



The story of Groundhog Day is well known and has drawn in crowds
MANUEL HARLAN

ARTS

Groundhog Day musical smashes box office records at the Old Vic

Tim Minchin's adaptation has enticed thousands of fans to London

[Kieran Gair](#)

Thursday August 17 2023, 12.50pm, The Times

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Groundhog Day, the ambitious stage adaptation of the popular 1993 film, has shattered box office records at the Old Vic, the producers have announced.

With a surge in tourists visiting the capital, schools on summer holidays and a star-studded creative team, audiences are turning out en masse this summer to see the Olivier Award-winning musical.

Directed by Matthew Warchus, the theatre's artistic director, the musical features music and lyrics by Tim Minchin, the Australian composer and comedian, and book by Danny Rubin, who co-wrote the film.



The stage adaptation of the beloved film has been well-received in London

The musical is the highest-grossing Old Vic production in history, with more than 90,000 people having seen the show since it opened on June 8.

In a sign of the theatre's growing ability to draw in new audiences, about 60 per cent of the people who saw *Groundhog Day* had never seen a production at the Old Vic before. And following a time of high anxiety around theatre's post-pandemic return, the triumph of setting a new box office record was met with jubilation by the production's creative team.

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Warchus said: "It has been a true honour and delight to [bring *Groundhog Day* back to the Old Vic](#) and give it a fresh new lease of life. The show, now seen by over 65,000 people in 2016 and

almost 90,000 people this summer, has broken all box office records (including its own records set in 2016).

“This surprisingly [moving and joyful show](#) is very dear to my heart, and I can’t wait to bring it to a wider audience in the near future. Watch this space . . .”

Rubin had co-written the fantasy-comedy film, which starred Bill Murray and Andie MacDowell, alongside director Harold Ramis.

The story follows a weatherman stuck in a time loop in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, on Groundhog Day, February 2, when locals look to a rodent to predict whether spring will be early or late.



Tim Minchin posing with the head of the groundhog costume. His musical has been a huge success for the Old Vic

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Rubin and Ramis shared a Bafta for best original screenplay with the film. In 2017, the adaptation won best new musical and best actor in a musical for American actor Andy Karl at the Olivier Awards, along with securing six nods.

A run of the musical on Broadway saw the musical nominated for seven Tony awards, including original musical score and book (musical), in 2017.

However, the production closed early and a US tour was subsequently cancelled after it failed to find a large enough audience to support its running costs.

In January 2018, Minchin, also known for *Matilda the Musical*, wrote on Twitter: “Sadly (despicably) there’ll be no US tour.” This year, Karl reprised his role as Phil Connors when the show started its run in London in May.

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Groundhog Day at the Old Vic is set to end its run on August 19.

Some of London’s best and longest-running shows:

Ask musical-theatre fans for the shows that made the most impression on them, and many will cite one of this trio: *Les Misérables*, *Wicked*, or [*The Phantom of the Opera*](#).

Les Misérables

Les Misérables isn’t the most uplifting of shows, but it’s certainly one of the most popular. The blockbuster is set in early 19th-century France, with the action centring on the Paris Uprising of 1832.

The production is the West End’s longest-running musical, with more than 14,000 performances, and the second-longest-running musical in the world.

It began its West End reign at the Palace Theatre in 1985, then moved to the Queen’s Theatre in 2004, where it has remained ever since, albeit with a temporary hiatus during the venue’s transformation into the Sondheim Theatre in 2019.

The Phantom of the Opera

Just behind *Les Mis*, at more than 13,800 performances, is Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Phantom of the Opera*. Also set in 19th-century France, it has won international acclaim since its 1986 premiere at Her Majesty's Theatre.

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As well as being among the longest-running West End shows, it was the first to reach 10,000 performances on Broadway.

Wicked

Wicked has clocked up more than 5,000 performances since it began at the West End's Apollo Victoria Theatre in 2006. Stephen Schwartz and Winnie Holzman's compelling twist on the *Wizard of Oz* story, based on Gregory Maguire's 1995 novel, *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West*, combines big themes with well-drawn characters and, unusually, focuses on an enduring female friendship.

The Mousetrap

But top of the list of the longest-running West End shows — and the world's longest-running theatre production — is Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap*, which has managed more than 28,100 performances since its 1952 premiere.

Under the terms of its contract, no film adaptation can be made until the West End production has been closed for at least six months.

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