

# ...Dwelling Structure in 8 Episodes

## by Chamber made Opera

In Andrew Lloyd Webber's latest musical/opera *Love Never Dies* (which opens here in Melbourne Australia tomorrow night) *The Phantom (of The Opera)* now hides out in New York City's freak-show city Coney Island. He invites husband & wife Christine and their child to visit him; not knowing what to expect they turn up. Tonight's **Chamber Made Opera** performance is the exact reverse of this story.

A happy family of 3, surrounded by beauty art and love have invited "the Phantom (you)" into their world, and you must silently bear witness not to planned scenes of horror but to happy normalcy. The sumptuous music of Lloyd Webber gives way to these artist's sounds of silence. Interrupted only now and then by echoes of the past and the outside world traffic noises you are made to invisibly partake in a non-horror non-Musical (in the theatre definition) operatic experience. As phantom figure you must sit quietly, not reveal yourself or feelings eavesdrop on their buildings past, as you ghost-like move through the rooms of their world unable to leave. Let the entertainment begin.....

Ironically set in an old Northcote music-hall, this "sound-scape with figures" production (scarily) reminded me of a petty-criminal friend who would break into and rob people's houses, shower, cook a meal, take a nap and even swim in their pool if they had one. Such was the intimacy of experiencing a theatrical performance with quietly albeit constructed "background noises"; that of the guilt of the silent robber trapped in a dwelling with the family carrying on their lives not knowing he was there. Surrounded by the mundane cooking of raisin bread, we invisibly watch as our hosts **Madeleine Flynn** make tea; her partner **Tim Humphrey** on consoles plays overlapping sound effects/keyboards piped into speakers in every room by over a kilometer of wire as we standby, we eat a piece of raisin toast and continue on.

Where were we, were we invited into or invading the familiar space of this normal family with their young musician kid (his garage band is Skeletal Panthers)? ‘

A capacity crowd (determined by the size of the dwelling) filled each room in turn, commencing in the huge hall to kitchen and sitting/lounge-room to eavesdrop on suburban life. Like the trapped unseen criminal we couldn't get out, not even through the (three paneled framed glass" doorway through the private tree surrounded yard to freedom; "sound-sure deprivation". To add to the drama, none of our friends knew we were there, the (performance space-private home) address was kept secret as part of our art conspiracy so we became as anonymously trapped as this tiny suburban family.

Chamber Made Opera dwells in a space the rest of us call intimacy; this is a real family (like CMO's players) acting out their lives surrounded by us silent strangers. **Wired for sound** (the electric stove was disconnected to allow the cables running the hidden speakers), dad played sounds/music as mum and kid Winnie went through their daily TV game-playing cooking rituals apparently unaware of our large (in)visible presence but is it entertainment? Usually defined as a music and/or drama/comedy performance in a public space; YES, this work satisfies all the selection criteria plus one; captive audience non-participation!

On arrival guests were served wine, organic popcorn from an installation art-piece, and asked to mingle using the “palm-book handheld devices” to read a script digitally encoded on paper music sheets to reveal fragments of the story of tonight’s “ordinary evening” home opera. **Each graphic symbol** once located in the viewfinder of the handheld I-device, displayed script excerpts (later projected in order onto the final (lounge-room) wall as incidental outside real-noise mixed into sound effects whispered and blared from other room speakers. At times surrounded, and next eerily left alone silent, we journeyed through a family’s evening interrupted by ghosts of the old halls past local history. Referential in the extreme, minimal in its portrayal, but strangely kind in its respect for things past. **This Zen-like production** quietly moved us slowly through time to its very simple music-played in the yard outside rendition of “Old Lang Syne”. On a small keyboard played by mum; dad appeared in the doorway, both froze, ghostly other room/world music giving way to silence they bowed thanking us for (re)visiting their real home.

Symbolic, pristine, historic reference pieces, such as the towering wooden sculpture decorated in the entrance hall, (which emitted sounds activated by the aforementioned handheld “I-thingo’s”) along with the edible real-popcorn tree sculpture interacted beautifully with this operatic/soundscape.

There is only a few seats left now for the Friday (tonight’s) late-nite show; so get your kit together see how the another-half live, mix with fellow art music lovers & invade this creative family home for a sticky beak, you’ll love the vicarious feeling.

**“Dwelling Structure an Opera in 8 time use intervals”** starts at 8pm, late show Friday 10pm contact Chamber Made Opera pay \$45 to get the secret location, nice wine nibbles and company, sit back and enjoy another great production!

## Bookings

[http://www.chambermadeopera.com/shop/Buy\\_tickets\\_to\\_Dwelling\\_Structure](http://www.chambermadeopera.com/shop/Buy_tickets_to_Dwelling_Structure)

<http://www.trybooking.com/Booking/BookingEventSummary.aspx?eid=9007>

## Links

<http://www.chambermadeopera.com/>

<http://www.facebook.com/ChamberMadeOpera>

<http://twitter.com/chambermadeblog>

<http://chambermadeopera.wordpress.com/>

<http://www.youtube.com/user/chamberblog>