The Phantom of the Opera

Dramatized by Dirk Kuiper

Based on the novel by Gaston Leroux

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DEDICATION

For Ken, Tim and Erin, who first read it; for Ang, who built it and kept it running; for the cast and crew of the original production, who made it sing; and for my Angel of Music, Jenn.

STORY OF PLAY

This version of the story, while based on the novel, focuses more on the character of Christine Daae, the young opera singer. As the play opens, she has just filled in for La Carlotta, the reigning prima donna, to a stupendous ovation. The owners of the opera are thrilled and congratulate her backstage, just as the ballet dancers flee from the "Opera Ghost." The owners, of course, do not believe in it. They inform Christine that the Vicomte de Chagny wishes to see her. Raoul, the Vicomte, comes to her dressing room, and it becomes apparent that they knew each other when they were young. Raoul apparently left her for reasons of loyalty to his family.

Christine's voice instructor, whom she thinks of as the "Angel of Music" her father once told her of, speaks to her. She convinces him to show himself, and he does. Now, however, she wants to see the hidden world he lives in, for she realizes he is the person people call the "Opera Ghost," though he tells her his real name is Erik.

Reluctantly, he takes her beneath the Opera to his lair, and she sees the wonder of a world that totally revolves around music. Curious about the mask he wears, she pulls it off his face when he is playing the organ, and sees the hideous visage beneath it. He is devastated, but she, after her initial shock, gives him the mask back and promises to continue her lessons.

Eventually, Erik is convinced Christine intends to leave the Opera. La Carlotta returns and is put in the leading role, defying the Opera Ghost's directive. Erik causes the chandelier over the stage to fall, though Carlotta escapes.

In Act II, a masked ball is held. Erik, in a new costume, appears, and reminds Christine that she belongs to him. Raoul is defiant. He asks Joseph, who works backstage, for information about the Opera Ghost. Joseph goes below in search of the Ghost, but he is captured. During a performance by Christine, the lights go out, and when they return, the body of Joseph is there. His girlfriend, Meg, now bent on revenge, joins Raoul as they journey into the cellars. Erik captures both. Christine agrees to marry him if he will set them free. He does, but Meg produces a knife and tries to kill him. Christine stops her, but Raoul also has moved to attack him. Christine takes Meg's knife and threatens to kill herself if all violence doesn't stop. Christine tells Raoul and Meg that she will remain with Erik, by choice and not by force. Erik stops them, and tells Christine to accompany them. Now that he knows she really loves him, he must pay for the crimes he has committed. They sing a last song together, and then she leaves with the others. Erik goes to the river and throws himself in.

TIME: 1881.
PLACE: The Paris Opera and the graveyard at Perros.

ORIGINAL PERFORMANCE

"The Phantom of the Opera" was first presented on October 27, 1995, Spruce Creek High School Drama Club, Port Orange, Florida. It was directed and designed by the playwright. It was stage managed by Angela Hinton with the following cast:

Christine Daae: Gretchen Ludwig
Erik, the "Opera Ghost": Damon Keith
Raoul, Vicomte deChagny: Jeff Cheezum
Meg Giry: Michele Dillon
Joseph Buquet: Zia Khan
Carlotta Salvador: Erin Fisher
Armand Moncharmin: John Longino
Firmin Richard: Kevin Snipes
Madame Giry: Kylie Koscoe
Ratcatcher/Dancer: Albert Chan
Messenger/Dancer: Keith Marks
Corps de Ballet: Megan Barnes, Naomi Beth Canup, Melissa Lilavois, Courtney Miller, Betsy Powers

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 M, 4 W, 3 flexible, numerous extras)

CHRISTINE DAAE: A young opera singer.
ERIK, THE "OPERA GHOST": A mysterious musician.
RAOUL, VICOMTE deCHAGNY: Childhood friend and love of Christine.
MEG GIRY: A ballet dancer and Christine's confidante.
JOSEPH BUQUET: A backstage crew member, in love with Meg.
CARLOTTA SALVADOR: The Opera's Spanish diva.
ARMAND MONCHARMIN: Business manager of the Opera.
FIRMIN RICHARD: Artistic manager of the Opera. (May be played by a female, Claudette Richard.)
MADAME GIRY: Head of the box office and Meg's mother.
MESSENGER: (May be played by male or female.)
RATCATCHER: (May be played by male or female.)
CORPS DE BALLET
MEMBERS OF PARISIAN SOCIETY

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Act I
Scene 1: The stage and backstage area of the Paris Opera.
Scene 2: Christine's dressing room.
Scene 3: The cellars and an underground lake.
Scene 4: The Phantom's lair.
Scene 5: The stage, days later.
Scene 6: The Phantom's lair, later.
Scene 7: The office of the managers, the next afternoon.
Scene 8: The graveyard at Perros, that evening.
Scene 9: The stage and backstage area, the next evening.
Scene 10: The roof.
Scene 11: Christine's dressing room.
Scene 12: The stage and backstage area.
Act II
Scene 1: The Grand Staircase, two weeks later.
Scene 2: The cellars.
Scene 3: The stage.
Scene 4: The cellars.
Scene 5: The Phantom's lair.
Scene 6: An underground lake.
Scene 7: The Phantom's lair.

****See additional PRODUCTION NOTES at end of script.*

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: The LIGHTS come up on a SINGLE FIGURE onstage, her back to the audience. She is facing an audience we do not see beyond the footlights at her feet. Standing at the edges of the stage, we now see MEG GIRY and the other BALLET DANCERS, as well as JOSEPH BUQUET, all entranced by the performance. The figure concludes her song to a massive ovation; the back curtain, representing the stage's grand drape, closes, and the figure turns as she EXITS the stage. We now see it is CHRISTINE DAAE, flushed from the triumph of her performance. Meg and the ballet dancers crowd around her.)

MEG: Oh, Christine, you were wonderful! That was the most beautiful thing I have ever heard!

BALLET DANCERS: *(Ad lib.)* Yes! Did you hear the crowd? So wonderful! *(Etc.)*

CHRISTINE: Oh, thank you so much! I was so nervous!

MEG: You should not have been. It is Senora Carlotta who should be nervous! And it serves her right for not showing up tonight!

CHRISTINE: Oh, now you are exaggerating.

MEG: Mark my words. The new managers will not forget that an understudy performed brilliantly in their first production. See, here they come even now! No doubt to congratulate you. I will see you later, Christine!

BALLET DANCERS: *(Ad lib.)* Congratulations again! *(Etc.)*

(MEG and the other GIRLS leave the stage as ARMAND MONCHARMIN and FIRMIN RICHARD, accompanied by a MESSENGER, enter from the wings looking about. Upon seeing CHRISTINE, they hasten to her.)

ARMAND: Though I have no ear, my dear, I must say I was most moved! There was something so unique about your performance.

FIRMIN: Well, I do have an ear, my young woman, and I am stunned. To hear something so stupendous on our first night…it is more than we could have wished for.
CHRISTINE: Thank you, monsieurs, I --

(Suddenly, there are SCREAMS from offstage, and MEG and the DANCERS return, racing to hide by the various people on the stage.)

MEG: It's him! It's the Opera Ghost!
ARMAND: What's this? What are you talking about?
MEG: The Opera Ghost! He came out of the shadows as we left the stage!
BALLET DANCERS: *(Ad lib.)* Yes, it was dreadful! Did you see his eyes? *(Etc.)*
FIRMIN: Nonsense! The only ghost around here is the one you have scared out of me! Your eyes are playing tricks on you young ladies.
BALLET DANCERS: *(Ad lib.)* No! He was there! *(Etc.)*
ARMAND: No, Monsieur Richard is quite right. Calm yourselves and go about your business.
MEG: You don't understand, monsieurs … but you will. You will.

(MEG and the other GIRLS drift over to JOSEPH. Meg brightens, and all the girls gather around him as he begins to whisper stories to them. They giggle to themselves; this occurs under the following action.)

ARMAND: Miss Daae, the Vicomte deChagny has asked to be admitted backstage, and while it is not unusual for such an attractive young lady --
FIRMIN: Armand!
ARMAND: Pardon me. Well, in any case, we wished to make certain it would be acceptable for him to speak to you.
CHRISTINE: It would be an honor, sir. I will be in my dressing room.
ARMAND: Very good. Then until later.

End of Freeview

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