

longest-running musical ever in both the West End and on Broadway. Whereas the London productions of *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Evita* had run for 3,357 and 3,176 performances respectively—both comfortably ahead of the 2,618 managed by *Oliver!*—the London *Cats* managed an utterly unprecedented 8,949 performances, closing only in 2002, and redefined the idea of what a ‘long run’ could mean. The fact that the story comprised only a little of the whole, and that Grizabella’s suffering and redemption sat rather oddly alongside the basically happy, festival atmosphere, did not deter audiences: they loved the novelty and fun of it all and embraced, or at least accepted, the kitsch sentiment. In fact, in an unlikely way, *Cats* made a strength out of weakness, for if there was little story there had to be a great show, and Nunn’s innovative production, with John Napier’s remarkably effective set and costumes and Gillian Lynne’s brilliantly inventive choreography, offered a new kind of theatrical experience, one that almost anyone could enjoy. It is noteworthy, for example, that the veteran opera critic Stan Meares judged *Cats* the ‘outstanding’ one among Lloyd Webber’s ‘many shows.’²¹

Starlight Express (1984), the musical which followed *Cats*, was quickly dubbed ‘*Cats* on Tracks’, and was the closest Lloyd Webber ever came to repeating himself. He had in fact planned a musical about trains, based on Wilbert Awdry’s *Railway Series* stories, long before there was any thought of *Cats*, and as originally conceived it was to have been the more modestly-scaled work. In the hands of Trevor Nunn, to whom the production was again entrusted, *Starlight Express* finally became something quite different, a ‘spectacular total theatre’ experience (Nunn’s description²²) in which singers on roller skates pretending to be engines and carriages race around the audience: a sort of cross between a musical and a theme park ride. Although in some ways a natural extension of the *Cats* model, *Starlight Express*, with lyrics by the popular poet Richard Stilgoe, lacked a good deal of the charm of the earlier musical, and paid heavily for it on Broadway, where it ran for a disappointing 761 performances. In London, however, *Starlight Express* proved very durable, settling in behind *Cats* as the West End’s second longest-running musical, and not closing until 2002.

Cats and *Starlight Express* did not demand a great deal of Lloyd Webber beyond a string of catchy songs (some of them subsequently rewritten and updated). The job of working those songs into something like a coherent piece of theatrical storytelling was largely entrusted to Nunn and his design team. In the terms of Lloyd Webber’s 1978 essay, this was really a regression to pre-Rodgers and Hammerstein standards, and he knew that, ultimately, he did not want to be judged by those. His next musical, *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986), was accordingly an ambitious attempt to return to, and surpass, the ‘operatic’, musico-dramatic aspirations of *Evita*. ‘I knew I wanted to write a big romantic score,’ he later explained, ‘something in the direction of Rodgers and Hammerstein, and *Phantom* had the potential to be a great operatic love story.’²³ The setting of the story, an opera house, naturally encouraged an operatic treatment, and the period, the late 1800s, was a time when ‘romantic’ opera still reigned supreme and Puccini’s genius was gradually revealing itself. The soaring melodies are consistently among Lloyd Webber’s finest, and in no other of his musicals is his sense of himself as an artist in history so clearly revealed: the score, while including some contemporary rock elements, also

looks back through Rodgers to Puccini and contains clever parodies of earlier operatic styles as remote as that of Mozart's period. The overall impression is certainly 'operatic', in a more traditional sense than *Evita*, and *The Phantom's* appeal to its huge audience has rested a good deal on its ability to exude a sense of privileged access to 'high' art in the most sumptuous European tradition. Much of that audience has enjoyed thinking of *The Phantom* as 'an opera' with none of the negative connotations often associated with the older art form in popular culture.

Lloyd Webber's source for his new musical was Gaston Leroux's novel, *Le Fantôme de l'Opéra* (1910), first published in English in 1911, and he was influenced by Ken Hill's theatrical version, which had included clever adaptations of real nineteenth-century operatic music. Leroux's famous novel tells the story of how Erik, 'the Phantom', a brilliant but disfigured man with an angelic voice, has constructed a fortress for himself in the lowest basement of the Paris Opera House. He becomes besotted with a young chorus girl, Christine Daaé, whom he teaches to sing, without however revealing himself; she believes him to be the 'Angel of Music' her deceased father had told stories about. When Christine falls in love with Raoul de Chagny, a young aristocrat, Erik resorts to a series of increasingly violent plots to force her to be his. Eventually, when she shows sympathy for his torments, Erik relents and lets her go. Lloyd Webber became fascinated with the story, but also very critical of the way Leroux had told it. As Frederick Forsyth, who discussed the matter at great length with the composer, subsequently reported:

[Lloyd Webber] saw that it was not basically a horror story at all, nor one based on hatred and cruelty, but a truly tragic tale of obsessive but unrequited love between a desperately disfigured self-exile from the human race and a beautiful young opera singer who eventually prefers to give her love to a handsome aristocratic suitor. [. . . he] extracted the true essence of the tragedy.²⁴

Whatever one thinks of the suggestion that Lloyd Webber somehow understood the story better than the man who wrote it, there can be little doubt that *The Phantom of the Opera* is his defining musical, not just in the sense that it is easily his most commercially successful work—it is still running in the West End and on Broadway at the time of writing—but because, of all his successful musicals, it is the one in which he invested most of himself, and took most creative control over (see Figure 23.2). His new writing partner, the young Charles Hart (b. 1961), was given the task of essentially translating the composer's thoughts into words—poetic, romantic words with none of the subversive playfulness of Rice's style. Although *The Phantom of the Opera* is still rich in spectacle like its predecessors—the falling chandelier is particularly famous—the spectacle is no longer an end in itself, but an attempt to intensify the emotional drama of the story, as reimagined by Lloyd Webber. Here, more than in the previous musicals, the story *as* music, and therefore the composer, is the centre of everything.

Yet the most remarkable thing about *The Phantom of the Opera*, given its astonishing success, is how perilously it navigates a dramatic tightrope to which Lloyd Webber appears to have been blind. In the novel it is obvious that Erik, elderly, physically



FIGURE 23.2 The composer linked with his most famous creation: Andrew Lloyd Webber posing with the Phantom's mask on the cover of the *Daily Mail Weekend* magazine, 24 September 2011.

Photograph by Charlie Gray. Reprint courtesy of Charlie Gray and Solo Syndication London.

repellent, and shabby (and presumably not very hygienic), cannot be an object of romantic or sexual attraction to Christine: it is simply his voice she loves. In the musical, by contrast, the Phantom, who is never referred to as Erik, is much younger and presented immaculately dressed and groomed, with only part of his face disfigured (and, famously, masked): the general tendency of the retelling is to push the story towards an intense love triangle in which Christine is attracted to both Raoul and the Phantom. This structure allows Christine, and through her, the audience, a dark, 'Gothic' fantasy of violation, of succumbing to the obsessive, reckless love of the sexualized Phantom lurking in the darkness, but this fantasy is crucially enacted within, and to an extent enabled

by, the safe framework of her fairly conventional Cinderella-like romance with the rich, titled, handsome—though perhaps not very exciting—Raoul. The balance between fantasy and reality is very effective, partly because it tends to disguise the fact that the ‘reality’ on offer here—Raoul’s love and all the social advantages it brings—is itself a fantasy. But the balance is also very delicate: if Raoul is too obviously the superior option we lose sympathy for the Phantom, who then appears primarily as a dark *threat* to Christine’s happy destiny; on the other hand, if we are led to believe that Christine really would be happier with the Phantom, her eventual, conventional choice disappoints. Puccini would have quickly recognized how important this balance is for dramatic effect; Lloyd Webber, by contrast, appears to have reached it somewhat fortuitously by identifying with the Phantom and not feeling much interest in Raoul. He clearly believed that Christine might, or even *should*, choose the Phantom—and hence, eventually, his badly judged sequel, *Love Never Dies*, discussed later. But in *The Phantom of the Opera* itself the imaginative constraints imposed by Leroux’s basic storyline checked the composer’s potentially self-destructive desire to transform the Phantom into the romantic hero of the story.

The underlying superficiality of Lloyd Webber’s response to Leroux’s novel was highlighted when, after years of discussion, the composer’s Really Useful Group finally produced a big-budget movie version of the musical in 2004. Gerard Butler, known for his strikingly handsome looks and muscular physique (at the time of his audition in 2003 he was most associated with the role of Attila the Hun in the American TV miniseries *Attila* (2001)) was cast as the Phantom, despite having virtually no singing experience and no means of persuading any but the most deluded that he was the ‘Angel of Music’. Butler himself has left an account of the rather surreal moment when he auditioned in Lloyd Webber’s drawing room:

I treated this whole thing as an interesting idea because it was kind of unusual that they came to me in the first place. [...] Andrew was sitting in the back with his arm clapped over his face. I suddenly thought, ‘what the hell am I doing here?’ I had never had a singing lesson in my life and it was all new to me.²⁵

The ‘arm clapped over his face’ may suggest that the artist in Lloyd Webber was struggling with the businessman, attempting not to be swayed by Butler’s looks, but if that was the case the businessman emerged triumphant and an outstandingly cynical decision was made that a handsome Phantom (displayed advantageously with a smaller mask) would be a bigger box office draw than the presence of a great singer in the role. This decision, and the ensuing direction (by Joel Schumacher) designed to establish Butler as an object of *visual* desire, imperilled the precarious balance of the story and represented a significant step towards its inversion in *Love Never Dies*. Much of the popular reaction to the movie predictably consisted of female enthusiasts extolling Butler’s attractiveness (clearly preferring him to Patrick Wilson’s conventional pretty-boy Raoul), but many existing fans of the musical took exception to Schumacher’s glossy superficiality, his constant emphasis on spectacle over substance. Although it made substantial profits,

the movie was not nearly so successful as an expensive screen version of the world's then most popular musical could, and should, have been, and the reason is clear: many people had invested more deeply in Leroux's story, as reinterpreted in the musical, than the film allowed. The businessman in Lloyd Webber had underestimated his public. Ironically, but revealingly, the film most pleased those least likely to be content with the existing storyline: those who felt that Christine should have chosen the Phantom, or at least succumbed to some ravishing. *Love Never Dies* would give expression to that feeling.²⁶

THE PHANTOM NEVER DIES

By the 1990s Lloyd Webber had become, in a virtually unprecedented way, his own worst enemy. With *Cats*, *Starlight Express*, and *Phantom* apparently more or less permanently encamped in the West End, and *Cats* and *Phantom* equally well established on Broadway, any new Lloyd Webber musical faced formidable competition from his older ones.

The first, and perhaps greatest, casualty of this situation was *Aspects of Love* (1989), based on David Garnett's novel of the same name (1955). This ran for 1,325 performances in the West End: a good run by pre-*Cats* standards, but by 1992, when it closed, regarded as something of a failure. On Broadway it fared much worse, managing a mere 377 performances and losing over US\$8 million. The diagnosis of this failure offered in Lloyd Webber's 2001 *Now & Forever* career retrospective is very interesting, for James Inverne's obsequious booklet notes are innocent of anything approaching an independent critical standpoint and can be read, in effect, as an officially sanctioned account of the composer's own thoughts on his works and their reception. *Aspects of Love*, the booklet says, was 'an intimate tale [...] the characters were too subtle to capture the public imagination'. It was, further, a 'chamber work', not really suited to big theatres (an echo of Lloyd Webber's earlier doubts about *Joseph*).²⁷ Subsequent smaller-scale revivals have shown, in fact, that the 'too subtle' nature of the work rather than its comparative size was the main reason *Aspects* failed to capture the very large audience of the earlier musicals. It certainly has a claim to be Lloyd Webber's most sophisticated and emotionally complex theatre work, yet had it immediately followed *Evita* it would probably have been accepted as part of a natural artistic progression. It was the earlier 1980s musicals that had taught audiences to expect, and prefer, unobtrusive, undemanding, spectacular entertainment. As the *Now & Forever* booklet puts it, with complicated irony, *Aspects of Love* contains 'no crashing chandeliers'. For some, this was a welcome change, and Kurt Gänzl, a notable champion, records that it 'became a particular favorite with those looking for relief from the current fashion for heavily spectacular or glitzy musical shows'.²⁸ Relief then, as much as anything, from Lloyd Webber.

Aspects of Love was the only post-*Phantom* Lloyd Webber musical not shaped in some way by the overwhelming cultural presence of the 1986 work. Planned and partly composed before *Phantom*, it was completed well in advance of any conclusive

demonstration that the latter musical would be critically and popularly accepted as Lloyd Webber's defining achievement. The other post-*Phantom* musicals, by contrast, all seem to be either clearly related to *Phantom* (*Sunset Boulevard*, *The Woman in White*, *Love Never Dies*) or rather desperate attempts at something completely different (*Whistle Down the Wind*, *The Beautiful Game*, *Stephen Ward*, *School of Rock*). The first of these, *Sunset Boulevard* (1993), based on the cult film of the same name (1950), offered unmistakable plot similarities with *The Phantom of the Opera* but it ultimately told a far more cynical story without anything equivalent to the wholesome love of Raoul and Christine and their happy ending. Moreover, while the Phantom's antics and the Paris Opera House had offered many integral opportunities for spectacle in the earlier musical, in *Sunset Boulevard* the large quota of spectacle seemed there to please the audience rather than serve the story. These were substantial disadvantages, and though *Sunset Boulevard* was slightly more successful than *Aspects of Love*, its high cost meant it lost a great deal of money in America.²⁹ For all this, there is no doubt that the level of musical inspiration is very high: *Sunset Boulevard* stands, with *Aspects of Love*, as one of the most underrated Lloyd Webber musicals.

Sunset Boulevard, mainly, it would seem, in deference to the film on which it was based, began reintroducing spoken dialogue into the Lloyd Webber musical. This was taken much further in his next two efforts, *Whistle Down the Wind* (1996) and *The Beautiful Game* (2000), which also marked an unexpected return to social realism and 'down-to-earth subject[s]'. The main problem, as with the early *The Likes of Us*, was that neither Lloyd Webber nor his rather unlikely lyricists—Jim Steinman for *Whistle* and Ben Elton for *The Beautiful Game*—had much natural feeling for, or understanding of, the particular historical contexts that shape these stories: God-fearing Louisiana in the 1950s and Belfast with its sectarian violence in the 1960s. *Whistle*, despite spawning a huge hit single in 'No Matter What', was markedly less successful than *Aspects* and *Sunset*, and did not open on Broadway at all. A much simpler production, it did not actually lose money; nevertheless, it is a remarkable comment on Lloyd Webber's post-*Phantom* decade that the *Now & Forever* booklet emphasizes this point, as though 'stay[ing] in the black' was now a sort of triumph for the composer who had enjoyed overwhelming commercial success in the 1970s and 1980s.³⁰ *The Beautiful Game* fared even worse, again failing to make it to Broadway and running for less than a year in London. This latter musical, based on an original story by Ben Elton, saw Lloyd Webber attempting to remap his relationship to Rodgers and Hammerstein and by extension the entire preceding tradition of musical theatre. He felt that '[i]t was the kind of story that Rodgers & Hammerstein in their early days would have seriously thought about setting'—i.e. in their best, unsentimental period according to Lloyd Webber's reading of their career.³¹ The fact that Lloyd Webber regards two such very different musicals as *The Phantom of the Opera* and *The Beautiful Game* as extending the Rodgers and Hammerstein legacy says much about the way he has consistently been inspired by, and judged himself against, the works of the American partnership, and in the latter musical he was presumably trying to connect with the realistic, homespun quality of *Oklahoma!*, even though the more obvious influence is his beloved *West Side Story*. Yet the realism

of *The Beautiful Game* consists primarily of a rather moralizing demonstration of the way positive human values and ordinary human lives are corrupted by sectarian violence: a heavily politicized plot of a kind Rodgers and Hammerstein never attempted, nor showed any aptitude for (witness the treatment of National Socialism in *The Sound of Music*). This was not natural Lloyd Webber territory either; after being confronted with the dismal box office returns, he decided not to pursue the new vein further.

The next musical, *The Woman in White* (2004), was a clear swerve back towards *Phantom* territory, and might have succeeded better had it immediately followed the 1986 work. Based on Wilkie Collins's classic novel of the same name, it was a return to nineteenth-century imaginative material of a kind clearly more congenial to the composer than the subjects of his three previous musicals. (Lloyd Webber, it is worth noting, has amassed one of the world's finest collections of Victorian art and is a recognized authority on the subject.) But the much greater complexity of the plot, and the fact that it was not a naturally musical story, made for less satisfying theatre than *Phantom*; Trevor Nunn's staging, with the use of projections, also proved unpopular. *The Woman in White* managed just 500 performances in London and a mere 109 in New York. The much-hyped *Love Never Dies* (2010) (discussed at the end of this chapter), the sequel to *Phantom*, again failed to reverse the general downward trajectory of Lloyd Webber's career, and *Stephen Ward* (2013) was a complete flop, running for just four months.

This extraordinary run of comparative failures presents interpretative problems, especially as, throughout his post-*Phantom* period, Lloyd Webber has been consistently able to depend on extensive publicity and to draw on the talents of leading writers, producers, and performers (whether he has chosen them wisely is obviously another matter). Apart from *Aspects of Love*, and parts of *Sunset Boulevard* and *Love Never Dies*, these later musicals do not represent the composer at his best, perhaps, but they are not obviously inferior work either, and one is forced to the conclusion that their reception has been shaped by both extrinsic and intrinsic factors. The fresh young talent of the 1970s had, by the mid-1980s, become the Establishment, and there was an inevitable reaction. *Spitting Image*, a highly successful satirical puppet show first aired by ITV in 1984, took aim at him from the beginning. One early sketch showed him composing his music on a cash register and categorized him, in contradistinction to 'composers who fart a lot', as 'a fart who composes a lot'.³² The 1989 film, *The Tall Guy*, written by Richard Curtis and featuring several of Britain's leading comic actors, included a ferocious parody of the Lloyd Webber style, and especially of *Phantom*, in the form of a spoof musical called *Elephant* (based on the life of Joseph Carey Merrick, the so-called 'Elephant Man'). Roger Waters's 1992 song, 'It's a Miracle' (on his *Amused to Death* album), included the line 'Lloyd Webber's awful stuff runs for years and years and years'.³³ Long runs were increasingly taken as evidence that Lloyd Webber had pandered to the lowest popular taste, producing the theatrical equivalent of the high-salt, high-fat junk food which, in various standard, branded forms, spread rapidly across much of the developed world in the 1980s: a 1995 BBC Two documentary specifically compared Lloyd Webber's business practice to that of the burger chain McDonald's.³⁴ Thus the later musicals did not obtain an unprejudiced hearing, being rejected on one hand by those who had already

written Lloyd Webber off as an out-and-out populist, and on the other by those who had fallen in love with *Cats* and *Phantom* and wanted more of the same. This of course is unfair, though any such argument tends to invite the reasonable riposte that, overall, Lloyd Webber has been rewarded according to, and perhaps much beyond, his deserts.

There is also the complex question of the role of the Really Useful Group in Lloyd Webber's career. This was a company he created in 1977 to manage and license productions of his musicals (and, subsequently, a few other works). It was floated on the stock exchange in 1986, but Lloyd Webber soon decided that he hated the way this 'lessened his authority and exposed him to the vagaries of the marketplace'³⁵ and from 1990 he embarked on a series of manoeuvres to reacquire complete financial control. The Really Useful Group has guaranteed him productions of all his musicals subsequent to *Evita* on his own terms and effectively meant that everyone connected with those productions is his employee. This enabled the situation Michael Walsh evokes in a succinct and prescient sketch of Lloyd Webber's decline written as early as 1997: 'The theater may be a cooperative enterprise, but Lloyd Webber had worked all his life to make it a one-man show, and over the years he had become increasingly indifferent to anyone's opinion but his own.'³⁶ It is noteworthy that of Lloyd Webber's six musicals which have enjoyed spectacular success at the box office, three were produced in equal partnership with Tim Rice, two in more or less equal partnership with Trevor Nunn, and the last, *Phantom*, was produced by Cameron Mackintosh and directed by Hal Prince: powerful men capable of standing up to the composer. Of these major collaborators, only Trevor Nunn has been significantly involved in Lloyd Webber's post-*Phantom* career, directing *Aspects of Love*, *Sunset Boulevard*, and *The Woman in White*, but, as Vagelis Siropoulos has well said, 'his role was significantly reduced, resembling now more that of a handsomely paid stage manager, handling the busy stage traffic and blocking out the scenes, rather than conceptualizing the performance.'³⁷ In general, since *Phantom* more and more aspects of each musical, from the storyline to the casting and advertising, have come under Lloyd Webber's personal control. A positive interpretation of this, of course, is that he now gets to write the musicals he wants to write without having to worry too much about their commercial viability as his earlier musicals remain immensely lucrative. Nevertheless, it is surely significant that many of the newer musicals which have moved in to address the market he once dominated have been much more collaborative affairs: *The Lion King* (1997), *Mamma Mia!* (1999), and *Wicked* (2003) are obvious examples.

Whether Lloyd Webber will compose any more massive hits on the scale of those he produced in the 1970s and 1980s must remain an open question. At the time of writing it appears that his future reputation as a composer for the theatre will continue to rest primarily on *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Evita*, *Cats*, *Starlight Express*, and *The Phantom of the Opera*. Rodgers and Hammerstein also produced six major hits, as did Puccini.

It is worth concluding with a more extended look at *Love Never Dies*, the sequel to *The Phantom of the Opera*. Of all his musicals, this is the one in which Lloyd Webber made the largest imaginative and emotional investment: '*Love Never Dies* is, I am unashamed to say, the most personal of all my stage works to date', he stated in 2011.³⁸ It is filled with

passionate, fiery music that shows his melodic talents quite undimmed. Unfortunately, the very idea of a sequel to *The Phantom*, especially one that reunites all the major characters, tends to strike most people as preposterous—a bit like there being a sequel to *Oliver!*. Nevertheless, Lloyd Webber conceived of such a sequel to his greatest hit as early as 1990, perhaps partly because of the sort of Hollywood culture that always sees lucrative possibilities in sequels, but mainly, it would appear, because of his compulsive desire to make the Phantom the true love of Christine's life. He imagined the Phantom, who dies in Leroux's novel but simply disappears at the end of the musical, making his way to New York, there to be subsequently joined by Christine and, weirdly, *their son*. This plot sketch was perhaps influenced by the fact that Broadway had become Lloyd Webber's second home; here, too, was a chance to join up the European opera-operetta tradition with the American musical. The composer discussed his idea with the novelist Frederick Forsyth, who did his best with it and published *The Phantom of Manhattan* in 1999, crediting the germ of the novel to Lloyd Webber. The latter found Forsyth's version unsuitable for musical development, however, and the project was put on hold for several years. In 2006, Ben Elton, who had written *The Beautiful Game* (and been widely criticized for it), was asked to help reshape the story, and did so to Lloyd Webber's satisfaction. The eventual book was credited to 'Andrew Lloyd Webber & Ben Elton / With Glenn Slater [the lyricist] & Frederick Forsyth'.

Lloyd Webber's 'most personal' work turns on a stunning, and to many a disillusioning, absurdity: that the Phantom impregnated Christine before she married Raoul. In *The Phantom of Manhattan* the fact that Christine and the Phantom (Erik) have a son drives the plot, but Forsyth says as little as possible about how this came to be, merely suggesting that Christine was raped after Erik abducted her from the theatre. At the very end of the novel she tells him: 'I was so afraid I thought I would die of fear. I was half swooning when what happened . . . happened.'³⁹ This was an intelligent storyteller's solution to the yawning plot hole in Lloyd Webber's scenario. It did not satisfy the composer at all, however, as it directly contradicted the central idea motivating a sequel. In the musical, Lloyd Webber got what he longed for: here we are invited to believe that, on the eve of her wedding to Raoul, Christine stole away to see the Phantom, somehow knowing where he was hiding, and that they enjoyed passionate, consensual, outdoor sex. Christine awoke in the morning ready to swear eternal love to the Phantom, but found him gone—and so married Raoul in a fit of pique. In *The Phantom of Manhattan* Raoul is still the kind, noble man found in *The Phantom of the Opera*; in *Love Never Dies* he is a gambler, an alcoholic, and a thoroughly unpleasant individual. To solve the weighty problems of Christine being married, and domestic bliss between her and the Phantom being (to most people) strictly incredible, she is accidentally shot dead at the end of the sequel by Meg Giry, her friend from Paris days: an extraordinarily contrived demonstration of the fact that fantasy can only be fantasy.

That Lloyd Webber kept faith for so many years with the absurd notion that the Phantom is Christine's true love, and was willing to sacrifice Raoul's character, a good part of Christine's character, and even her life on that altar, is less a comment on his artistic judgement in general—which has frequently been very shrewd—than on his

particular obsession with reinterpreting *The Phantom of the Opera* story. The point of *Love Never Dies* may be that Christine could never get the Phantom out of her head and her life; the significance of the work is that Lloyd Webber had not been able to get the Phantom out of his. Yet *Love Never Dies*, strong as it is musically, must be one of the oddest sequels in theatrical history, shaped by a peculiar love-hate relationship to its original. On one hand it shores up the position *The Phantom of the Opera* occupies as Lloyd Webber's central, defining musical; on the other it seems intent, in a rather Freudian way, on displacement, on destroying the authority of the earlier work (which is scrupulously respected in Forsyth's novel), and as such perhaps dramatizes the older composer's frustration at having to keep competing (unsuccessfully) with his younger self. Lloyd Webber has indeed prophesied that he will be eventually remembered as the composer of *Love Never Dies*, not *Phantom*: 'I think, in the end, if I was a betting man—which I'm not—the musical that I'd say will be remembered in 100 years' time is *Love Never Dies* [*sic*].'⁴⁰ As sequel and original are erected on such different imaginative premises that they cannot both be true (as though a sequel to *Oliver!* were to show Oliver choosing, after all, a life of crime with Fagin, in defiance of Charles Dickens), this implies audiences gradually rejecting Leroux's residual authority over the characters he created and corresponding acceptance of the fact that they are now completely Lloyd Webber's. So far, however, all the evidence suggests that the vast majority of the composer's many fans will remain loyal to the earlier musical and that 'in 100 years' time' he is likely to be remembered above all for *The Phantom of the Opera*.

Whether Lloyd Webber will ever emerge from the shadow of *The Phantom* is unclear, but perhaps with *Love Never Dies* now completed to his satisfaction he will find himself able to move on decisively and rediscover the freshness, unpredictability, and art of leading and directing popular taste that allowed him to stamp his personality so compellingly on the modern musical in the 1970s and 1980s. At the time of writing, in late 2015, Lloyd Webber's newest musical, *School of Rock*—following the current fashion for musicals based on recent films—is due to premiere on Broadway. This is his most commercial choice of subject since *Phantom*, and if the balance between diegetic and non-diegetic music is satisfactorily worked out, it is likely to prove his most successful musical of the new century. But whatever it adds to his existing achievement, the past five decades remain Lloyd Webber's era, and in Britain, especially, there is no obvious inheritor of his mantle as a creator and enabler of musical theatre with global appeal and a global reach.

NOTES

1. Tim Rice, *Oh, What a Circus: The Autobiography 1944–1978* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1999), 1.
2. Quoted in Michael Walsh, 'Magician of The Musical', *Time* (US ed.), 18 January 1988, 61.
3. Andrew Lloyd Webber, 'The Music of Evita', in Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice, *Evita: The Legend of Eva Peron 1919–1952* (London: Elm Tree Books, 1978), not paginated.
4. Quoted in Andrew Lamb, 'What's the Greatest Musical Ever Written?', *Theatregoer*, September 2003, 23.

5. Lloyd Webber, 'Music of Evita'.
6. Quoted in John Coldstream, 'High Flying', *Evita*, programme (London: Prince Edward Theatre, 1978), not paginated.
7. Basil Ramsey, Sleeve Notes, *The Southend Boys' Choir: Three Pop Cantatas*, LP, Vista VPS 1009, 1974.
8. *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, LP, Decca SKL 4973, 1968.
9. Rice, *Oh, What a Circus*, 191.
10. Andrew Lloyd Webber, 'Andrew Lloyd Webber', *Jeeves*, programme (London: Her Majesty's Theatre, 1975), not paginated.
11. Rice, *Oh, What a Circus*, 319.
12. Lloyd Webber, 'Music of Evita'.
13. Quoted in Michael Walsh, *Andrew Lloyd Webber: His Life and Works*, extended ed. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997), 97.
14. Lloyd Webber, 'Music of Evita'.
15. Rice, *Oh, What a Circus*, 366.
16. Rice, *Oh, What a Circus*, 289.
17. Quoted in Gerald McKnight, *Andrew Lloyd Webber* (London: Granada, 1984), 87.
18. Quoted in Anon., 'T. S. Eliot Musical: Nunn Joins Forces with Andrew Lloyd-Webber [sic]', *Stage and Television Today*, 25 September 1980, 2.
19. Quoted in McKnight, *Andrew Lloyd Webber*, 209.
20. Walsh, *Andrew Lloyd Webber*, 115.
21. Stan Meares, "'From Disaster to Triumph': A Selection of British Operas Composed During the Reign of HM Queen Elizabeth II", *British Music* 34 (2012): 100.
22. Quoted in Keith Richmond, *The Musicals of Andrew Lloyd Webber* (London: Virgin, 1995), 88.
23. Quoted in Richmond, *Musicals of Andrew Lloyd Webber*, 103.
24. Frederick Forsyth, *The Phantom of Manhattan* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1999), xii.
25. Wilson Morales, 'Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Phantom of The Opera*: An Interview with Gerard Butler', blackfilm.com features, December 2004, <http://www.blackfilm.com/20041217/features/gerardbutler.shtml>, accessed 19 June 2014.
26. This point is well illustrated by some videos on YouTube that take footage from *The Phantom of the Opera* film and combine it with Christine and the Phantom's account of their lovemaking in *Love Never Dies* ('Beneath a Moonless Sky'). The combination suggests, of course, that Butler's Phantom was sexually irresistible to Christine.
27. James Inverne, Booklet Notes, *Andrew Lloyd Webber, Now & Forever*, not paginated, CD, The Really Useful Group, 314 589 393-2, 2001.
28. Kurt Gänzl, *The Encyclopedia of Musical Theatre*, 2nd ed., 3 vols. (New York: Schirmer Books, 2004), 1:76.
29. The financial losses *Sunset Boulevard* suffered in America had much to do with Lloyd Webber's personal casting decisions and the expensive legal suits and bad publicity they prompted. See Walsh, *Andrew Lloyd Webber*, 262-263.
30. Inverne, Booklet Notes.
31. Andrew Lloyd Webber, untitled essay, *The Beautiful Game*, programme (London: Cambridge Theatre, 2000), not paginated.
32. *Spitting Image*, directed by Bob Cousins, Peter Harris, and Andy de Emmony, broadcast on ITV on 10 March 1985.

33. Roger Waters, *Amused to Death*, arranged for voice, piano, and guitar (Esher: Pink Floyd Music Publishers Ltd, 1992), 71.
34. *The Business*, directed by Helen Richards, broadcast on BBC Two on 20 July 1995.
35. Walsh, *Andrew Lloyd Webber*, 232.
36. Walsh, *Andrew Lloyd Webber*, 233–234.
37. Vagelis Siropoulos, 'The Ideology and Aesthetics of Andrew Lloyd Webber's Musicals: from the Broadway Musical to the British Megamusical' (unpublished PhD thesis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2008), 279–280.
38. Andrew Lloyd Webber, 'A Note from the Composer', *Love Never Dies*, programme (Melbourne: Regent Theatre, 2011), not paginated.
39. Forsyth, *Phantom*, 250.
40. Quoted in Rebecca Hardy, 'Love Never Dies . . . (Ask My Ex-wives!)', *Daily Mail Weekend*, 24 September 2011, 9.

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