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The Phantom Of The Opera (DVD) Review

By Britt Gillette

Nominated for 3 Academy Awards and 3 Golden Globes, including Best Motion Picture – Musical or

Comedy, The Phantom Of The Opera is one of the most talked about movies of 2004. Taking the smash commercial success of Andrew Lloyd Webber's stage production to the big screen is no easy task, but long-time Hollywood director Joel Schumacher is more than able to get the job done. He takes an otherwise poorly written screenplay (minus the awe of a live performance no less) and manages to thrill the audience with the visual aspects of a film chiefly intended to rehash a successful stage musical. The costumes and set are simply magnificent, and Art Director John Fenner (Raiders Of The Lost Ark) helps Schumacher put together a fabulous production that's well worth a movie-goer's time...

The Phantom Of The Opera centers around a mysterious character who dwells underneath the Paris Opera House, imbibing himself on the music that emanates from above. Known as The Phantom (Gerard Butler), he wears a half-mask to cover the hideous facial scars that have plagued him since birth. A musical genius, the phantom is infatuated with the opera, and when he falls in love with the voice of a young chorus girl named Christine (Emmy Rossum – The Day After Tomorrow (2004), Mystic River (2003)), this love of the opera morphs into an outright obsession. The phantom provides Christine with one-on-one voice lessons, while during his spare time, he terrorizes the opera house in an effort to land his protégé the opera's leading role. When Christine finally rises to that position, however, she is reunited with childhood friend Raul (Patrick Wilson), and the two begin a torrid love affair. Vengeful and jealous, the phantom kidnaps Christine and holds her prisoner in his underground lair, and Raul is the only one who can save her...

Onscreen, The Phantom Of The Opera is weak by the standards of a traditional film. The cast does its best to make the most of a screenplay peppered with rigid dialogue – a script designed to sell "the music of the night". The supposed magnetism between Christine and Raul is non-existent and not really believable. As such, the audience is forced into believing that the phantom (who, by contrast, is quite charismatic in this rendition) would end up playing second fiddle to a man who makes Al Gore seem animated. Overall, however, other aspects of the film make up for this flaw...

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Based on Gaston Leroux's 1925 novel of the same name, The Phantom Of The Opera loses much of its original edge given the phantom's transformation from a frightening and mangled lunatic to a watered down half-scarred/half-babe-magnet figure complete with likeable characteristics. But inevitably, that's the mark of an enduring franchise – its malleability in the realm of numerous genres and the public's willingness to embrace such changes. But arguably, the small changes in the original novel's plot were necessary to achieve Lloyd Webber's goal of a melodramatic and stirring Broadway musical boasting mass commercial appeal. In a year in which the Oscar nominations were mostly dominated by lower-budget, surprise hit films (such as Sideways, Million Dollar Baby, and Finding Neverland), The Phantom Of The Opera holds its own in many aspects (given its pre-production designation as a commercial success). But those who have not seen the stage version are unlikely to be won over to the ranks of the franchise's numerous fanatics. My advice is to definitely see the film if you've ever seen the stage performance or listened regularly to the soundtrack – otherwise, you might be disappointed. After all, no matter how good The Phantom Of The Opera translates to the big screen, there's a reason musicals are not the dominate genre in Hollywood...

Britt Gillette is author of The DVD Report (

<http://thedvdreport.blogspot.com>

), a blog where you can find

more reviews like this one.

On Broadway–The Greatest Shows Ever

By F. R. Penn

What does the Phantom of the Opera and Cats have in common? Answer: They are the longest running plays in the history of Broadway. Phantom is currently still performing its spectacular production and nearing its 7,500th performance. Cats closed on September 10th, 2000 after 7,486 shows. What is the allure of Broadway and these two plays?

Phantom has been delighting audiences of readers since Gaston Leroux wrote the novel in 1911. Phantom first went to film in 1925 and recently a remake appeared in 2005. On Broadway, Phantom's opening night was on January 26, 1988 at the Majestic Theatre. Phantom of the Opera had ticket seekers clamoring for the opportunity to take a seat and watch the visual delights of this most beloved operatic play. Today in 2006, Phantom tickets are still much sought after and available. What is the appeal of this long running and powerful play?

One fascination and reason for the popularity of Phantom comes from its story. The right mixture of horror, music, fantasy and romance transfixes the audience into becoming emotionally involved with the production. On Broadway, the scenery and props, the stirring lyrics bring you into the fantasy world of the phantom as he pursues his love, the beautiful Christine. The beauty of the young Christine and the beastly attributes of the daunting phantom combine to transfix and bring mystery and wonderment

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into our lives, if only for a few hours. Love and loving another is a universal phenomenon in which we can all relate. Phantom stirs our emotions, entertains and that is the main appeal behind the 2nd longest running play on Broadway, Cats.

Cats is based on a work of poetry by TS Elliot and it premiered on Broadway on October 7, 1982 at the Winter Garden Theatre. One of the most famous songs in history gained popularity from Cats.

Memories is a song that had a strong emotional appeal for audience member of all ages. Cats gained popularity not only for its music but as entertainment for which all family members could attend together. It will fascinate the children and at the same time it will entertain adults. The set designs are enormous and breathtaking, the singing and dancing are auditory and visual delights. Broadway knows how to entertain and put on a show you will never forget. There are many ways to find the right shows you might want to see.

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is a great place to start in getting tickets as well as

information about events and shows on Broadway.

Broadway theatre has a special allure. The fact that it is performed live is undoubtedly its strongest attraction. Simply put, live performances be it Broadway, a concert, and opera or ballet are more vivid. The eyes behold the beauty of the sets, the crispness of the music and the artistry of performance that no technological device can offer. This is not to say that a beautiful opera on a nice stereo or a concert on DVD can't be enjoyed, they just can't provide the vividness and clarity that live performance can. There is also another consideration to make when deciding to attend a Broadway play in person or watch its version on the television at home.

Broadway live performances bring us out into the world. We socialize, we see people, and we experience the magic and beauty of Broadway with others. We experience life in the atmosphere of humanity. Generations into the past, live performances were the tradition. It was an all day event of excitement to prepare, get dressed up and travel to the event. One had to go out for the evening to experience entertainment. That tradition, while not pursued as often because of today's

technological devices, is still available on or off Broadway.

When you find the Broadway show you want to see, be aware of terms such as on or off Broadway. Broadway is the name of the street or theatre district that has some thirty-nine venues for professionally staged Broadway theatre shows in New York City, United States. Off Broadway are theatres that are smaller and while professionally produced offer a more intimate theatre experience. In fact, it is generally the number of seats that determine if a show is termed off Broadway. These off Broadway houses generally seat less than 500 persons.

The thrill and pleasures of attending a Broadway show are many. It's a chance to experience the sounds of music like no technological device can offer. Attending a Broadway show is a chance to get out for the evening and socialize, to be a part of one of life's unforgettable experiences. Be a part

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of history and go see Phantom of the Opera. Whatever your choice of show, be a part of a historical tradition that takes into a few hours of fantasy, magic, adventure and pleasure.

This article was written by F. R. Penn sponsored by

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