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The Phantom of the Opera staged its final show on Sunday, ending a 35-year, 13,981-performance run as Broadway’s longest running production—thousands more performances than any other show in the top ten. Laird Mackintosh at the closing performance of “Phantom of the Opera” on April 16. Nina Westervelt/Variety via Getty Images The Phantom of the Opera debuted in 1988 and won seven Tony Awards, including Best Musical, Leading Actor in a Musical (Michael Crawford), Featured Actress in a Musical (Judy Kaye) and Direction of a Musical (Hal Prince). Phantom’s music was composed by Andrew Lloyd Webber with lyrics by Charles Hart. Most of the ten longest-running Broadway shows have closed, except for Chicago, The Lion King and Wicked. The Phantom of the Opera: 13,981 performances (Opened January 26, 1988, and closed April 16, 2023) Chicago (1996 revival): 10,329 (Opened November 14, 1996) The Lion King: 9,944 (Opened November 13, 1997) Wicked: 7,485 (Opened October 30, 2003) Cats: 7,485 (Opened October 7, 1982, and closed September 10, 2000) Les Misérables: 6,680 (Opened March 12, 1987, and closed May 18, 2003) A Chorus Line: 6,137 (Opened July 25, 1975, and closed April 28, 1990) Oh! Calcutta!: 5,959 (Opened September 25, 1976, and closed August 6, 1989) Mamma Mia!: 5,758 (Opened October 18, 2001, and closed September 12, 2015) Beauty and the Beast: 5,462 (Opened April 18, 1994, and closed July 29, 2007) News Peg Phantom shut down on Sunday after 35 years because of lingering damage done by the Covid-19 pandemic, inflation and declining international tourism. The musical had long been a tourist attraction because of its status as an iconic Broadway production. The crowd for the final performance was invitation-only, including actors who had once been in the musical and some fans who had won a lottery. Lloyd Webber delivered a speech after the final curtain, thanking fans for their support and dedicating the show to his son Nick, who died of gastric cancer last month. Phantom, which is based on a 1910 French novel of the same name, follows the exploits of a masked “phantom” who haunts the Paris Opera and falls in love with a beautiful young soprano. The show first premiered in London in 1986 before opening in New York two years later. The musical spent its entire Broadway run in New York City’s Majestic Theatre, where it became the longest-running Broadway show in 2006 and became the first Broadway production to reach a milestone 10,000th show in 2012. The musical stopped production in March 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic and reopened in October 2021. Coming back from the pandemic was a struggle: While the box office stagnated, production costs rose more than $100,000 per week after the show reopened, making weekly costs about $950,000, producer Cameron Mackintosh told the New York Times. Tangent Productions of Phantom are still running in the United Kingdom, Czech Republic, Japan, South Korea and Sweden, with additional shows set to open in China, Italy and Spain. Phantom is the second-longest-running musical in West End history, and it’s the third-longest-running West End production overall, behind The Mousetrap and Les Misérables. Big Number $1.36 billion. That’s how much the Broadway production of The Phantom of the Opera grossed. The show sat 20 million people over its 35-year run. With Cheers and Tears, ‘Phantom of the Opera’ Ends Record Broadway Run (New York Times) Andrew Lloyd Webber: A Goodbye to ‘Phantom’ (New York Times) All the Times Phantom of the Opera Made History on Broadway (Playbill) Here's your ultimate guide to The Phantom of the Opera, the longest-running show on Broadway.Diep TranFebruary 11, 2022, 00:00He's here, the phantom of the opera...and he's been haunting Broadway since 1988. The Phantom of the Opera, by Andrew Lloyd Webber, Charles Hart, and Richard Stilgoe, is the longest-running Broadway show of all time. This musical has appealed to theatregoers for over three decades, but after a record-breaking run that will go down in history, the music of the night will soon play for the last time when the show closes in February 2023.The Phantom of the Opera is part romance, part Gothic melodrama, and part spectacle. It is about a composing genius, the Phantom, who hides from the world in an opera house. He is obsessed with an ingenue opera singer named Christine, who is both drawn to and frightened of him.The plot seems simple, but where Phantom stands out is the music and the visuals. With songs such as the haunting and bombastic title song, "The Phantom of the Opera," as well as the ballads "Music of the Night," "Think of Me," and "All I Ask of You," Lloyd Webber's music is sweeping, big, and romantic — just like the show. And the special effects are awe-inspiring — from the now-iconic image of the Phantom and Christine on a boat in a sea of fog, to the one-ton chandelier that flies up and over the audience's heads, to stage fire — Phantom is not just an emotional journey; it's also a feast for the eyes.Find out more about The Phantom of the Opera below, with characters, running time, songs, and behind-the-scenes history of how the show was made. Then, get tickets to see this living piece of Broadway history before the show becomes a phantom of Broadway's past. Get The Phantom of the Opera tickets now. What is The Phantom of the Opera about?The Phantom of the Opera is based on the 1910 French novel by Gaston Leroux of the same name. It features music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, lyrics by Charles Hart and Richard Stilgoe, and a book by Stilgoe and Webber. It is about an ingenue opera singer named Christine, who works at the Paris Opera House. She is haunted by a figure that she calls the Angel of Music.This angel is actually a real man, who wears a white mask and who calls himself the Phantom of the Opera. He is also a music genius, haunting the opera house and terrorizing the people who work there. The Phantom is also in love with Christine and her voice, and he is determined to make her a star so that the world can finally hear his music (of the night). When Christine's childhood sweetheart Raoul comes back into her life, the Phantom becomes jealous and more terrible things start happening in the opera house. And yet, Christine continues to be drawn to the Phantom. Who should Christine choose? Raoul or the Phantom? That's a question that has haunted Phantom fans (or rather, phans) for over 30 years. Part mystery, part romance, The Phantom of the Opera is considered the best of the '80s megamusicals, where the budget, the story, and the music were big and bombastic. Considering that The Phantom of the Opera includes a giant chandelier which flies over the audience's heads and crashes onto the stage, this Broadway titan more than fits the bill when it comes to "mega." Where is The Phantom of the Opera playing?The Phantom of the Opera opened in 1988 at the Majestic Theatre and has been playing there ever since. The Majestic is located at 247 West 44th Street, between Seventh Avenue and Eighth Avenue. The Majestic opened in 1927. It was a favorite theatre of Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein, who premiered four of their musicals there, among them Carousel and South Pacific.How long is The Phantom of the Opera?The Phantom of the Opera runs at 2 hours and 15 minutes, with one 15-minute intermission. This is a standard running time for a Broadway musical. It's recommended that you eat before the show. What days is The Phantom of the Opera playing?The Phantom of the Opera plays seven performances a week at the Majestic Theatre. The show typically runs Monday to Sunday, with two performances on Thursdays and Saturdays. Phantom does not perform on Tuesdays. For the complete weekly performance schedule and up-to-date show times, please visit the Phantom of the Opera page to learn more. When did The Phantom of the Opera premiere?The Phantom of the Opera was actually inspired by a 1910 same-named horror novel and a real-life romance between a genius composer and an ingenue: Andrew Lloyd Webber wrote the role of Christine for his wife at the time, Sarah Brightman, who was a rising star. Here's the history of the Phantom of the Opera musical. 1984: Webber marries Brightman. He then contacts his producing partner at Really Useful Group, Cameron Mackintosh, who produced Webber's hit musical Cats, about a romantic musical based on French author Gaston Leroux's book, The Phantom of the Opera. Brightman would play Christine. Webber then asked Jim Steinman to write the lyrics to Phantom (Steinman had helped Meat Loaf write the songs for his Bat Out of Hell album). Steinman declined. Richard Stilgoe then agreed to write lyrics for the musical. Charles Hart was brought on in 1985 later to rewrite some of Stilgoe's lyrics. Webber also brought in Harold Prince to direct. 1986: The Phantom of the Opera opens on the West End at Her Majesty's Theatre. The show was a hit. A cast album was soon released in 1987 and also topped the charts, going platinum four times in the U.S. Phantom is still running on the West End and is the third-longest-running show there. 1988: Phantom opens on Broadway at the Majestic Theatre. Michael Crawford, Sarah Brightman, and Steve Barton reprised their roles as the Phantom, Christine, and Raoul from the West End. 1989: The first U.S. tour of Phantom begins. It would become the longest-running continuous tour in U.S. history, running until 2010. The first international production of Phantom also begins, in Canada at the Pantages Theatre in Toronto. 1990: The first Australian production of Phantom begins at the Princess Theatre. Phantom would run in Australia until 1998. 1993: The first U.K. tour of Phantom begins. It runs until 1996. 2006: Phantom opens a sit-down production in Las Vegas, called Phantom: The Las Vegas Spectacular, at the Venetian. This production of the musical is shortened to 90 minutes. It runs until 2012. 2012: A new production of Phantom, the first to not be a replica of the Harold Prince production, begins a UK and Ireland tour. This was to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Phantom. 2019: The Phantom of the Opera embarks on a world tour, beginning in Manila. 2021: Following the Covid-19 pandemic, Phantom reopens on the West End, but with some retooling to the show that is different from the original production that had played there since 1987. The number of musicians is decreased, some parts are restaged and choreographed, and parts of the set are redesigned. Phantom also reopens on Broadway. Other productions: Phantom has played to over 140 million people in 35 countries. Phantom has been performed in 15 languages, showing that the music of the night is truly universal.Who wrote The Phantom of the Opera?The Phantom of the Opera is based on the 1910 French novel by Gaston Leroux of the same name. It features music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, lyrics by Charles Hart and Richard Stilgoe, and a book by Stilgoe and Webber. Webber, who has been knighted by the Queen of England as Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber, is the winner of six Tony Awards and seven Olivier Awards. He is also one of 16 people who have won an Oscar, an Emmy, a Grammy, and a Tony. He runs the theatre company Really Useful Group, one of the biggest theatre producers in England. As a musical theatre composer, Webber has also written Cats, Jesus Christ Superstar, Sunset Boulevard, and Evita.Richard Stilgoe has collaborated with Webber on three musicals: Phantom, Cats, and Starlight Express. He founded the Alchemy Foundation, from his royalties from the American productions of Starlight Express and The Phantom of the Opera. The Alchemy Foundation donates money to charitable causes. Stilgoe has been knighted by the Queen for his charity work. Charles Hart was still a student when he met Webber, and he was soon brought on to help write lyrics for Phantom. Hart also collaborated with Webber on Aspects of Love. His other musicals include Bend It Like Beckham, based on the film, and The Dreaming, based on Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream.The Phantom of the Opera charactersIt takes 130 cast, crew, and orchestra members to put each performance of The Phantom of the Opera together. Below are the major characters in the show and some of the notable musical theatre performers who have played them. The Phantom: The composer who haunts the Paris Opera House. He lives in a subterranean lair under the opera house. He resents the world for rejecting him because of his disfigured face, and he is obsessed with Christine. Michael Crawford originated the role of the Phantom, but the other actors who have played that role include Colm Wilkinson, Ramin Karimloo, Hugh Panaro, and Norm Lewis. Christine DaaÃ©: A chorus girl who wants to become a prima donna. Christine is drawn to the Phantom for his music but is also afraid of him. She is in love with Raoul. Sarah Brightman originated the role of Christine, and the role has also been played by actresses including Sierra Boggess and Rebecca Luker. Raoul: Christine's childhood sweetheart who reunites with her at the Opera House when he becomes a patron. He is in love with Christine and wants to rid the Opera House of the Phantom. Steve Barton originated the role of Raoul. Hugh Panaro, Ramin Karimloo, and John Barrowman have also played the role. Carlotta Guidicelli: The prima donna of the Opera House. She is angered at the incidents that keep occuring because of the Phantom but refuses to cede the limelight to Christine. Gilles AndrÃ©: One of the new owners of the Opera House. He is trying to keep Carlotta happy and things running, despite the Phantom causing mayhem. Richard Firmin: One of the new owners of the Opera House. He is trying to keep things running smoothly, despite the Phantom. Madame Giry: The ballet mistress at the Opera House. She is a strict and foreboding presence, and the one who delivers messages between the Opera House owners and the Phantom. Meg Giry: Meg is Madame Giry's daughter. She is Christine's friend and a ballerina and chorus girl. The Phantom of the Opera songsThe Phantom of the Opera is a sung-through musical, with very little dialogue. Some of the most famous songs include "The Music of the Night," "All I Ask of You," "Masquerade," "The Point of No Return," and the title track, of course! Here are all the songs in the show. Act I "Hannibal Rehearsal" - Carlotta, Piangi, Reyer, Lefevre, AndrÃ©, Firmin, Madame Giry, Meg, Buquet, Ensemble "Think of Me" - Christine, Raoul "Angel of Music" - The Phantom, Meg, Christine "Little Lotte" - Raoul, Christine "The Mirror/Angel of Music (Reprise)" - The Phantom, Christine, Raoul "The Phantom of the Opera"- Christine, The Phantom "The Music of the Night" - The Phantom "I Remember/Stranger Than You Dreamt It - Christine, The Phantom "Magical Lasso" - Buquet, Madame Giry, Meg "Notes/Prima Donna" - AndrÃ©, Firmin, Raoul, Carlotta, Madame Giry, Meg, Piangi, The Phantom "Poor Fool, He Makes Me Laugh" - Carlotta, Piangi, The Phantom, Ensemble "Why Have You Brought Me Here/Raoul, I've Been There" - Raoul, Christine "All I Ask of You" - Raoul, Christine "All I Ask Of You (Reprise)" - The PhantomAct II Entr'acte - Orchestra "Masquerade" - Andre, Firmin, Ensemble "Why So Silent" - The Phantom "Notes/Twisted Every Way" - AndrÃ©, Firmin, Carlotta, Piangi, Raoul, Christine, Madame Giry, The Phantom "Don Juan Triumphant Rehearsal/Phantom of the Opera (Reprise)/Little Lotte (Reprise)" - Christine, Piangi, Reyer, Carlotta, Madame Giry, Ensemble "Wishing You Were Somehow Here Again" - Christine "Wandering Child/Bravo, Monsieur..." - The Phantom, Christine, Raoul "Don Juan Triumphant " - Carlotta, Piangi, Christine, Ensemble "The Point of No Return" - The Phantom, Christine "Down Once More/Track Down This Murderer" - The Phantom, Madame Giry, Raoul, Ensemble "Finale" - Christine, The Phantom, Raoul, EnsembleWhat awards has The Phantom of the Opera won?It's rare for a show to be both critically acclaimed and popular with the masses. But Phantom is both, if its longevity is any indication. And the musical received a diverse array of awards for acting, design, composition, and leadership alike. Here are the major awards Phantom has won. Olivier Awards: The West End production won four Olivier Awards of its five nominations: Best New Musical, Best Actor in a Musical (for Michael Crawford), Most Popular Show, and the Audience Award. Tony Awards: The Broadway production of Phantom won seven Tony Awards out of 10 nominations: Best Musical, Best Performance by a Leading Actor in a Musical (for Crawford again), Best Performance by a Featured Actress in a Musical (for Judy Kaye as Carlotta Guidicelli), Best Direction of a Musical, Best Scenic Design, Best Costume Design, and Best Lighting Design. Drama Desk Awards: The Phantom of the Opera on Broadway also won seven Drama Desk Awards in 1988: Outstanding Actor in a Musical (for Crawford), Outstanding Director of a Musical, Outstanding Music, Outstanding Orchestrations, Outstanding Set Design, Outstanding Costume Design, and Outstanding Lighting Design.Major productions of The Phantom of the OperaThe major productions of Phantom have mostly been replicas of the original West End production directed by Harold Prince, aside from the 25th anniversary U.S. and U.K. tours. Below are the major productions of Phantom and behind-the-scenes facts about them. 1987 West End production: For the original production, it took five people four weeks to build the chandelier, which is made of 6,000 beads and weighs one ton. It flies over the audience's heads and crashes on the stage at the end of Act One. Plus, a number of song lyrics in this production are different from the productions that came after it; those differences can be heard on the different cast albums. 1988 Broadway production: The Broadway production of Phantom almost didn't happen. Prior to the show coming to Broadway, Actors' Equity Association, the union for stage actors in the U.S., told the Phantom team that they would have to recast Christine with an American actress (per union rules). Andrew Lloyd Webber threatened to pull the production if Sarah Brigthman could not be in the show. The union relented, and the show went on to make Broadway history. Phantom: The Las Vegas Spectacular: This version of Phantom was edited down to just 90 minutes. The biggest change was that "The Point of No Return" was shortened, and the chandelier crash was staged after "The Point of No Return" rather than "All I Ask Of You." The Phantom of the Opera at the Royal Albert Hall: To celebrate the musical's 25th anniversary, Phantom was staged at the Royal Albert Hall for a two-night performance in 2011. Laurence Connor directs, and original creative team member Gillian Lynne returns to choreograph and do the musical staging. The cast includes Ramin Karimloo as the Phantom and Sierra Boggess as Christine (the two would later star in the original production of the Phantom sequel, Love Never Dies). Original cast members Michael Crawford and Sarah Brightman perform some songs post-show. The performance was released on DVD in 2012. Connor also stages the 2012 UK tour of Phantom, which is more pared down than the original Harold Prince production, though the costuming remains the same. Onscreen adaptations of The Phantom of the OperaTalks about adapting Phantom for the screen had swirled since 1989 after Warner Bros. purchased the film rights to the show. Michael Crawford and Sarah Brightman were in talks to reprise their roles. But production stalled on the film because of Andrew Lloyd Webber and Brightman's divorce. The film languished in development for over a decade, until 2002, when Lloyd Webber's Really Useful Group had purchased the film rights from Warner Bros. Here are some more facts about the Phantom of the Opera film adaptation, which ultimately came out in 2004. The Phantom film starred Gerald Butler as the Phantom, Emmy Rossum as Christine, Patrick Wilson as Raoul, and Minnie Driver as Carlotta. Unlike the stage adaptation, the Phantom film had mostly negative reviews. Nonetheless, The Phantom of the Opera was nominated for three Academy Awards: Best Art Direction, Best Cinematography, and Best Original Song. Butler was the only main cast member who did not have music experience. He had to take singing lessons! Webber wrote some new music for the film, including the song "Learn to Be Lonely," which was written with Charles Hart and sung by Driver. The song was nominated for an Oscar. Some of the new music that Webber wrote for the film was later reused in Love Never Dies, his stage musical sequel to Phantom.Fun facts about The Phantom of the OperaFrom sequels to how the Broadway production almost didn't happen, there are enough facts and trivia about Phantom that would surprise even a longtime opera ghost. Here are some phun phacts about The Phantom of the Opera. The original Broadway production of The Phantom of the Opera cost a record-at-the-time $8 million to produce, which would be $20 million today. There are 19 cast albums of The Phantom of the Opera available, including cast albums in non-English languages. The full white mask that has graced Phantom posters since 1987 isn't actually the mask that's worn in the show. The Phantom's mask in the show only covers one side of this face, from his right eye to his right cheek. But the mask that covers the entirety of the Phantom's face was actually tried out in a workshop production. That mask proved too difficult for the actor playing the Phantom, then Colm Wilkinson, to perform in, and he couldn't see well in it. So set and costume designer Maria BjÃ¶rnson designed the now-iconic half mask. Phantom fans (or "phans") have long debated whether Christine should choose the Phantom or Raoul. In 2010, Webber gave his opinion on the matter with his musical sequel to Phantom, Love Never Dies, which takes place 10 years after the ending of Phantom and reunites Christine with her angel of music in Coney Island. The musical was thoroughly panned on the West End, and despite getting a U.S. tour and productions worldwide, Love Never Dies has never been to Broadway. But Phantom phans can watch a filmed version of the Australian production, which was released on DVD in 2021. Princess Diana was such a fan of Phantom that for the seventh anniversary of her marriage to Prince Charles, she filmed a music video of herself on the Phantom set at Her Majesty's Theatre, singing "All I Ask Of You" dressed as Christine. The musical's choreographer, Gillian Lynne, even directed Diana in the video. Webber was there to oversee. Michael Jackson saw Phantom in 1988 and loved it so much, he told Webber backstage after a show that he wanted to play the Phantom in a film version. Webber declined since Michael Crawford was also on board to play the Phantom in the film version. But the thought of the King of Pop playing the Angel of Music â€” talk about a thriller night!How to get The Phantom of the Opera ticketsDon't miss this iconic Broadway staple in its final months. If you love romance and spectacle, give in to the power of the music of the night by seeing The Phantom of the Opera. Make sure to watch your head for the falling chandelier. The Phantom of the Opera tickets are available now. Get tickets to The Phantom of the Opera on New York Theatre Guide today. Originally published on Sep 29, 202213:02 It takes more than just a Tony Award to guarantee a long run on Broadway. While some of the most critically loved shows in Broadway history are long gone, others have found commercial success an enjoyed decades entertaining the masses. Which are the longest running Broadway shows of all time? Which current Broadway productions have a chance of breaking the top ten? We've got the full list!NOTE: Stats last updated on November 3, 2024The Longest-Running Broadway Shows of All-Time:1. The Phantom of the OperaTotal Shows: 13981Opened: January 26, 1988 at the Majestic TheatreAfter over three decades of Broadway performances, the music of the night is over now. The Phantom of the Opera became the longest-running show in Broadway history in 2006. Since its debut, the New York production grossed over $1.2 billion with total attendance over 19 million. While the Broadway production has concluded, Phantom continues to play around the world, across a total of 15 countries, in 8 languages and 4 continents.Scene from The Phantom of the Opera. Photo Credit: Matthew MurphyTotal Shows: 10985 (and still running)Opened: November 14, 1996 at the Richard Rodgers Theatre*Now playing at the Ambassador TheatreWhile the original Broadway production only ran for only 936 performances, Chicago's only revival has been painting the town for over two decades and holds the distinction of being the longest-running American musical in Broadway history.3. The Lion KingTotal Shows: 10607 (and still running)Opened: November 13, 1997 at the New Amsterdam Theatre*Now playing at the Minksoff TheatreLion King is not quite king… but it's close. The Disney musical is the only show in history to generate six productions worldwide running 15 or more years. Performed in eight different languages (Japanese, German, Korean, French, Dutch, Spanish, Mandarin and Portuguese), its worldwide gross exceeds that of any film, Broadway show or other entertainment title in box office history.Scene from The Lion King. Photo Credit: Deen Van MeerTotal Shows: 8144 (and still running)Opened: October 30, 2003 at the Gershwin TheatreGood news! Wicked continues to climb the list as a bonafide Ozian hit. The musical has been performed in over 100 cities in 16 countries around the world and has thus far been translated into six languages: Japanese, German, Dutch, Spanish, Korean, and Portuguese. Wicked has amassed over $4.6 billion in global sales and has been seen by nearly 60 million people worldwide.Scene from Wicked. Photo Credit: Joan MarcusTotal Shows: 7485Opened: October 7, 1982 at the Winter Garden TheatreClosed: September 10, 2000For almost a decade, from 1997 to 2006, Cats held the title of the longest-running show in Broadway history. The jellicles have now been seen in over 30 countries, translated into 15 languages, and seen by more than 73 million people worldwide.6. Les MiserablesTotal Shows: 6680Opened: March 12, 1987 at the Broadway TheatreClosed: May 18, 2003 at the Imperial TheatreBroadway could hear the French people sing for over sixteen years during Les Miserables' original Broadway run- it has since been revived twice. While the musical remained second in position throughout most of its life on Broadway, the London production holds the distinction of being the longest-running West End show of all time.7. A Chorus LineTotal Shows: 6137Opened: July 25, 1975 at the Shubert TheatreClosed: April 28, 1990This ode to Broadway dancers held the number one spot on this list for much of its run, until surpassed by Cats in 1997. It has spawned productions all around the world, including two in London's West End and a 2006 Broadway revival.8. Oh! Calcutta! (Revival)Total Shows: 5959Opened: September 24, 1976 at the Edison TheatreClosed: August 6, 1989The oldest show on this list, Oh! Calcutta!'s original 1969 production ran for just 1314 performances. Not until this controversial, erotic review opened seven years later was it fully embraced by the public. It remains the longest-running review in Broadway history.9. Mamma Mia!Total Shows: 5758Opened: August 18, 2001 at the Winter Garden TheatreClosed: September 12, 2015 at the Broadhurst TheatreMy, my! How could the public resist Mamma Mia!, which ran for fourteen disco-tastic years? Though the ABBA musical began its Broadway journey immediately before the terrorist attacks of September 11, it was one of few new shows to prevail, despite the subsequent struggle to attract tourists back to the city.Scene from Mamma Mia!. Photo Credit: Joan MarcusTotal Shows: 5461Opened: April 18, 1994 at the Palace TheatreClosed: July 29, 2007 at the Lunt-Fontanne TheatreThe tale as old as time lasted on Broadway for a very long time as the first Broadway musical from Disney Theatrical Productions. It has since become a huge commercial success, grossing more than $1.4 billion worldwide and playing in thirteen countries.The Longest-Running Broadway Shows Right Now:1. Chicago2. The Lion King3. Wicked4. The Book of MormonTotal Shows: 4999Opened: March 24, 2011 at the Eugene O'Neill TheatreThe first of Broadway's current line-up poised to crack the top ten, The Book of Mormon is already the longest running production in the history of the Eugene O'Neill Theatre, where it has broken the house record more than 50 times. Since it began marching two by two in 2012, the first and second national tours of The Book of Mormon have broken 105 house records at 58 different venues across the country.Scene from The Book of Mormon. Photo Credit: Julieta CervantesTotal Shows: 3771Opened: March 20, 2014 at the New Amsterdam TheatreAnother Disney hit has top ten potential. Aladdin is still staying one jump ahead of the competition, breaking 14 New Amsterdam Theatre house records. Worldwide, it has welcomed more than 10 million people and grossed over $1 billion. Its global footprint has expanded to include productions in Tokyo, Hamburg, London and Australia, in addition to the two U.S. productions.6. HamiltonTotal Shows: 3213Opened: July 6, 2015 at the Richard Rodgers TheatreLike Alexander Hamilton himself, this mega-hit musical is truly non-stop. Since opening on Broadway four years ago, Hamilton has opened sit-down productions in Chicago and London, with three ongoing national tours and an upcoming run in Australia. A future spot in the top ten seems imminent... Hamilton just needs to wait for it.Scene from Hamilton. Photo Credit: Joan MarcusTotal Shows: 1985Opened: April 22, 2018 at the Lyric TheatreThe next story in the Harry Potter series apparated from London and has been playing to magic-loving muggles since it arrived at the newly renovated Lyric Theatre. Since opening on Broadway, the two-part play has also played extended runs in Melbourne and San Francisco.Scene from Harry Potter and the Cursed Child. Photo Credit: Matthew MurphyTotal Shows: 1684Opened: April 17, 2018 at the Walter Kerr TheatreTake the road to hell in this mythic musical from Anaïs Mitchell. Hadestown was the belle of the 2019 awards season ball, earning 14 Tony nominations (and winning 8). The company continues to raise their cups eight times a week on Broadway and on tour.9. Moulin Rouge! The MusicalTotal Shows: 1537Opened: July 25, 2019 at the Al Hirschfeld TheatreMoulin Rouge! can (can can) keep playing on Broadway. This spectacular, spectacular musical is still bringing audiences to their feet with this tale of splendor and romance, of eye-popping excess, of glitz, grandeur and glory.Scene from Six. Photo Credit: Joan MarcusTotal Shows: 1273Opened: October 3, 2021 at the Lena Horne TheatreThe wives of Henry VIII are having their say and doing it their own way in Six. After transferring from a hugely successful run in the UK, this cult-favorite musical has continued its reign on Broadway and across two US tours, not to mention other productions all over the world.Want to learn even more about Broadway? We've got info on all 41 Broadway theatres, which shows are best for high schools, plus tips on when to buy tickets to a Broadway show, how to get there, what to wear, and how to know if it's age appropriate! Thirty-five years ago, a new musical took the Broadway stage on the heels of its smash-hit success on the West End. The cultural response, both in London and New York was described as "Phantom-mania," with theatregoers around the nation buzzing about the spectacle-filled melodrama full of mystery, suspense, and romance. This year, The Phantom of the Opera celebrates its 35th and final anniversary on Broadway, as its closing date approaches on April 16. Take a look back at three-and-a-half decades of the "Music of the Night" being sung on Broadway. January 26, 1988: Phantom of the Opera opens on Broadway at the Majestic Theatre Playbill cover for The Phantom of the Opera in 1988. Just two years after it opened on the West End, Phantom of the Opera opened on Broadway, becoming an immediate cultural craze. Months prior to its January 1988 opening, tickets were already sold out through September 1988. As early as November 1987, fans were camping out overnight in the subfreezing cold, desperate to purchase the next block of tickets for performances. Straight off of the West End stage, the Broadway production starred Michael Crawford as the Phantom, Sarah Brightman as Christine, and Steve Barton as Raoul. The cast also included Patti Cohenour, Judy Kaye, and newcomer at the time Rebecca Luker, who made her Broadway debut in the ensemble. Luker took over as the principal Christine the following year. With record-breaking box office success, reviews that declared the production an instant phenomenon, and a quick cult following of "phans" that returned to the production dozens of times (some, as many as one hundred) throughout its run—it was immediately clear Phantom had secured a special place in Broadway history. June 5, 1988: Phantom of the Opera Wins The Tony Award For Best Musical At the 42nd Annual Tony Awards, it was quite the line-up of nominees: Dreamgirls, Anything Goes, and Into The Woods, which Phantom famously beat for the Best Musical category. During Sondheim's reigning era in the American theatre, this win wasn't taken lightly, and gave Phantom yet another boost into megahit status. Phantom walked away with seven wins: Best Scenic Design (Maria Björnson), Best Lighting Design (Andrew Bridge), Best Direction of a Musical (Hal Prince), Best Costume Design (Maria Björnson), Best Performance by a Leading Actor (Michael Crawford), and Best Performance by a Featured Actress (Judy Kaye). May 18, 1989: The first United States tour of Phantom of the Opera launches A little over a year after its opening at the Majestic Theatre, the Broadway production hit the road with Michael Crawford stepping off of the New York stage to lead the touring cast alongside Dale Kristien as Christine. It opened on May 18, 1989 at the Ahmanson Theatre in Los Angeles. Two additional tours emerged after this, the third and final original production tour spanning 18 years, making it one of the longest-running touring theatre productions in the United States. The first national tour (Christine Company) played Los Angeles and San Francisco for a combined total run of almost ten years, with 3,902 performances and 6.6 million patrons. The second national tour (Raoul Company) played an eight-and-a-half-year run, with 3,364 performances and 7.5 million patrons. The third national tour (Music Box Company) played 7,284 performances and in a full-circle fashion, closed in Los Angeles at the Pantages Theatre on October 31, 2010. January 9, 2006: Phantom of the Opera becomes the longest-running show in Broadway history The cast of The Phantom of the Opera Joan Marcus After surpassing Cats' record of 7,485 performances, Phantom of the Opera became Broadway's longest-running show, with an 18 year run at the Majestic Theatre. The special performance was invite-only, save for 200 seats won by fans in a trivia competition. And at the curtain call, a dancer dressed as Victoria from Cats approached the Phantom (Howard McGillin, at the time) onstage to "pass the baton" from one longest-running show to the next. The evening closed out with a masked ball at the Waldorf Astoria to celebrate what was a huge milestone at the time. Little did they know, that 18-year run would nearly double, reaching 35 years on Broadway in 2023. June 15, 2008: Whoopi Goldberg plays Christine...? You read that right! Of course, it was a limited engagement run...of roughly one minute. To commemorate Phantom's 20th year on Broadway, Phantom star John Cudia was joined on his boat ride to the underground lair by none other than Whoopi Goldberg, who had the audience in a fit of giggles. Although this moment might not be history-making in the sense of being a major milestone for the production, it's certainly worth looking back on with a laugh. January 26, 2013: Phantom of the Opera celebrates 25 years on Broadway Just two years behind London's 25th anniversary, which was commemorated with the now-renowned Royal Albert Hall performance starring Ramin Karimloo and Sierra Boggess, Phantom hosted one of 2013's biggest nights on Broadway, with a special performance followed by a star-studded gala at the New York Public Library. Phan-favorite Hugh Panaro led the cast alongside Boggess who joined for a limited engagement, still riding the wave of her Royal Albert Hall breakout stardom. The evening was full of surprises, with original music supervisor David Caddick conducting the orchestra once more and onstage appearances at curtain call by Hal Prince, Andrew Lloyd Webber, Cameron Mackintosh, and Sarah Brightman. But wait...there's more! The onstage festivities concluded with a very special performance of the title song and "Music of the Night" by not one, not two, but three additional Phantoms alongside Panaro: Ramin Karimloo, John Owen Jones, and Peter Jöback. The latter went on to replace Panaro as the Phantom in April of that year. The "foursome" performance went on into Phantom fandom infamy...just ask any phan! May 12, 2014: Norm Lewis becomes the first Black actor to play the Phantom on Broadway After 26 years on Broadway, finally, a Black actor took on the role of the Phantom—a long-awaited moment of onstage representation. Joining Sierra Boggess, who played his daughter in The Little Mermaid on Broadway, Norm Lewis donned the mask beginning May 12, 2014. In an interview with Playbill, he described that he felt as though being cast as the Phantom was equivalent in likelihood to winning the lottery. Prior, only one Black actor had played the Phantom before Lewis in all of Phantom history (Robert Guillaume, who replaced Michael Crawford in Los Angeles in 1990). Said Lewis at the time, "There are so many brothers out here who can just sing circles around this show and do a phenomenal job... I was the lucky one that got picked, so I need to do my best and bring my A-game, and then hopefully that will open the door for other people." Lewis became an instant phan-favorite, and the Associated Press declared his Phantom entrance as being one of the top 10 theatre moments of 2014. His run went through February 2015. June 13, 2016: Ali Ewoldt and Jordan Donica join the cast as the first Asian Christine on Broadway and the first Black Raoul on Broadway Ali Ewoldt and Jordan Donica in Phantom of the Opera Matthew Murphy A principal cast change in June 2016 brought necessary change to the diversity of the actors playing Christine and Raoul, with Ali Ewoldt and Jordan Donica entering the production. They were the first BIPOC actors to play those roles on Broadway. Ewoldt played Christine until November 2018, serving as the principal Christine for the show's 30th anniversary. Donica's run went through January 2017, with a limited engagement return in the summer of 2022. January 26, 2018: Phantom of the Opera celebrates 30 years on Broadway Sarah Brightman and Peter Jöback What do you get when you put together a gala, an Empire State Building light show, a city holiday being declared in honor of Phantom's reign on Broadway, and the kids from the cast of School of Rock? Phantom's big 30 bash! The production called in Phantom alum Peter Jöback for a limited anniversary engagement, alongside principals Ali Ewoldt and Rodney Ingram. The gala performance was held two days before the actual anniversary on January 24. The day started off bright and early with the Phantom cast ringing the Nasdaq stock market opening bell, and Mayor Bill de Blasio declaring January 26 as "Phantom of the Opera Day" in New York City. All of these uniquely New York honors sought to emphasize Phantom's role as an NYC institution, intrinsic to the city's culture as its longest-running, mainstay musical. The special gala performance invited industry members, Phantom alumni, and a select number of phans who were able to purchase $30 seats in the balcony. Appearances included Andrew Lloyd Webber, Cameron Mackintosh, Sarah Brightman, and Hal Prince—who celebrated his upcoming 90th birthday alongside the casts and creatives, who sang "Happy Birthday" to him. Prince passed away the following year. The performance closed out with a special rock rendition of the Phantom of the Opera title song sung by Brightman and Jöback, with the Broadway cast of School of Rock playing as an onstage rock band. The celebration continued through the night at NBC's Rainbow Room, where friends and family of the Phantom cast and creative team had a perfect view of a special Empire State Building, which had a light show timed to a medley of the Phantom score. Ben Crawford, Howard McGillin, and Hugh Panaro Ben Crawford, Howard McGillin, Hugh Panaro, and David Caddick Richard Samson and Howard McGillin Peter Lentz and Hugh Panaro Ben Crawford and Kate Crawford David Caddick, Howard McGillin, Phillip J. Smith, Ben Crawford, and Hugh Panaro Kenneth Cole and Debi Larrison Paul Marlow and Joe Mantello Joe Mantello, Paul Marlow, and Debi Larrison Hugh Panaro, Howard McGillin, and Ben Crawford Hugh Panaro, Howard McGillin, and Ben Crawford Hugh Panaro, Howard McGillin, Imogen Lloyd Webber, and Ben Crawford Imogen Lloyd Webber and David Caddick In a fundraising campaign benefiting Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS, 30 fashion designers (Nicole Miller, Kenneth Cole, and Rebecca Minkoff, to name just a few) were commissioned to design their own Phantom masks to honor Phantom's 30th anniversary year. The designs were revealed during an invitation-only event on October 30, sponsored by Bank of America. The 30 masks were on display at the Museum of the City of New York for 30 days, while they were up for bidding through an online auction. October 22nd, 2021: Phantom of the Opera reopens on Broadway following the COVID-19 shutdown 586 days after Phantom's last performance in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the chandelier rose again on Broadway. Pre-pandemic principals Meghan Picerno, Ben Crawford, and John Riddle returned to their roles, and Senator Chuck Schumer kicked off the evening with a pre-show speech, declaring: "with Phantom opening tonight, we know New York is back."For those who were unable to get tickets to the anticipated event, a New Year's Eve-style countdown appeared on the megascreens in Times Square, marking the moment the chandelier rose once more inside of the Majestic Theatre. ...And Andrew Lloyd Webber DJs a street party afterwards. Andrew Lloyd Webber Smoke machines and multicolor spotlights threw a neon haze over 44th Street, with Andrew Lloyd Webber standing right in the center, atop of a truck, DJing a remix of the title song. The theatre corner of the internet went wild. Emilie Kouatchou and company in The Phantom of the Opera To mark 34 years on Broadway, Emilie Kouatchou made her principal debut as Christine. Kouatchou was the first Black Christine on Broadway, and was cast just a year behind the first Black Christine on the West End, Lucy St. Louis. Kouatchou initially made her Broadway debut as the Christine alternate in October 2021 when Phantom reopened. September 16, 2022: Phantom of the Opera announces closure on Broadway The Phantom of the Opera at the Majestic Theatre Marc J. Franklin In a chaotic fashion, unverified reports came early in the day that Phantom would soon close on Broadway, causing a social media spiral between Phantom phans and members of the theatre community as a whole. Later that evening, the news was officially reported: After a historic 35-year-run, Phantom of the Opera would