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*Dramatic Publishing*

A NEW VICTORIAN THRILLER

# **Phantom of the Opera**

*Based on the novel by  
Gaston Leroux.*

By  
GENE TRAYLOR



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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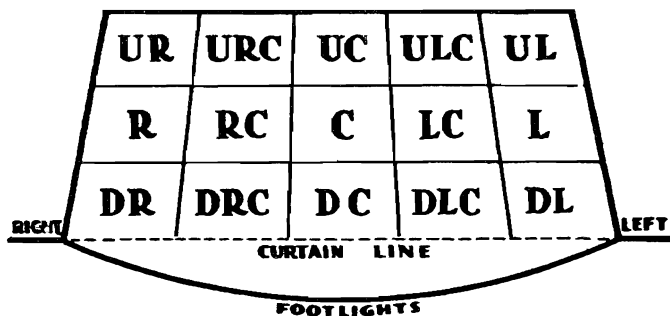
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GENE TRAYLOR

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(PHANTOM OF THE OPERA)

ISBN 0-87129-363-3

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## CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS



## STAGE POSITIONS

*Upstage* means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: UR for *up right*, RC for *right center*, DLC for *down left center*, etc. A territory designated on the stage refers to a general area, rather than to a given point.

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NOTE: Before starting rehearsals, chalk off your stage or rehearsal space as indicated above in the *Chart of Stage Positions*. Then teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement by having them walk from one position to another until they are familiar with them. The use of these abbreviated terms in directing the play saves time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

PHANTOM OF THE OPERA  
A Full-length thriller  
*For 8 Men. 4 Women. Extras. Doubling.*

C H A R A C T E R S

Monsieur Poligny . . . . . *Director of the Opera*  
Monsieur Richard . . . . . *Director of the Opera*  
Christine Daae . . . *Beautiful young understudy to star*  
Andre, Viscomte de Chagny . . . . . *Christine's fiancée*  
Inspector Bournot . . . . . *Paris Police*  
Nanette (Mme. Victorine) . . . . . *Christine's maid*  
The Phantom (Erik) . . . . . *A mad genius*  
Alphonse . . . . . *Attendant in theatre*  
Mlle. Favart\* . . . . . *Secretary to management*  
Sophie . . . . . *Maid of the star*  
Dr. DeBienne\* . . . . . *House physician*  
Monsieur Mercier\* . . . . . *Orchestra conductor*  
Stagehands, Reporters, Police . . . . . *who do the work*  
Ladies of the Ballet . . . . . *Dancers*

\*These roles may be doubled by Stagehands or Ballet Ladies.

Time: Late in the Nineteenth Century

Place: The Paris Opera

# ACT ONE

## Scene I

Scene: In the wings of the Opera. There is a tableau of stagehands, ballet girls, and the stage manager. DR, POLIGNY and RICHARD, the directors of the opera are in quiet conversation.

BOY (entering UL). Fifteen minutes, please . . . fifteen minutes to curtain!

(As he speaks, the tableau bursts into activity. Sounds of an orchestra tuning up come from off L. POLIGNY exits L, peeks through the curtain and returns to RICHARD.)

POLIGNY. The house is filled to the rafters! What an opening, what an opening!

RICHARD. Yes, this is the one Mme. Carlotta has been waiting for. If all goes well, it will make her the biggest star the opera has ever seen.

(MERCIER enters.)

POLIGNY. Not to mention the fact that it will be our biggest triumph to date as the new directors, my dear Richard.

RICHARD. There's Mercier. Let's see how he's feeling about it. Maestro!

MERCIER. Ah, Monsieur Poligny . . . Monsieur Richard, a very exciting evening, is it not?

RICHARD. It certainly is. And how is the orchestra? Everything well?

POLIGNY. No problems, I hope. I'm afraid I can't help but be nervous. Every critic in Paris is out there tonight . . . not to mention the patrons of the opera . . . and the minister of culture, of course.

MERCIER. Everything will be fine, gentlemen. La Carlotta has never sung better in the rehearsals. It will be a triumph, you can count on it.

ALPHONSE (entering with several bouquets). More flowers for Mme. Carlotta. Her dressing room must be completely full by now. (To CALL-BOY.) Tell Mme. Carlotta's maid that more flowers have arrived. Oh, wait, there she is now. Sophie! More flowers.

SOPHIE (entering). Ah, mon Dieu! Where will we put them? There is hardly room to move even now. Here, I'll take them. Merci. (Exits.)

POLIGNY. Oh, I wish I weren't so nervous. Openings always upset me, but this one in particular. You don't think we'll have any trouble from . . . well, you know . . .

RICHARD. Not you, too! Don't tell me you're beginning to believe in these ridiculous stories.

POLIGNY. Well, not exactly . . . but there have been so many . . . and some of the things that have happened around here seem more than mere accidents.

RICHARD. Nonsense! There are always accidents in a place as big as the opera. Such stories are invented by the girls from the ballet.

POLIGNY. Oh! Yes, "accidents" like the death of M. Buquet.

RICHARD. Joseph Buquet hanged himself. That was decided at the inquest. Now, let's hear no more about this. If we start talking about these things, it only adds credence to them. We certainly don't need any more bad publicity.

POLIGNY. Well, I find it all very mysterious and somewhat frightening. Oh, I certainly hope everything goes well tonight.

RICHARD. It will. It will. Now stop fidgeting so. It's about time we went to our loge. (Scream from offstage.)

POLIGNY. My God! What was that?

RICHARD. Oh, no! What now?

ALPHONSE (entering). What's happening? What's that? Is someone hurt?

RICHARD. We don't know. It came from the dressing rooms. Come on, let's go. (THEY start toward the dressing rooms.)

SOPHIE (entering). It's Madame Carlotta!

POLIGNY. Yes, yes, child, tell us! What is it?

RICHARD. What about Mme. Carlotta?

SOPHIE. She's dead!

OTHERS. Dead?

SOPHIE. Yes! Just now, when I took the flowers to her dressing room . . . I found her . . . she was lying there . . . the cord still around her neck.

POLIGNY. She was strangled?

SOPHIE. Yes, with a red satin cord!

POLIGNY. But when? How?

SOPHIE. I went to the wardrobe mistress to get her gown for the second act, and then I stopped to take some flowers that had just arrived. I was



only gone for a few minutes . . . (The BALLET GIRLS enter US and huddle together, listening.)

POLIGNY. I knew it! I knew it! I knew something terrible would happen!

ALPHONSE. We must call the police right away!

RICHARD. No! Don't call anyone!

ALPHONSE. But Monsieur, in such a case, we must notify the police immediately.

RICHARD. And have them stop the performance? With everyone in Paris out there tonight? We cannot afford such a thing!

POLIGNY. Performance? What performance? La Carlotta is dead! How can we have a performance?

RICHARD. Be quiet! I have an idea. Alphonse, go and fetch Mlle. Daae.

ALPHONSE. Oui, Monsieur. (Exits.)

POLIGNY. We're ruined! Ruined, I tell you! More bad publicity, and we cannot stand another scandal. Oh, why tonight of all nights?

RICHARD. Will you try to be calm?

POLIGNY. But who killed Mme. Carlotta? Who possibly could have done such a thing?

RICHARD. I don't know. But she's certain to have had enemies. Everyone does. I will call the police from my office *after* the performance has begun. (MERCIER enters.)

MERCIER. What's happening? What's going on?

RICHARD. It's Mme. Carlotta. She's been strangled in her dressing room.

MERCIER. Oh, no! This is terrible! Then we must cancel the performance immediately.

RICHARD. No! I've thought of a solution. We will  
*not* cancel the performance.

MERCIER. But how? I don't understand.

RICHARD. I've sent for Mlle. Daae. She knows the  
role, and she will sing it tonight. Go and see  
that the orchestra is in place. (MERCIER  
exits.) Come on, Poligny, we must see that  
no one goes in or out of that dressing room.

(RICHARD and POLIGNY exit. The STAGEHANDS  
and BALLET GIRLS gather around SOPHIE  
and whisper excitedly. After a moment,  
POLIGNY and RICHARD re-enter.)

RICHARD. Ladies! Gentlemen! Enough of this  
chatter. We have a performance to give.  
(STAGEHANDS and BALLET GIRLS retreat  
US. RICHARD turns to POLIGNY.) I'll have  
Alphonse post a guard to see that no one enters  
that dressing room.

POLIGNY. It's horrible! Too horrible! We'll never  
withstand this scandal.

ALPHONSE (enters with CHRISTINE DAAE). M'sieur  
Richard, here she is: Mlle. Daae.

RICHARD. Mlle. Christine, there's been an . . . accident.

CHRISTINE. Yes, I just heard. It's true, then?

RICHARD. I'm afraid so. And we must not cancel this  
performance. You know this role, do you not?

CHRISTINE. Yes, I do.

RICHARD. Then you could sing it?

CHRISTINE. Yes . . . of course.

RICHARD. Then go and get dressed. Quickly! You  
must sing it tonight!

(CHRISTINE pauses for a moment. SHE looks at the DIRECTORS, then turns and exits US. As SHE passes, the assembled company turn and look anxiously after her as SHE leaves. The LIGHTS FADE.)

Scene 1(a)

Scene: LIGHTS COME UP on an area DR where the BALLET LADIES are gathered excitedly around SOPHIE.

FIRST LADY. Oh, Sophie, it must have been terrible for you.

SECOND LADY. Tell us about it. You poor thing!

THIRD LADY. I was so frightened, I could hardly dance tonight.

FIRST LADY. Yes, me too . . . it's all I could think about during the whole performance.

SECOND LADY. Be quiet, you two. Let her tell us what happened.

SOPHIE. I came in with the flowers and her dress for Act Two. At first, I thought she was dressing behind the screen. Then I turned around . . . and there she was!

SECOND LADY. Oh, how terrifying!

FIRST LADY. Yes . . . yes?

SOPHIE. She was lying on the floor by the dressing table. At first, I thought she had fainted . . . and then I saw it around her neck . . .

THIRD LADY. Yes, what did you see?

SOPHIE. A piece of red satin cord . . . and her eyes were open . . . staring at nothing . . . and then

I knew she was dead!

FIRST LADY. Oh, how could you stand it? I would have died, too! It's the phantom. I know it is!

SECOND LADY. The phantom! Do you really think so?

FIRST LADY. Yes! First Monsieur Buquet . . . her conductor. And now, her. It must be.

SOPHIE. But Monsieur Buquet was a suicide. The police said so.

FIRST LADY. Just because they found him hanging in the opera cellar doesn't mean it was suicide.

SECOND LADY. Besides, you know *where* they found him. That spot!

FIRST LADY. The same spot where the phantom was seen!

THIRD LADY. Remember Jean Pierre, the stagehand who saw him, said it was in exactly that place.

SOPHIE. But did he really see something? Or just a shadow?

THIRD LADY. Yes, he did! He told me about it. Down on the third level, where they stole the scenery . . . he was all alone, and he saw a dark shadow but with a glowing white face!

SECOND LADY. Oh, I don't want to hear about all that! I'm too frightened!

FIRST LADY. Let's don't sit here talking. It's getting late.

THIRD LADY. Yes, everyone's leaving . . . and I don't want to be the last one out of the dressing room tonight!

(The LIGHTS FADE as they all exit.)