find your path, the path finds you."

This interview with Errico — who was visiting London for Wimbledon with her husband, Patrick McEnroe, who provides tennis commentary — has been edited for clarity and length.

Q: What are some must-do things at Wimbledon, outside of watching tennis?

A: The Cannizaro House for tea. Wimbledon Common for a long walk. And the Wimbledon Village Stables, because horses somehow make every place feel more civilized. Everyone should visit this historic place (with) horses tucked into ancient buildings (and) flowerpots beneath the windows. It's simply enchanting.

Q: What is your favorite



Melissa Errico tries to complete one sightseeing activity in every city where she performs. **CHARITY RACHELLE**

vacation destination?

A: Greece. The light is different there. The sea feels ancient. The food is simple and perfect. There is history everywhere, but it somehow never feels heavy.

Q: When you tour, do you have free time for sightseeing?

A: I try to do at least one thing in every city. In Las Vegas I recently visited the Mob Museum, which was unexpectedly fascinating. In Carmel, Indiana, I loved visiting the wonderful Great American Songbook (Foundation that) Michael Feinstein helped create. In Phoenix, I performed at the MIM — the Musical Instrument Museum — and spent an hour wandering through extraordinary collections of instruments from around the world, like a 15th-century guitar or Duke Ellington's actual piano. Sometimes, the venue itself becomes the destination.

Q: Where have you been to where you wanted to stay longer?

A: Rome. Every time I leave Rome, I feel I've only begun to understand it. Rome haunts me for some reason. I have dual citizenship. Maybe I should flip the switch and give in to my Roman nature.

Q: Where would you like to go that you have never been to before?

A: Morocco. I've imagined it for years. It feels like a place where stories are still

wandering around looking for listeners. My oldest daughter is planning to go. It's funny to watch your own fantasies pass down to your children.

Q: What's the most important thing you've learned from your travels?

A: That people are far more alike than different. Audiences may speak different languages or come from different cultures, but everyone responds to beauty, longing, humor, memory, music and love. Travel has made me less certain about stereotypes and more certain about human nature. I've also learned that kindness is an international language. Everyone can laugh. Sometimes it's good to have very little language in common. You look for the fun.

Q: When you go away, what are some of your must-have items?

A: My eyeglasses. At this stage of life, they are less an accessory than a survival strategy. A simple black dress. Sandals that look elegant but can still hike. My ukulele. And scarves. Scarves are my latest discovery. Pack three to six of them and you can transform your look, change your hairstyle, and travel with almost no extra weight. I somehow failed to appreciate scarves until this year.

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