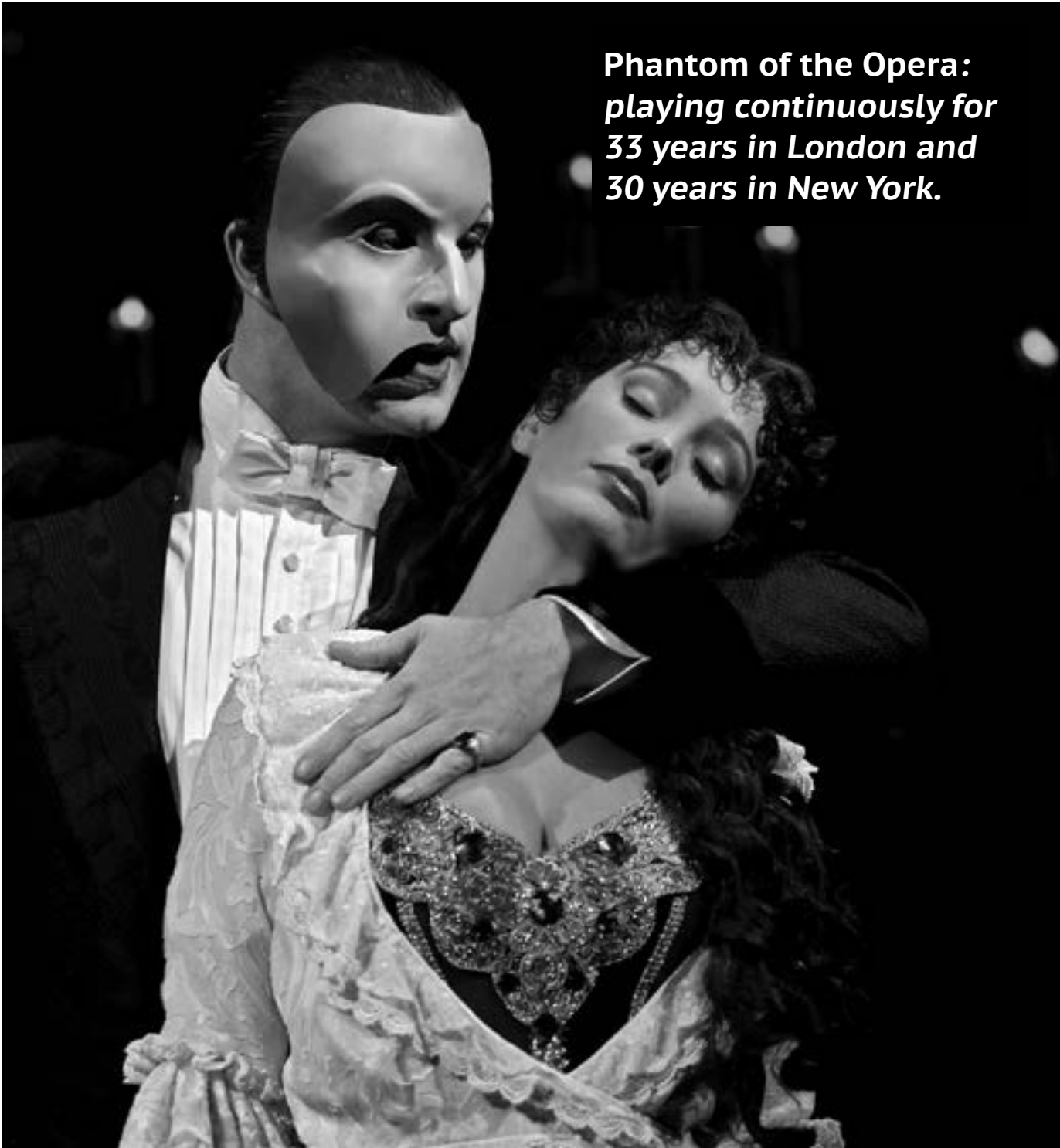


Let's Sing! Let's Dance! **A2**



Singin' in the Rain (1952) is considered the best musical film ever. It is about a film company when films with sound were invented. It starred Gene Kelly and Debbie Reynolds.



**Phantom of the Opera:
playing continuously for
33 years in London and
30 years in New York.**

Musical comedies are some of the most popular plays and films in the world.

Theatre and songs have a long history. Ancient Greek theatre had songs. Shakespeare's plays had songs and dances. They were considered a normal part of a show. Opera, of course, has a long, popular tradition. But the musical comedy started appearing in New York and London about 1870. These were shows with dialogue, a story, songs and dances. The songs were part of the story. Performers specialised for musicals – it's difficult to sing and dance at the same time. musical-theatre performer needs lots of talents.

When the first films with sound appeared, music was important. In fact, the first film with sound, *The Jazz Singer* (1928), was a musical.

Soon, one of the most popular types of film was the musical. Stars, and shows, went from Hollywood to Broadway, New York's theatre district, and from Broadway to Hollywood. Today, some musicals play for years and years in the theatre: *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Cats*, *Les Misérables* and *The Lion King* for example.

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The *Lion King* was an animated film and was then adapted for the theatre. Disney films are often musicals, right back to *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* in 1937.

The 1991 animated film was remade as "live action" in 2017.

The London production of *The Lion King*.



Disney

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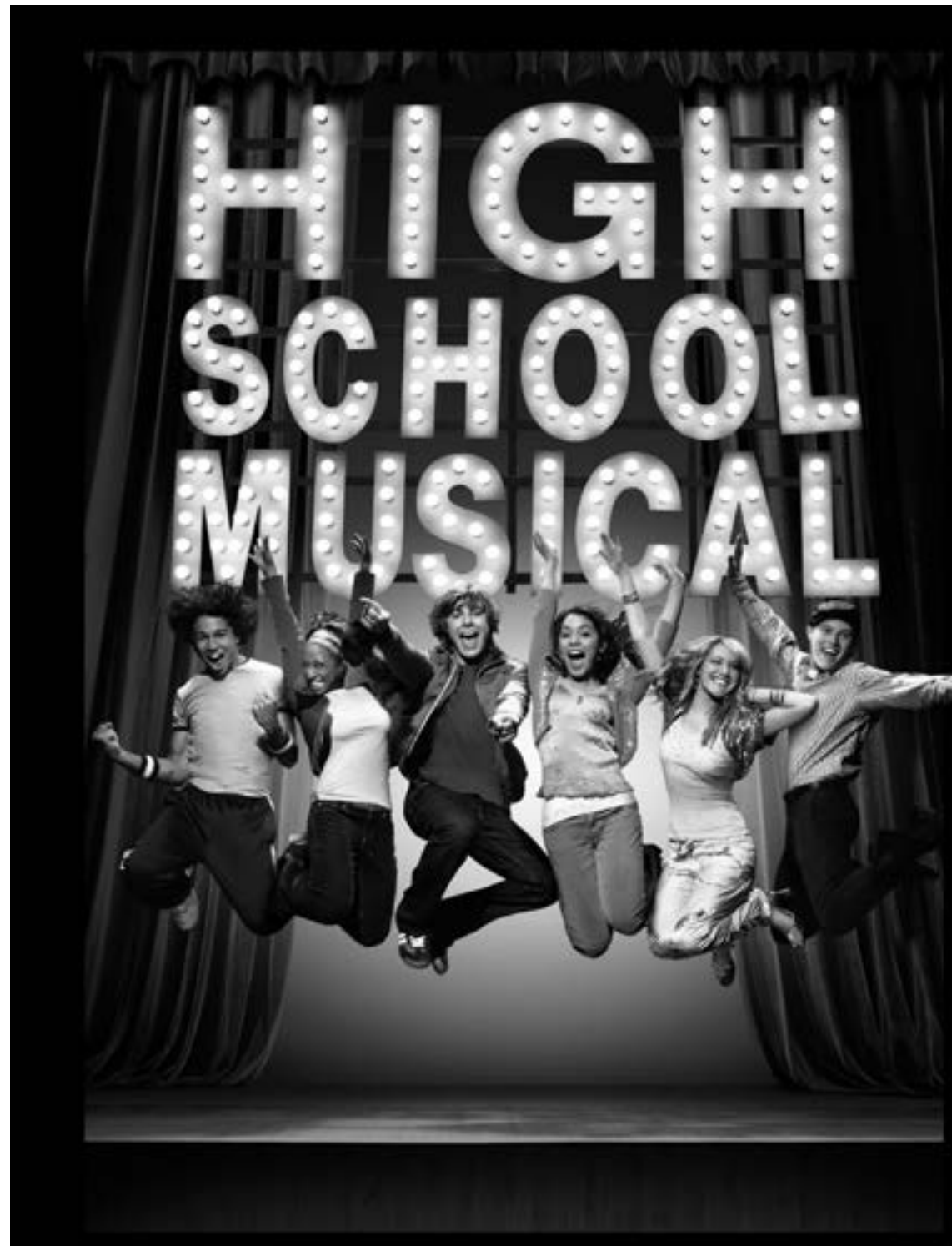
The cinema made musical performers into international stars. Fred Astaire was a singer and dancer, who performed with his sister Adele and then dancer Ginger Rogers. He starred in more than 40 films.



Musicals have big budgets and introduce innovations like special effects.

© Lobster Films.
Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers in Top Hat, 1935

Fred Astaire dans Mariage royal (Royal Wedding), réal. Stanley Donen, 1951. Droits réservés.



Disney

High-school Musicals

One reason for the continued popularity of musicals in the theatre in the U.S.A. is that it became a tradition for high schools to create productions of musicals. It's estimated that there are more than 30,000 each year. Musicals are particularly popular because there are lots of different roles, so lots of students can participate. There are roles for people who can sing, dance, act, play an instrument, or a combination of those.

The three Disney *High School Musical* films were about that tradition. And now high-schools produce the theatre version as part of their tradition!



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Musicals traditionally start with a big “production number”: a song with lots of singers and dancers. In the modern musical La La Land (2016), the film begins with a production number typical of modern Los Angeles: drivers in a traffic jam on their way to work start singing and dancing. The cars become part of the choreography.



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Musicals are popular in lots of cultures. India's film industry, the biggest in the world, is specialised in Bollywood musicals with beautiful costumes and spectacular dances.

