

Media Release
18 July 2025

***The Phantom of the Opera* returns to Sydney Harbour to launch global 40-year celebration**



Opera Australia today announced the return season of one of the world's most successful musicals, *The Phantom of the Opera*, to the Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour stage in 2026, kicking off the iconic show's global 40th anniversary celebrations in spectacular style.

Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Phantom of the Opera* is widely considered one of the most popular and stunning musicals ever created, having played to more than 160 million people in 205 cities across 58 territories, and in 21 languages.

The Sydney Harbour spectacular, directed by Australian musical theatre royalty Simon Phillips, took audiences by storm when it premiered in 2022 and now Opera Australia has the honour of staging the first major event in a world-wide program of celebrations in 2026.

Opera Australia Acting CEO Simon Militano said the company is thrilled to be teaming up again with The Really Useful Group for such an historic celebration.

"We're honoured to be playing such a prominent role in the 40th anniversary global celebrations for this iconic musical, in the same year that OA is marking its own significant milestone with its 70th anniversary.

"Our spectacular staging of *The Phantom of the Opera*, with its magical setting on Sydney Harbour, and the sweeping gothic romance and unforgettable music, all combines to create a fantastic showcase of OA's artistic excellence, and an event not to be missed" said Militano.

The Really Useful Group CEO, James McKnight, said: "We're delighted that Opera Australia will once again be staging this magnificent harbour production. It is the first of many global projects to be announced as we celebrate 40 years of *Phantom*.

"This unique staging brings to life the drama and splendour of Andrew Lloyd Webber's music that has made *Phantom* such a beloved phenomenon, loved by millions of fans old and new around the world. There could be no more fitting backdrop than Sydney Harbour to begin our year of celebrations of one of the world's most iconic musicals."

NSW Minister for Jobs and Tourism Steve Kamper said, "Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour is a signature event on our calendar that showcases Sydney's unique combination of culture and nature to the world.

"I'm thrilled Andrew Lloyd Webber has chosen Sydney to commence next year's 40th anniversary celebrations of *The Phantom of the Opera*. Staging an iconic production like *Phantom* in its milestone year, under the stars, on the water with the spectacular city skyline as the backdrop illustrates why Sydney is renowned as a global hub for cultural experiences."

Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour is supported by the NSW Government, via its tourism and major events agency Destination NSW, and through the International Foundation for Arts and Culture as Naming Rights Partner, Dr Haruhisa Handa OA's Patron in Chief, and OA's Principal Partner HSBC.

Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour – *The Phantom of the Opera*: Opens Friday 27 March 2026

Fleet Steps, Mrs Macquaries Point, Sydney

Bookings

Early access to *The Phantom of the Opera* on Sydney Harbour tickets will be available from **Tuesday 5 August** by booking an Opera Australia 2026 Season Subscription of two or more productions.

Priority pre-sale access to single-performance tickets begins **Tuesday 26 August**.
Visit opera.org.au/harbour and join the waitlist.

General public on sale from **Tuesday 2 September**.

For **travel trade bookings** or enquiries (rates, terms and conditions), please contact:
tourism@opera.org.au

★★★★★ *"The Phantom of the Opera is already an extraordinary show that has accumulated rock-solid fans over decades of continuous performances. The Handa Opera on the Harbour production does something that might not have seemed possible – it adds even more magic."*

TimeOut

★★★★★ *"If there was ever an epic tale to sweep us momentarily away from the troubled present, The Phantom of the Opera, suspended against the backdrop of the world's most beautiful harbour, is surely it."* **The Sydney Morning Herald**

"To say my jaw dropped would be an understatement. In essence, this is a must-see production for any fan of musical theatre" **The Guardian**

★★★★½ *"Truly, it's near impossible to avoid overusing superlatives in attempting to convey the accomplishments of this production. This is world-class, and it all unfolds with a backdrop of one of the world's most scenic skylines."* **Theatre People**

About *The Phantom of the Opera*

Based on Gaston Leroux's 1910 novel, *Le Fantôme de L'Opéra*, *The Phantom of the Opera* tells the story of a mysterious masked figure who lurks beneath the Paris Opera House, exercising a reign of terror over all who inhabit it. He falls madly in love with a young soprano, Christine Daaé, and devotes himself to nurturing her extraordinary talents, employing all of the devious methods at his command.

Cameron Mackintosh's acclaimed stage productions of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Phantom of the Opera* are widely considered some of the most beautiful and spectacular in history, playing to over 160 million people in 47 territories and 195 cities in 21 languages.

Having premiered at Her Majesty's Theatre in London's West End on 9 October 1986 and debuted on Broadway at the Majestic Theatre on 26 January 1988, *The Phantom of the Opera* has won over 70 major theatre awards. On January 9, 2006, *The Phantom of the Opera* became the longest-running show in Broadway history, surpassing *Cats* with its 7,486th performance.

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