



## **CPLG TO TAKE CENTRE STAGE WITH ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER'S MUSICALS**

**London, 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019** – CPLG has been appointed worldwide licensing agent by Andrew Lloyd Webber's The Really Useful Group, to represent the composer's best-known, award-winning musicals – *The Phantom of the Opera*, *CATS* and *Starlight Express*.

The Really Useful Group, which is wholly owned by Andrew Lloyd Webber, produces, licenses and promotes Webber's shows and music around the globe.

CPLG will develop a cross-category licensing programme, including apparel, dress-up, gifting, paper and stationery and homewares, which celebrates the themes and captures the iconic logos of these well-loved shows.

*The Phantom of the Opera*, the longest running musical in Broadway history, tells the love story of a masked figure who lurks beneath the Catacombs of the Paris Opera House. It first opened in October 1986 in London and is now in its 33<sup>rd</sup> year. It has been seen by more than 145 million people worldwide across 30 countries, and has received more than 70 major theatre awards.

Since its world premiere in 1981, *CATS* has been presented in over 30 countries, has been translated into 15 languages and has been seen by more than 73 million people worldwide. This year will see the theatrical release of the smash hit musical on December 20<sup>th</sup> when Universal Pictures and Working Title release the big-screen adaptation of *CATS* with an ever-growing A-list cast including Jennifer Hudson, Taylor Swift, Ian McKellen, James Corden and Judi Dench.

*Starlight Express* opened in London in March 1984, taking the revolutionary approach of building a race track all the way around the auditorium. In April 1991, *Starlight Express* became the second-longest running musical in London theatre history, at that time. The show has been produced all over the world from the USA to Japan and Australia. There is also a production in Bochum, Germany, which has been running for over 25 years and has been seen by 15 million people.

*The Phantom of the Opera* and *CATS* recently made their first foray into the world of fashion when The Really Useful Group announced a collaboration with US streetwear brand, The Hundreds. Founded in LA and sold worldwide, The Hundreds is one of the biggest players in the streetwear scene and heavily influenced by 80's and 90's skate, punk and pop-culture. This collaboration explores the connecting themes between the theatrical productions and streetwear culture across a range of adult apparel and accessories.

Steve Manners, EVP Business Development, at CPLG, said: "Andrew Lloyd Webber has reigned over the musical theatre world for nearly five decades with fans of his musicals spanning many countries and generations. There is huge potential to capitalise on this universal appeal and we already have some exciting conversations in the pipeline which we will be announcing soon."



**For further information, contact:**

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**About The Really Useful Group**

The Really Useful Group is wholly owned by Andrew Lloyd Webber and exists to produce, license and promote his shows and music around the globe representing Andrew's work in theatre, film, television, music publishing and all forms of licensing.

**The Phantom of the Opera**

Based on the classic novel *Le Fantome de L'Opera* by Gaston Leroux, Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Phantom of the Opera* tells the story of a masked figure who lurks beneath the Catacombs of the Paris Opera House, exercising a reign of terror over all who inhabit it. He falls madly in love with an innocent young soprano, Christine, and devotes himself to creating a new star by nurturing her extraordinary talents and by employing all of the devious methods at his command. The musical opened at Her Majesty's Theatre on 9 October 1986, and at the Majestic Theatre in New York on 26 January 1988, with Michael Crawford, Sarah Brightman and Steve Barton in the leading roles. There have been dozens of productions worldwide since. Now, 33 years after the production, *The Phantom of the Opera* is one of most successful productions in entertainment history, having played to over 145 million people in 150 cities across 30 countries. It is the longest running show on Broadway, having celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2018, and has won more than 70 major theatre awards, including seven Tony Awards and four Oliver Awards, including Best Musical.

**CATS**

Adapted from TS Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*, Andrew Lloyd Webber's *CATS* is one of the longest-running shows in West End and Broadway history, received its world premiere at the New London Theatre in 1981 where it played for 21 record-breaking years and almost 9,000 performances. The ground-breaking production, originally directed by Trevor Nunn and featuring musical staging by Gillian Lynne, was the winner of the Olivier and Evening Standard Awards for Best Musical. In 1983, the Broadway production become the recipient of seven Tony awards, including Best Musical, and ran for 18 years.

Since its world premiere in 1981, *CATS* has been presented in over 30 countries, has been translated into 15 languages and has been seen by more than 73 million people worldwide. Both the original London and Broadway cast recordings won Grammy Awards for Best Cast Album. The magnificent musical score includes one of the most treasured songs in musical theatre – 'Memory', which has been recorded by over 150 artists, from Barbara Streisand and Johnny Mathis to Liberace and Barry Manilow.

**Starlight Express**

With music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, lyrics by Richard Stilgoe and choreography by Arlene Phillips, *Starlight Express* has been seen by over 20 million people and gross box office world-wide is estimated at over \$1.2 billion dollars.

A child's train set magically comes to life and the various engines compete to become the "Fastest – engine in the World"! The underdog, Rusty the Steam train, has little chance until he is inspired by the



legend of the “Starlight Express” and ultimately defeats his arch rivals Greaseball and Electra before going on to win the hand of the lovely first-class coach, Pearl.

The show opened at the Apollo Victoria in London on 27th March 1984, taking the revolutionary approach of building a race track all the way around the auditorium. In April 1991, *Starlight Express* became the second-longest running musical in London theatre history, at that time.

The show has been produced around the world, from the USA to Japan and Australia. There is also a production in Bochum, Germany, which has been running for over 25 years and has been seen by an incredible 15 million people.

#### **About CPLG**

CPLG ([www.cplg.com](http://www.cplg.com)) is one of the world’s leading entertainment, sport and brand licensing agencies with offices in the UK, Benelux, Nordics, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Poland, Middle East, Greece & Turkey and the US. Owned by DHX Media ([www.dhxmedia.com](http://www.dhxmedia.com)) a leader in the creation, production and licensing of family entertainment rights, CPLG has more than 40 years of experience in the licensing industry. It provides each of its clients with dedicated licensing and marketing industry professionals and a fully-integrated product development, legal and accounting service. CPLG believe that partnership is about clarity, openness and trust, and is widely known for its no-nonsense, straightforward approach; Expert Common Sense.

#### **About DHX Media**

DHX Media Ltd. (TSX: DHX, NASDAQ: DHXM) is a global children’s content and brands company, recognized for such high-profile properties as *Peanuts*, *Teletubbies*, *Strawberry Shortcake*, *Caillou*, *Inspector Gadget*, and the acclaimed *Degrassi* franchise. One of the world’s foremost producers of children’s shows, DHX Media owns the world’s largest independent library of children’s content, at 13,000 half-hours. It licenses its content to broadcasters and streaming services worldwide and generates royalties through its global consumer products program. Through its subsidiary, WildBrain, DHX Media operates one of the largest networks of children’s channels on YouTube. Headquartered in Canada, DHX Media has offices worldwide. Visit us at [www.dhxmedia.com](http://www.dhxmedia.com).