

Leeds Arts Centre
presents

The Phantom of the
Opera



by Malcolm Brown
from the novel by Gaston Leroux

Leeds Civic Theatre - 15th -17th October 1998

The Phantom of the Opera

In the darkest depths beneath the Paris Opera House lurks the mysterious, masked Phantom. His desperate desire for love fuels his obsession with the beautiful young singer, Christine. Driven to blackmail, kidnap and murder, the Phantom holds the entire Opera house in his spell of dark fascination.

This new dramatisation, a premiere for Leeds Arts Centre, remains more faithful to Gaston Leroux's original novel than the majority of adaptations since the famous 1924 film starring Lon Chaney.

Leroux, a painstaking researcher, interspersed the fictional elements of *The Phantom of the Opera* with real characters, events and places. . .

The Paris Opera House opened in 1875 after a construction period fraught with problems. Work began on the site in 1861, revealing an underground stream. A lake was created deep beneath the stage area and its water powered the hydraulic stage machinery.

Building was halted in 1870 with the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war. The unfinished building was used as an observation post, communications centre, powder store and military prison. Perhaps it was in this period that the idea that the Opera was haunted by tormented spirits took hold.

The gala opening of the Opera on 5th January, 1875 signalled the renaissance of Paris and heralded the beginning of *La Belle Époque* - a period of elegance; excitement and high living.

The Opera House covers a site of nearly three acres. It is seventeen storeys high, seven of which are below ground level. Suspended in the centre of its auditorium is an ornate chandelier - seven tons of metal-work and glass. In 1896, a steel hawser holding one of its counterweights burned through in an electrical fire. The weight broke, smashed through the ceiling and a woman was crushed to death by debris.

Leroux's narrative is in the journalistic style and due to the blurring of fact and fiction, appears almost documentary. He begins:

The Opera Ghost really existed. He was not, as was long believed, a creature of the imagination . . .

Cast

(in order of appearance)

Armand Moncharmin	} joint managers of	Edwin Barraclough
Firmin Richard		the Paris Opera
Jammes	} ballet girls at	Rachel Gilby
Meg Giry		the Opera
The Persian		David Mallinson
Carlotta - <i>Spanish diva at the Opera</i>		Pam Wilson
Mame Giry - <i>Box keeper at the Opera</i>		Monica Brown
Christine Daaé		Phoebe Smith
Raoul, Vicomte de Chagny		Patrick Forde
The Phantom of the Opera		Michael Brooksbank

Crew

Production Co-ordinator	Joyce King
Stage Manager	Martin Drake
Assistant Stage Manager	Taimaz Ranjbaran
Set construction & painting	Richard Francis & team
Props	Mary Nelson, Margaret Savage
Prompt	Trudy Stewart
Costume	Chris Wilson, Betty Triggs, Jean Blundell & team
Lighting	Peter Waddicor, Sandy Clark
Sound Recording	Jim Marshall
Sound Operation	Shirley Broadbent
Front of House Manager	Denise Davies
Box Office	Maggie Rhodes

Phantom make-up & mask by HYBRID ENTERPRISES LTD., Unit 26 Armley Workshops, Pickering Street, Leeds LS12 2QG. Tel. 0113 2171 300

Designed and directed by Malcolm Brown

Thank you

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GASTON LEROUX

Gaston Leroux was born in Paris in 1868. A star pupil at school, he frequently won prizes for his academic ability and in 1889, he gained a degree in law. In the same year, his father died, leaving him a million francs - which he rapidly squandered on drink, gambling and ill-considered speculations. Unhappy with the legal profession, he successfully applied for a journalistic post with *L'Echo de Paris*.

Soon after, *Le Matin* offered him a more prestigious and lucrative position as a roving correspondent. Leroux travelled far and wide, across Europe, Russia, Asia and Africa. He frequently adopted disguises to get a good story and witnessed some of the greatest historical events of the period. In 1907, however, he gave up his journalistic travels to become a full time novelist.

The Phantom of the Opera

This is a new dramatisation of *The Phantom of the Opera*, and a premiere for **Leeds Arts Centre**. Our director has aimed to be more faithful to Leroux's original novel than the majority of adaptations since the famous 1924 film starring Lon Chaney. We hope you enjoy the show.

There will be one interval of fifteen minutes

Civic Theatre

Theatre Manager - *Steven Cartwright*

Assistant Manager - *Vivien Simpson*

Chief Technician and Lighting - *Peter Waddicor*

Technicians - *Sandy Clark, Tony McManus, Shaun Woodhouse*

Catering for Crown Point Foods - *Shirley Tarran*

Box Office - *Helen Richmond, Shirley Shortall, Syliva Gooding*

In accordance with the requirements of the Licensing Sub-Committee of Leeds City Council:

- a The public may leave at the end of the performance by all exits and entrance doors and such doors must at all times be open
- b All gangways, passages and staircases must be kept entirely free from chairs or any other obstructions.
- c Persons shall not be permitted to stand in any of the intersecting gangways, or stand in any other unseated space in the auditorium, unless standing in such place has been specially allowed by the Licensing Committee. A notice is exhibited in that part of the auditorium in which standing has been sanctioned.
- d The safety curtain must be lowered and raised once immediately before the commencement of each performance to show that it is in proper working order.

Leeds Arts Centre

Leeds Arts Centre was formed in 1945 as an amateur society. Our members come from all walks of life and include people who have worked in the theatre, others who hope to make a career on the stage and quite a number who are very happy to remain amateurs. We're a friendly company, working together to maintain the high standards for which our productions are known. First and foremost, we aim to enjoy ourselves.

Each year we produce four plays at the Civic Theatre - but that's not all. . .

Our **Green Room** group devise plays, readings, quizzes and other entertainments to keep members not involved in current productions busy and to develop our skills in acting, directing and production.

Our **Fine Arts** group meets regularly throughout the year for life drawing, sketching and painting.

Last, but not least, we enjoy a variety of **social activities**, including theatre visits outings, parties etc.

We welcome new members . . .

. . . so if you're interested in:

**acting, directing, producing,
set building & painting (scenery & pictures)
making and repairing costumes
back stage and front of house
or publicity and promotion**

. . . why not have a chat with one of our members front of house this evening - or in the bar after the show. You can also write, with contact telephone number for further information to:

The Secretary, Leeds Arts Centre
c/o Civic Theatre, Cookridge Street, Leeds LS2 8BH

FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS

Henrik Ibsen's

A Doll's House

Directed by Gwyneth Hadley

Ibsen's famous play illustrates the difference between "two kinds of conscience, one for men and one, quite different, for women."

Nora commits forgery, to secure a loan fraudulently and is proud of her actions, because she has done it out of love, to save the life of her husband. When the secret is revealed, he reacts with horror, taking the conventional 'honourable' standpoint, to the letter of the law.

First performed in the late nineteenth century, *A Doll's House* still speaks to us today in a quiet, yet moving voice. Ibsen's play never preaches, but leaves us to enjoy the story - and decide for ourselves.

Thursday 28 to Saturday 30 January at 7.30pm

Sue Townsend's
BAZAAR and Rummage
Directed by Tony Nelson

Sue Townsend, acclaimed author of the "Adrian Mole" diaries and numerous plays has written a marvellous satire on our 'caring' times.

A neurotic do-gooder and a trainee social worker persuade three agoraphobics from the safety of their homes to run a local church jumble sale.

Sharply observed, funny and real - this very human comedy drama might leave you wondering who needs whom most, the 'carers' or the 'cared for'

Week commencing 18 April 1999

Next Week:

The Showstoppers present:

Lights & Tights, a Variety Show

featuring song, dance and comedy

Friends of Leeds Civic Theatre
please join the Friends and support this Theatre
Application forms available in the foyer