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Music Appreciation: The Phantom of the Opera

The Phantom of the Opera is the longest running Broadway show ever with more than 11 thousand performances since it first opened in January 26, 1988 (Ibdb). It tells the story of a deformed bitter man who lives in the dark corners of an opera house, and has fallen in love with a young talented singer, Christine. He terrorizes the opera house, demanding to give Christine lead roles as he shows her the rest of the opera house privately. Christine, however, met his childhood acquaintance Raoul and they fell in love. The phantom got jealous and was outraged and so he uses violence to win over Christine's love.

" Floating, falling, sweet intoxication. Touch me, trust me, and savor each sensation. Let the dream begin, let your darker side give in to the power of the music that I write the power of the music of the night."

This particular line in the song " Music of the Night" (Hart) struck me when the Phantom of the Opera obliges to reveal himself to Christine and then guides her to a ghostly underground realm where he enchants her with his voice. Later, it is revealed that he has loved her for so long, and he desires to be loved back.

The song and the way it was sung - powerful and emotional - perfectly captured the heart of the Phantom, and what's in stored in it for years as he's finally able to pour it all out for Christine, his beloved Christine, to hear. The Phantom of the Opera has lived his life in shadows; a ghost to the people, alive only to himself. He has been visiting little Christine and has taught her to sing until she's grown, proving to the Opera's ballet mistress

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with the song “ Think of Me” that she’s equally better to Carlotta, the resident soprano prima donna who storms offstage as a backdrop collapses without warning while she was rehearsing.

What made the show stunning than it already is was that there is more to it than a phantom ghost going through threatening measures to covet the love of the woman he has desired for years, unable to conceive in himself that Christine is able to love him, and see past his deformity.

The thing is, there is a Phantom in all of us. There are these deep, dark ghostly underground realms in our life that we are hiding; fearing that other people might not be able to like us the way we like them to if we reveal those things to them. There are Christines in this world that we covet, and sometimes we do threatening measures to have it, simply because it would satisfy us greatly to have that love. And sometimes, just sometimes, we fail to see in ourselves that we are lovable, that in fact, there are people out there who are capable to love us and see past our flaws. These messages are greatly emphasized through the songs brilliantly sang by the actors and actresses in the show. It is felt deep within the bones, and pierces through the heart like knife, and eventually heals itself with words sung like therapy. Christine knew and told the Phantom that only his soul is deformed, not his face. That is where he has finally understood that love is more than physical attraction, and being blinded by fear, he has failed to see this countless of times.

In the end, the Phantom was able to see past the rage and jealousy that has clouded his eyes and was overpowered by true kindness and compassion showed by Christine. He let both Raoul (Christine’s fiancé) and Christine go

as he told her he loves her. He let her go. His Christine. The girl he has taught to sing, and loved for years. He let her go. That particular scene made me remember this line:

“ But if you love and must needs have desires, let these be your desires: To melt and be like a running brook that sings its melody to the night. To know the pain of too much tenderness. To be wounded by your own understanding of love; And to bleed willingly and joyfully.” (Gibran)

Christine was able to see past the Phantom's deformity and loved him. That reigned in the entire show. It showed more of the romantic side of the story than its horror side. It has kept me on the edge of my seat, and my ears feasted on the angelic and intense saturated voices of the actors and actresses. It felt like I was the only one watching and the rest of the people melted. No one was talking; everyone was listening, just taking it all in. People could only clap at every scene, asking for more, wanting for more. It was like one of the moments where you just want the world to stop and have them singing for hours. It was magical and it made me feel something, and has probably awakened something inside of me. Magical. It was truly magical. I can feel everyone was captured by the experience, marveling at every scene.

You can hear music everywhere - on the streets, a guy busking on the subway, on the radio, concerts, phones - music is literally everywhere. And every experience is a new one. You get lost into it. If getting lost was a way of escape, then there it is.

It was a show that you never get to watch just once. You will want to experience it again and again, never getting tired of its brilliance. The actors,

on the many years to come, might get replaced, the plot may be forgotten, but the music will live on. The Phantom lives and will enthrall every single person that sits and will sit in the theater with his undying love for Christine.

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