

The Phantom of the Opera, 2004.

Critique by Varia Naimy

Discovering the Beauty Within the Beast

“This loathsome gargoyle who burns in hell, but secretly yearns for heaven”, is how the Phantom depicts himself in *The Phantom of The Opera*, released in 2004 and directed by Joel Schumacher. It follows the story of a mysterious man, the Phantom, roaming the corners of the Paris Opera House, who becomes obsessed with the beautiful soprano Christine Daaé and does everything to gain her love and affection. On the other hand, Christine reconnects with an old childhood friend, Raoul, and becomes entangled in this web of complicated feelings and emotions. As for the Phantom, he is distraught by the budding romance between the two old friends and that pushes him to reach the peaks of rage and murderous obsession. Three key points that are truly remarkable in this film are the music, the performance of the actors, and the set and colours.

Attentive reader, if you find yourself unfamiliar with this title, then the first thing you should know is that this movie is a musical melodrama, and dialogue is very minimal and brief. The songs in this film will leave you humming them to yourself for hours and even days after you watch it, and only for the good reasons. The captivating melody and fine lyrics of each song will give you a very hard time picking a favourite; I, myself, find it impossible. The soundtrack of this marvellous film will put you through a tornado of emotions: from romantic and sweet songs like *All I Ask of You*, to bittersweet and grieving feelings from *Wishing You Were Somehow Here Again*, and others that thrill your soul and raise the hairs on your arms like *The Point of No Return*. And so, as mentioned in one of the songs, *The Music of the Night*, to be precise, “Close

your eyes and surrender” to this enchanting musical world, and “Softly, deftly music shall caress you/Hear it, feel it secretly possess you”.

Of course, the soundtrack of the film is nothing short of phenomenal, but it would be nothing without the outstanding performance of the cast. One cannot talk about *The Phantom of the Opera* without acknowledging the spectacular acting and angelic voice of Emmy Rossum, who was only eighteen years old at the time of release. It is also essential to talk about Gerard Butler’s sensational performance of the Phantom. Together, they become scientists in this incredible production, and their intense chemistry touches the viewers’ hearts; the immense talent the two main actors display to the public brings the story to life and makes you feel for both characters, despite the antagonistic image of the Phantom. Indeed, this film will put you through a whirlwind of feelings, and if you are like me, it will have you weeping during and after the end credits.

Finally, this incredible performance by the cast is amplified by a perfectly designed set and the colours used to portray the contrast between the worlds of luxury and spotlight, and darkness and secrecy, and so the contrast between the Phantom and the lovely Christine. Christine is mostly shown wearing white or other bright colours and is most of the time present on stage illuminated by a bright spotlight. However, the man is usually wearing black with a mask to cover his disfigured face, and he has made out of the dark spaces in the Opera underground chambers his “humble” abode. Not only does this show how different the characters are, but it can also hint at the fact that their love is already doomed since the beginning. Second, the set and the décor depict the perfect scenery for this film: the stage and the chandelier,

Christine's room, the Phantom's underground world...Everything is just as it should be to be able to call this movie a spectacular masterpiece.

In conclusion, dear reader, I suppose you already know that I would recommend the viewing of this film. It is absolutely marvellous, and it is definitely recommended. If you are a fan of drama, romance, musicals with amazing songs and melodies, intense chemistry between the characters and a little bit of gothic style, then this is the movie for you. It deserves a solid 9/10, and I hope you will enjoy it as much as I did. On a side note, I suggest you keep a box of tissues by your side because the chances you'll need it are quite high.