



ARTS & CULTURE

'Phantom of the Opera' Closes on Broadway after 35 Years

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The Phantom of the Opera closed Sunday night after 35 years on New York City's famous Broadway.

The musical theater show opened on January 26, 1988. It completed nearly 14,000 performances.

The show ended with another performance of its most famous song, *The Music of the Night*. The performance included many well-known singers and actors who had parts in the show over the years.

The show's creator, Andrew Lloyd Webber, attended the final performance. So did Sarah Brightman, the singer who first played the lead character, Christine. The two came on **stage** for a final celebration. A video played that honored those involved in the show who had died. Some attendees drank sparkling wine as shiny gold and silver paper came down from the show's famous **chandelier**.

Lloyd Webber **dedicated** the final performance to his son, Nick, who recently died after a long illness.

The show is the story of the **phantom**, a **composer** with a misshapen face who wears a mask and haunts the Paris Opera House. He falls in love with Christine, a young singer.

Actors, singers and Broadway **producers** with close connections to Lloyd Webber were there, too, including Glenn Close and Lin-Manuel Miranda.

Lloyd Webber's other **musicals** include *Cats*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Evita*, *Sunset Boulevard* and *School of Rock*. With *Phantom* closing, he has only one show playing on Broadway: *Bad Cinderella*.

The longest-running Broadway show is now *Chicago*, which opened in 1996.

New York theater experts say many shows had difficulties coming back after Broadway closed for 18 months during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some, such as Miranda's *Hamilton*, returned to full **audiences**. But other shows, including *Phantom*, depend heavily on out-of-town visitors. Many tourists have yet to come back to New York City.

The show first played in London in 1986. It has been seen by over 145 million people in 183 cities around the world. In New York City alone, it sold over \$1.3 billion in tickets.

The show was supposed to close in February of this year but its run was extended because of increased interest.

There are still theaters where you can see the show around the world. It is in its 37th year in London. You can also see *Phantom* in Japan, Greece, Australia, Sweden, Italy, South Korea and the Czech Republic. New productions are also opening in 2024 in Bucharest, Romania and Vienna, Austria.

Emilie Kouatchou played Christine in the final show.

“We get to celebrate at the end of this,” she said before the show started. “We get to all come together and drink and laugh and talk about the show and all the highs and lows. It’s ending on a big note.”

I’m Dan Friedell.

Dan Friedell adapted this story for Learning English based on a report by the Associated Press.

Words in This Story

chandelier -*n.* a large light fixture with many lights and glass or crystal decoration

dedicate -*v.* to do something to honor the memory of someone else

phantom -n. a ghost

composer -n. a person who writes music

producer -n. a person who organizes the financial support for a creative production such as a film or show

musical -n. a type of theatrical production with mostly signing instead of speaking

audience -n. people who gather to watch a performance

fantasy -n. something made up or not real

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