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## *Orfeo ed Euridice*

Libretto

# Interleaf



**Above and Overleaf**  
Mark Morris Dance Group,  
*Jesu, Meine Freude*,  
photo by Dan Rest

ed

Opera in three acts  
in the 1762 Vienna version

by Christoph Willibald von Gluck  
Libretto by Raniero de'Calzabigi

*Orfeo ed Euridice* will be performed  
at the Brooklyn Academy of Music  
May 16—18, 1996

by  
Mark Morris Dance Group  
and  
Handel & Haydn Society Chorus and Orchestra

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*Euridice*

# Orfeo ed Euridice

by Roger Downey

*Orfeo ed Euridice was the first of Gluck's three so-called reform operas written with Raniero de'Calzabigi, in which a "noble simplicity" in the action and the music was intended to replace the complicated plots and florid musical style of opera seria.*

—Jeremy Hayes, in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*

To be known as the "reformer" of an art as beloved for its absurdities as its accomplishments; to be labeled an apostle of "noble simplicity" when extremity and extravagance seem of its very essence: has any composer in the history of music a more uninviting reputation than Christoph Willibald von Gluck?

The more scholars protest the centrality of Gluck's oeuvre in the history of opera, the more elevated, worthy, and desperately dull they make it sound. Composers as different as Mozart and Berlioz adored *Orfeo ed Euridice*; but their encomia have not managed to keep the work in the repertory. Today even those "florid," turgidly plotted *opere serie* are making a comeback, while the reforming masterwork of Gluck still languishes in the shadows. Why?

Until recently a number of obstacles stood in the way of anyone wanting to revive *Orfeo ed Euridice* as it was first presented before the Imperial Court in Vienna. Until 1963, there was no trustworthy edition of this 1762 original available to set against the plethora of transposed, rearranged, re-orchestrated "performing versions" of the score, devised by admirers of more enthusiasm than integrity. Until even more recently, there were simply no male altos both technically and temperamentally suited to the role of Orfeo. But, thanks to recordings, there has been ample evidence for more than a decade that the musical resources for a successful mounting of the 1762 *Orfeo* once more exist. Why has no major opera house risen to the challenge?

In large measure, I believe, because even the finest recording does not and cannot reflect its greatness. *Orfeo ed Euridice* stands perhaps unique in the operatic repertory as a music drama devised from the ground up to a detailed theoretical plan—an utterly self-conscious musico-theatrical manifesto somehow transmuted—brought to life as an organic work of art. More truly a Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk* than any of Wagner's own music-dramas, *Orfeo ed Euridice* must be seen for its full grandeur to emerge; it must be seen in a performance which honors its creators' plan and follows it to the letter.

*It is owing to their accuracy of representation that the works of men like Corneille and Racine, Raphael and Michelangelo, have been handed down to posterity . . . Why can we not add to the names of these great men those of the masters of dance who made themselves so celebrated in their day? But they are scarcely known; is it the fault of their art, or of themselves?*

—Jean-George Noverre, *First Letter on the Dance*, 1760 (trans. Cyril Beaumont)

The plan which produced *Orfeo ed Euridice* was not in its first impulse that of any artist, but that of a producer. When 33-year-old Count Giacomo Durazzo came to Vienna in 1750 as Genoese ambassador to the Imperial Court, the musical life of the Hapsburg capital was dominated by opera, and for a generation operatic life had been dominated by the librettist Pietro Metastasio and the composer Johann Adolf Hasse. As ambitious as he was able, Durazzo set out to supplant the aging eminences with an artistic team of his own.

*He imported a French theatrical troupe to perform popular, unpretentious opéras comiques; when they proved successful, he recruited Gluck, a recent arrival in Vienna, to adapt such works for Viennese tastes and stage practice.*

Since Hasse and Metastasio represented the quintessence of heavy, elaborate Italian *opera seria* practice, Durazzo turned to France for inspiration and assistance. He formed an alliance with the young assistant director of the court ballet, Gasparo Angiolini, an alliance which paid off when Angiolini was promoted to the top job in 1757. He imported a French theatrical troupe to perform popular, unpretentious *opéras comiques*; when they proved successful, he recruited Gluck, a recent arrival in Vienna, to adapt such works for Viennese tastes and stage practice.

Metastasio and Hasse still occupied the operatic high ground in Vienna. In 1760, Durazzo saw his chance for a flank attack on their dominant position in the publication of Jean-Georges Noverre's *Lettres sur la danse et sur les ballets*. In this immensely influential book, the youthful Noverre argued for a revival of the theater by means of the simplicity, directness, and emotional truth of "dramatic mime." Less than a year after the *Lettres* reached Vienna, Durazzo, now manager of all Imperial theaters, announced the production of a dramatic ballet based on the tale of Don Juan, its action to be staged by Maestro Angiolini to a new score by Gluck.

*Don Juan* was a sensation, in every sense of the word. The unrelievedly grim story-line, "explicit" action, and headlong pace of the 45-minute work put it in the greatest possible contrast to the decorous pace and architectural formality of abstract, mythological courtly ballet. While all the town was still arguing about the merits of the new style in dramatic dance, Durazzo mobilized his artistic team for a frontal assault on the old guard: to create an opera which would make *opera seria* look as tired and stodgy as formal court ballet looked after *Don Juan*.

The team was the same which created *Don Juan*, with one major addition. Raniero Calzabigi was yet another young artist-adventurer prowling *ancien régime* Europe. He arrived in Vienna from Paris in 1761 with a reputation as one familiar with all the artistic and intellectual currents in that progressive capital, and was immediately recruited by Durazzo to compose the libretto for the opera intended to blow the old operatic guard sky-high.

With its mythological subject of Orpheus' descent into the Underworld in search of his lost Eurydice, Calzabigi's *Orfeo* is, if anything, old-fashioned for an operatic subject—on the surface. But in fact, his treatment of the tale is truly revolutionary. Against the rigidly repeating recitative-aria-exit formula of *opera seria* he sets the musicodramatic structure of the seventeenth-century French *tragédie lyrique*, a fluid sequence of recitatives (accompanied and unaccompanied), dramatic scenes, arioso, and full-blown arias each furthering the flow of the action. Nothing is allowed to interrupt that flow: the dance sequences, which in even the most solemn works of Lully and Charpentier are primarily *entr'actes* and *divertissements*, become in *Orfeo ed Euridice* integral elements in unfolding the action.

Calzabigi's treatment of character is as revolutionary as his treatment of narrative. The heroes and heroines of *opera seria* are rulers, and their amatory dilemmas public and dynastic. Calzabigi's Orpheus is no demigod or king, but a mere man, and his emotions of no consequence to anyone but himself. Orpheus is also an artist, and his story portrays the power of art to force its way against the laws of this world and the next: pure wish fulfillment in terms of its own time, but heavy with significance in light of the course European history took over the next half century.

*Orfeo ed Euridice* is often described as an apotheosis of neoclassical art. This label represents a fundamental misunderstanding of the work's sources and objectives. No work could be farther in spirit from the chilly classical drama of Dryden or Voltaire, the reductive, rationalizing brilliance of the *Encyclopedistes*. Beneath its classical draperies, *Orfeo ed Euridice* breathes the mind and spirit of the most demonic soul of the eighteenth century, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, prophet of the simple, the natural, the unaffected, of the force and value of the irrational, of the mysterious truth of the heart. Far from being a capstone of Classic art, it is a fragrant presage of the Romantic era; little wonder that Mozart, Berlioz, Wagner all fell deeply under its spell.

The very qualities in the work which attract and fascinate artists are the ones which make it inaccessible to a lay audience. Gluck is a fine dramatic composer, especially when provided with a libretto as intelligently conceived and deftly detailed as Calzabigi's; but his music, conceived as support for a staged drama, does not stand on its own merits alone as does the music of more prodigally gifted composers. Even at its very best, as in the second scene of the second act of *Orfeo ed Euridice*, it is theatrical in inspiration: it "paints" the light-filled glory of the Elysian fields as no scene-painter could (or can), but it expects—indeed, demands—that what the ear hears will be reinforced, completed by the eye, in the stage pictures, choral movements, the soloists' behavior and expression. *Orfeo ed Euridice*, in short, is not just complete only in a stage performance; it is complete only when approached with the same intentions as its creators, in the determination to blend movement, stage pictures, sound, and storytelling into a single inseparable whole.

In critical theory, any operatic production subscribes to some such ideal. In practice, few, even the most successful, rise above the measure of a lucky fluke. There are simply too many artists involved in even the most modest productions, too many divergent ambitions, too many differing artistic agendas, too little discussion, too little money, too little time, to achieve an effect of more than serviceable collage.

Such a production, no matter how gifted the individual artists involved, cannot capture the true nature of a work like *Orfeo ed Euridice*. It is, in fact, not simply an opera but a "meta-opera:" an opera about the nature of opera, a performance exploring the expressive contours of the arts of performance. Beautifully and sensitively presented it is both a moving and memorable musical fable and an argument about the nature of art. Only great sophistication single-mindedly applied can achieve both the "naive" affect and the heroic assertion its creators worked for.

—Roger Downey is a founder and senior editor of *Seattle Weekly* in Seattle, Washington. He has written extensively on Mark Morris and his work.

# An Opera for the Age of Enlightenment

by Patricia Howard

Gluck's *Orfeo* belongs to the courtly tradition of marking great feasts, dynastic marriages, political visitations, and the domestic celebrations of a ruling family with an appropriately sumptuous musical entertainment. For its first performance, in Vienna on October 5, 1762, the sparkling overture, lavish use of the chorus and ballet, spectacular underworld scenes, and the triumphal finale were designed to appeal to an audience celebrating the name day of the Hapsburg Emperor Francis I. Significantly, *Orfeo* was described not as an opera, but as an *azione teasnale*, an occasional, festival piece which involved the collaboration of the leading theatrical talents in Vienna. "Sublime" declared the diarist Zinzendorf, "deeply moving, the music perfectly adapted to the subject, with the most beautiful stage designs."

Musical criticism from this period is rare and unsystematic, and it is only by luck that a full review of the first performance was published in the official Viennese newspaper, the *Wienerisches Diarium*. The writer of this anonymous article praises the music of "our Christoph Gluck, who has surpassed himself," the ballets choreographed by the innovative dancer Gasparo Angiolini, were commended for their relevance to the plot, and their integration with the choruses; Giovanni Mari Quaglio's designs were judged to be remarkable, and the set for the Elysian fields brought special praise, though the critic carps at its execution by those who painted the scenery. But the lion's share of the adulation was reserved for the poet Rainieri de'Calzabigi—to the extent that he is suspected of having ghosted the notice himself.

To be fair to Calzabigi, the poet's role was crucial to the success of such work. The conventions of court music drama required that the subject matter had to be carefully crafted to suit the occasion. Mythical subjects were fashionable. They reflected the intellectual tastes for neo-Classicism, and they were also conveniently open to a variety of relevant interpretations. Pastoral drama, which implied contrasts and parallels between the reality of court life and a rural idyll, was especially popular. In the case of *Orfeo*, the connection between the Hapsburg court and Arcadia was already in place; six years earlier, Gluck had composed a festive setting of *Il re pastore* (The Shepherd King) for the emperor's birthday. In *Orfeo*, the emperor is represented by Orpheus, and the opera celebrates his enduring love for his consort, Maria Theresia.

Plots chosen for their supposed relevance can appear grotesquely inappropriate to twentieth-century eyes. For two-thirds of the opera, Orpheus is, after all, in anguish, mourning the untimely death of his wife Eurydice. But Gluck's opera was not intended to be taken as prophesying the empress' imminent demise, any more than, five years later, his *Alceste* was thought to imply that the recently widowed empress should have sacrificed her own life to save her husband's. To a mid-eighteenth-century audience, Gluck and Calzabigi's *Orfeo* acts out a representation of love that is stronger than death, promises honored, and obedience rewarded.

Enlightenment drama investigates what it means to be fully human. Often built around a series of trials through which man (and in Italian drama the protagonist usually is male) must pass to achieve his full potential, it is goal-oriented, and its aim is always to define the highest degree of physical, mental, and moral development to which humanity might aspire. Orpheus passes his trial of courage by descending into the Underworld, and his test of skill by subduing the Furies with his singing. He fails his trial of obedience, by the narrowest of margins, because he was asked to attempt the superhuman—the denial of love. By turning to look at Eurydice, he demonstrated that faithful love is a more human virtue than the fulfillment of a vow extracted under duress. In the words of the Viennese critic, “to keep a secret is not the most difficult task for a reasonable man, but not to give help to a suffering wife is asking too much.” His failure also provides the opportunity to illustrate another tenet of the Enlightenment, an act of clemency on the part of the authority. For while Orpheus is an icon of Francis, the husband of Maria Theresia, Amor stands for Francis as emperor and representative of Enlightenment absolutism in Europe.

Calzabigi had no qualms about altering the ending of the story “out of a pleasing regard for the requirements of our local theater.” Other ages had told the tale differently. The earliest versions, in Virgil and Ovid, and also in the Renaissance pastoral play by Poliziano, end violently, with Orpheus being torn limb from limb by vengeful women. Rinuccini’s libretto for the first operatic settings by Peri and Caccini in 1600 eliminates the trial element by imposing no condition on Orpheus, who successfully rescues Eurydice from the Underworld amid general rejoicing. Monteverdi’s more famous telling of the same story in 1607 has a happy ending of sorts, since Orpheus’ reward is to be taken up to heaven where he may forever gaze upon Eurydice among the stars. Calzabigi rejected the violence, the tensionless denouement and the abstract consolation of apotheosis after physical and mental torment, a living, breathing wife, and addresses Maria Theresa’s oft stated concern that theatre should promote solid domestic virtues. The empress rewarded the poet’s calculated tribute by enthusiastically and uncharacteristically attending fourteen performances of the first production. (Even so, scrupulous voices were raised against “moral ambiguities” in the work because the audience does not know what unlicensed activity Orpheus and Eurydice might indulge in between the end of Act II and the beginning of Act III!)

The structure of *Orfeo* satisfies the taste for symmetry and balance in the Age of Reason. In this most architectural of operas, the arching framework of the slight plot is supported at each side by pillars of the opening and closing choruses, the first deeply mourning, the last cheerfully triumphant. The opening chorus is remarkable for its expressive intensity; three times Orpheus calls out his wife’s name above the somber funeral ritual. Gluck urged a later exponent of the part; the French tenor Le Gros, to “think at this moment neither of the music nor of the chorus, but scream

with as much pain as if someone were sawing your leg off!" The first Orpheus, however, was the castrato Guadagni, and Calzabigi acknowledged his contribution to creating the role, writing that "the part fitted him like a glove." What is known of Guadagni's talents? He impressed Handel, who gave him the alto solos in *Messiah* and *Samson*, his voice was small, but flexible and finely nuanced; he had been trained as an actor by none other than David Garrick, and may well have seized the opportunity provided by the pauses between his phrases to enhance his role with the expressive gestures for which he was famous—Burney tells us that "Guadagni's admirable action" accounted for much of the opera's popularity. No happy ending could quite match this movement in emotional range or theatrical effect, but there is evidence that Gluck rejected a more pedestrian version of his final chorus in favor of the springing step of the festively scored vaudeville heard today. As the critic of the *Diarium* declared, "Has not the virtuous Orpheus merited his happier fate?"

Within this outermost frame, there are more equal and opposite structures to be articulated. The opera divides in the middle of Act II, its first half moving from darkness to darkness, with the lighter central episode of Amor's hopeful interpolation. The second half is framed by light, the light of the Blessed Spirits and the light of the happy ending, containing at its center the dark tragedy of Orpheus' struggle to fulfill Amor's arbitrary conditions. The parallel situations of the protagonists from another arch, as in each half of the opera, one of them calls for some signal of response: in Act I Orpheus cries out in vain for Eurydice to speak to him ("L'idol del mio cor non mi risponde!"); in Act III Eurydice begs him, all but vainly, to look at her ("Rispondi, traditor!") Then there are the two great laments which evidence Gluck's ability to couch extremes of emotion in the language of a simple song, "Chiamo il mio ben così" in Act I is balanced by the "Che farò" in Act III, both miracles of controlled passion: "The chevalier Gluck is simplifying music," wrote Burney, "he tries all he can to keep his muse chaste and sober. . . Most of his airs in *Orfeo* are as plain and simple as English ballads."

The magnificent second act contains the fulcrum of the work, in two extended tone pictures, one of darkness, one of light. With a curious literalism, composers of the Enlightenment never fail to grasp an opportunity to paint the changing quality of light—from the wealth of gently crescendoing dawns in Haydn's symphonies and oratorios (not forgetting the "big bang" in *The Creation*) to the radiant emergence, after their trials, of Tamino and Pamina into Sarastro's enlightened kingdom in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*. Gluck's music for the gloomy cavern in Act II Scene I, with its smoke-filled depths and flickering illumination, is not merely fearsome—though the three heads of Cerberus bark realistically—but has a certain nobility too: Orpheus does not snatch Eurydice from a gang of thugs, but persuades suffering spirits to grant him access to a sweet token of the life they can barely understand. When he later rehearsed the opera in Paris, Gluck braved a

demarcation dispute and brought about a minor revolution in the opera house by insisting that the dancers themselves sang the repeated cries of "No!" as they contested Orpheus' entry into the Underworld.

For the delights of the Elysian Fields, Gluck produced a masterpiece. Using tiny orchestral motifs as effectively as Impressionist painters a hundred years later were to use dabs of paint, he represents, in "Che puro ciel," the shimmer and dazzle of light itself. This elaborate score must have given trouble in performance. Gluck told Burney of "the difficulties he had met with disciplining the band, both vocal and instrumental performers, at the rehearsals of *Orfeo*, and that "he frequently obliged them to repeat some of his maneuvers twenty or thirty times." The theater schedules confirm an unusually large number of rehearsals for this work, and "Che puro ciel" is one of the numbers which Gluck simplified in revising the work for Paris. Even in its revived version, the intimate interdependence between voice and orchestra was hailed as something new—Beaumarchais described Gluck's orchestra as "an actor in the drama."

*Orfeo*, an occasional work in a minor genre, became a landmark in operatic history. Its one-off nature was quickly forgotten as by fits and starts it entered the Viennese repertoire, beginning exceptionally well with nineteen performances in 1762 alone. Performances across Europe soon followed. In the ten years after the premiere, *Orfeo* was seen in Italy, England, Germany, and Sweden, and largely through this one opera, Gluck became an international celebrity. Visiting him in Vienna in 1772, Burney expressed the opinion that "his invention is, I believe, unequalled by any other composer who now lives, or has ever existed." Another visitor, the Swedish composer Kraus, wrote that "no pilgrim approached the relics of the holy land with greater reverence than I did this great patriarch." "We are all Gluckists at Ferney," declared Voltaire. And in Paris, a reluctant convert to Gluck's cause gave *Orfeo* perhaps the finest tribute that could be paid to any work of art: "To spend a couple of hours in the enjoyment of so great a pleasure," wrote Rousseau, "persuades me that life is worth living."

—This article originally appeared in the *Cambridge Opera Handbook* Gluck's *Orfeo* by Patricia Howard.

# Orfeo ed Euridice

## Synopsis

### The Argument

*The poet/singer Orfeo, son of Apollo and the muse Calliope, weds the dryad Euridice. During the festivities, Euridice, walking abroad with her friends the nymphs, is assailed by the jealous Aristaeus. In fleeing his attack she steps on a snake whose venomous bite kills her. Wedding becomes funeral.*

### Act One

#### Scene One

A Lonely Grove  
Euridice's Grave

Nymphs and shepherds lament Euridice's death ("Ah se intorno a quest'urna funesta"). Left alone, Orfeo adds his voice to the rites. Only Echo replies ("Chiamo il mio ben così"). Orpheus vows to rescue Euridice from the Underworld ("Numi! barbari numi").

#### Scene Two

Amor appears with word that Jove, pitying Orfeo's sorrow, will allow him to descend, alive, into the land of the dead to retrieve Euridice. To make this trial more difficult, Orfeo must neither look at Euridice, nor explain why looking is forbidden. If he fails this test, he will lose her forever ("Gli sguardi trattieni"). Orfeo agrees and begins his voyage.

### Act Two

#### Scene One

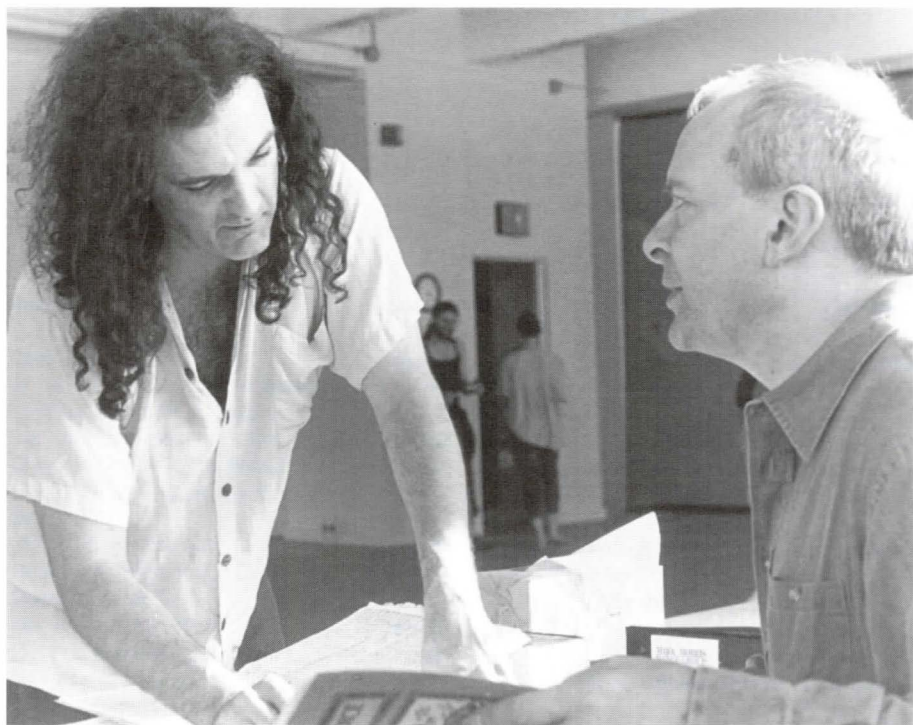
The Gate of Hades

Furies and ghosts try to deny Orfeo's passage to the Underworld ("Chi mai dell'Erebo"). His lament softens and placates them. He is eventually allowed to pass through to the Elysian Fields.

#### Scene Two

Elysium

Orfeo is moved by the calm beauty of the landscape ("Che puro ciel, che chiaro sol"). Heroes and heroines bring Euridice to him ("Torna, o bella, al tuo consorte). Without looking at her, he takes her away.



Mark Morris and  
Christopher Hogwood  
photo by Tom Brazil

### **Act Three**

#### *Scene One*

##### *A Dark Labyrinth*

Orfeo leads Euridice toward the upper air, unallowed to look at her ("Vieni, segui i miei passi"). Euridice doesn't understand. Orfeo can't explain ("Vieni, appaga il tuo consorte!"). Euridice panics at the thought of a life without the love of Orfeo ("Che fiero momento"). In desperation he turns to her. She dies, again. How can he live without her? ("Che farò senza Euridice?"). He decides to kill himself.

#### *Scene Two*

Amor reappears and stays Orfeo's hand. In response to Orfeo's deep love and devotion, Amor revives Euridice, again. The three of them return to earth.

#### *Scene Three*

##### *The Temple of Love*

Orfeo, Euridice, Amor, the nymphs and the shepherds all celebrate the power of love with song and dance ("Trionfi Amore!").

# Act I

## **Overtura**

*Scena I*  
Orfeo ed il Coro

### **Coro**

Ah, se intorno a quest'urna funesta,  
Euridice, ombra bella, t'aggiri,

### **Orfeo**

Euridice!

### **Coro**

Odi i pianti, i lamenti, i sospiri  
Che dolenti si spargon per te.

### **Orfeo**

Euridice!

### **Coro**

Ed ascolta il tuo sposo infelice  
Che piangendo  
Ti chiama e si lagna

### **Orfeo**

Euridice!

### **Coro**

Come quando  
La dolce compagna  
Tortorella amorosa perdè.

### **Orfeo**

Basta, basta, o compagni!  
Il vostro duolo aggrava il mio!  
Spargete purpurei fiori,  
Inghirlandate il marmo,  
Partitevi da me!  
Restar vogl'io solo  
Fra quest'ombre funebri e oscure  
Coll'empia compagna di mie sventure.

## **Overture**

*Scene I*  
Orpheus and Chorus

### **Chorus**

Ah! If around this funeral urn,  
Eurydice, sweet spirit, you hover,

### **Orpheus**

Eurydice!

### **Chorus**

Hear the plaints, the laments, the sighs  
Which we mourners utter for you.

### **Orpheus**

Eurydice!

### **Chorus**

And hearken to your unhappy husband,  
Who, weeping,  
Calls you and makes moan.

### **Orpheus**

Eurydice!

### **Chorus**

As when  
The amorous dove  
Loses her dear companion.

### **Orpheus**

Enough, enough, my friends!  
Your grief increases my own!  
Scatter purple flowers,  
Place garlands on her tomb,  
And leave me!  
I would remain alone  
Among these dark and mournful shades  
With the pitiless company of my misfortunes!

**Ballo****Coro**

Ah, se intorno a quest'urna funesta,  
Euridice, ombra bella, t'aggiri,  
Odi i pianti, i lamenti, i sospiri  
Che dolenti si spargon per te.

**Orfeo**

Chiamo il mio ben così  
Quando si mostra il dì,  
Quando s'asconde!  
Ma, oh vano mio dolor!  
L'idol del mio cor  
Non mi risponde!

**Orfeo**

Euridice, Euridice,  
Ombra cara, ove sei?  
Piange il tuo sposo  
Ti domanda agli Dei,  
A' mortali ti chiede  
E sparse a' venti  
Son le lagrime sue,  
I suoi lamenti!

**Orfeo**

Cerco il mio ben così  
In queste, ove morì,  
Funeste sponde.  
Ma solo al mio dolor,  
Perchè conobbe amor,  
L'eco risponde.

**Orfeo**

Euridice! Euridice! Ah, questo nome  
San le spiagge, e le selve  
L'appresero da me!  
In ogni valle  
Euridice risuona, in ogni tronco  
Scrisse il misero Orfeo:  
Orfeo infelice,  
Euridice, idol mio,  
Cara Euridice!

**Ballet****Chorus**

Ah! If around this funeral urn,  
Eurydice, sweet spirit, you hover,  
Hear the plaints, the laments, the sighs  
Which we mourners utter for you.

**Orpheus**

Thus do I call my love  
When day shows itself  
And when it disappears.  
But ah! vain is my grief!  
The idol of my heart  
Does not reply.

**Orpheus**

Eurydice, Eurydice,  
Beloved shade, where are you?  
Your husband weeps,  
Begg the gods for you  
And asks for you among mortals,  
Yet scattered to the wind  
Are his tears  
And his laments!

**Orpheus**

Thus do I seek my love  
On these sad shores  
Where she died.  
But to my grief  
Echo alone replies,  
Since it knew our love.

**Orpheus**

Eurydice, Eurydice! Ah, that name  
The seashore knows, and the woods  
Learnt from me!  
In every valley  
Eurydice resounds, on every tree  
The wretched Orpheus has written:  
Unhappy Orpheus,  
Eurydice, my love,  
Dear Eurydice!

**Orfeo**

Piango il mio ben così,  
 Se il sole indora il dì,  
 Se va nell'onde.  
 Pietoso al pianto mio  
 Va mormorando il rio,  
 E mi risponde.

**Orfeo**

Numi! barbari Numi,  
 D'Acheronte e d'Averno pallido abitor,  
 La di cui mano avida delle morti  
 Mai disarmò, mai trattener  
 Non seppe beltà ne gioventù,  
 Voi mi rapiste la mia bella Euridice—  
 Oh memoria crudel!—sul fior degli anni!  
 La rivoglio da voi, Numi tiranni!  
 Ho core anch'io per ricercar  
 Sull'orme de'più intrepidi Eroi,  
 Nel vostro orrore la mia sposa,  
 Il mio ben!

*Scena II*

Amore, e detto

**Amore**

T'assiste Amore!  
 Orfeo, della tua pena  
 Giove sente pietà.  
 Ti si concede le pigre  
 Onde di Lete vivo varcar!  
 Del tenebroso abisso sei sulla via:  
 Se placar puoi col canto le furie,  
 I mostri, e l'empia morte,  
 Al giorno la diletta Euridice  
 Farà teco ritorno.

**Orfeo**

Ah, come? Ah, quando?  
 E possibil sarà?  
 Spiegati!

**Amore**

Avrai valor che basti  
 A questa prova estrema?

**Orfeo**

Mi prometti Euridice,  
 E vuoi ch'io tema?

**Orpheus**

Thus do I mourn my love,  
 Whether the sun gilds the day  
 Or sinks into the waves.  
 The brook, taking pity on my complaints,  
 Goes murmuring by  
 And answers me.

**Orpheus**

O gods, cruel gods!  
 You, the pale inhabitant of Acheron and Avernus,  
 Whose greedy hand was never stayed  
 By beauty or youth,  
 Nor could keep it from death,  
 You stole from me my lovely Eurydice—  
 Oh cruel memory!—in the flower of her life.  
 I want her back from you, tyrannous gods!  
 I too have the courage, in the footsteps  
 Of the most intrepid heroes,  
 To search for my wife,  
 My loved one, in your horror!

*Scene II*

Amor and Orpheus

**Amor**

Love will assist you!  
 Orpheus, Jove has taken pity  
 On your grief.  
 It is granted you to pass  
 The sluggish waters of Lethe alive!  
 Go on your way to the shadowy abyss:  
 If with your singing you can placate the Furies,  
 The monsters, and pitiless death,  
 You can take back your beloved Eurydice  
 With you into the light of day.

**Orpheus**

But how? and when?  
 Can this be possible?  
 Explain!

**Amor**

Have you courage enough  
 For this extreme trial?

**Orpheus**

You promise me Eurydice,  
 And you think I could be afraid?

### **Amore**

Sai però con qual patto  
L'impresa hai da compir.

### **Orfeo**

Parla!

### **Amore**

Euridice ti si vieta il mirar  
Finchè non sei fuor degli antri di Stige!  
E il gran divieto rivelarle non dei!  
Se no, la perdi e di nuovo e per sempre;  
E in abbandono al tuo fiero desio  
Sventurato vivrai!  
Pensaci, addio!

### **Amore**

Gli sguardi trattieni,  
Affrena gli accenti,  
Rammenta che peni,  
Che pochi momenti  
Hai più da penar!  
Non sai purché talora  
Confusi, tremanti  
Con chi gl'innamora  
Son ciechi gli amanti,  
Non sanno parlar!

### **Orfeo**

Che disse? Che ascoltai?  
Dunque Euridice vivrà,  
L'avrò presente?  
E dopo i tanti affanni miei,  
In quel momento,  
In quella guerra d'affetti,  
Io non dovrò mirarla,  
Non stringerla al mio sen!  
Sposa infelice!  
Che dirà mai? Che penserà?  
Preveggo le smanie sue,  
Comprendo le angustie mie!  
Nel figurarlo solo  
Sento gelarmi il sangue,  
Tremarmi il cor!  
Ma lo potrò! Lo voglio!  
Ho risoluto! Il grande  
L'insoffribil de'mali è l'esser privo  
Dell'unico dell'anima amato oggetto.  
Assistetemi, o Dei! La legge accetto.

### **Amor**

Then know on what conditions  
You must complete the task.

### **Orpheus**

Speak!

### **Amor**

Forbidden is the sight of Eurydice  
Until you are beyond the caves of the Styx!  
And of this great prohibition you must not tell her!  
Otherwise, you lose her again, and for ever;  
And you will live unhappy,  
A prey to your fierce desire!  
Think on this: farewell!

### **Amor**

Restrain your glances,  
Refrain from words:  
Recall, if you suffer,  
That you have to suffer  
But a few moments more!  
Do you not know  
That sometimes lovers,  
Confused and trembling,  
Are blind to those they love,  
And cannot speak?

### **Orpheus**

What said he? What did I hear?  
That Eurydice will live  
And I shall have her here?  
And after all my torments,  
In that moment,  
Torn by emotions,  
I must not look at her,  
Not clasp her to my bosom!  
Unhappy wife!  
What will she say? What will she think?  
I foresee her impatience,  
I understand my anguish.  
At the mere thought  
I feel my blood congeal,  
My heart falter.  
But I can! I will!  
I am resolved! The greatest,  
Most intolerable of ills is to be deprived  
Of the only being my soul adores.  
Be with me, ye gods! I accept your decree.

# Act 2

*Scena I*

Orfeo ed il Coro

**Ballo**

**Coro**

Chi mai dell'Erebo  
Fralle caligini  
Sull'orme d'Ercole  
E di Piritoo  
Conduce il piè?

**Ballo**

**Coro**

Chi mai dell'Erebo  
Fralle caligini  
Sull'orme d'Ercole  
E di Piritoo  
Conduce il piè?

D'orror l'ingombrino  
Le fiere Eumenidi,  
E lo spaventino  
Gliurli di Cerbero,  
Se un dio non è!

**Ballo**

**Orfeo**

Deh! placatevi con me,  
Furie, larve, ombre sdegnose!

**Coro**

No!

**Orfeo**

Vi renda almen pietose  
Il mio barbaro dolor!

*Scene I*

Orpheus and Chorus

**Ballet**

**Chorus**

Who is this  
Who draws near to us  
Through the gloom of Erebus  
In the footsteps of Hercules  
And of Pirithous?

**Ballet**

**Chorus**

Who is this  
Who draws near to us  
Through the gloom of Erebus  
In the footsteps of Hercules  
And of Pirithous?

May the savage Eumenides  
Overwhelm him with horror,  
And the howls of Cerberus  
Terrify him  
If he is not a god.

**Ballet**

**Orpheus**

O be merciful to me,  
Ye Furies, ye spectres, ye angry shades!

**Chorus**

No!

**Orpheus**

May my cruel grief  
At least earn your pity!

**Coro**

Misero giovane,  
 Che vuoi, che mediti?  
 Altro non abita  
 Che lutto e gemito  
 In queste orribili  
 Soglie funeste!

**Orfeo**

Mille pene, ombre moleste,  
 Come voi sopporto anch'io!  
 Ho con me l'inferno mio,  
 Me lo sento in mezzo al cor.

**Coro**

Ah, quale incognito  
 Affetto flebile  
 Dolce a sospendere  
 Vien l'implacabile  
 Nostro furor?

**Orfeo**

Men tiranne, ah! voi sareste  
 Al mio pianto, al mio lamento,  
 Se provaste un sol momento  
 Cosa sia languir d'amor!

**Coro**

Ah, quale incognito  
 Affetto flebile  
 Dolce a sospendere  
 Vien l'implacabile  
 Nostro furor?

Le porte stridano  
 Su'neri cardini  
 E il passo lascino  
 Sicuro e libero  
 Al vincitor!

**Chorus**

Wretched youth,  
 What seek you? What is your purpose?  
 Here dwell naught  
 But grief and lamenting  
 In these fearful,  
 Mournful regions!

**Orpheus**

A thousand pangs I too suffer,  
 Like you, O troubled shades!  
 My hell lies within me,  
 In the depths of my heart.

**Chorus**

Ah! What unknown  
 Feeling of pity  
 Sweetly comes  
 To soften  
 Our implacable rage?

**Orpheus**

Ah! You would be less harsh  
 To my weeping and lamenting  
 If for but a moment you could know  
 What it is to languish for love!

**Chorus**

Ah! What unknown  
 Feeling of pity  
 Sweetly comes  
 To soften  
 Our implacable rage?

Let the gates creak  
 On their black hinges,  
 And let the victor,  
 Safe and free,  
 Be allowed to pass.

*Scena II*

**Ballo**

**Orfeo**

Che puro ciel, che chiaro sol,  
Che nuova serena luce è questa mai!  
Che dolce lusinghiera armonia  
Formano insieme  
Il cantar degli augelli,  
Il correr de' ruscelli,  
Dell'aure il sussurar!  
Questo è il soggiorno  
De' fortunati Eroi!  
Qui tutto spira un tranquillo contento,  
Ma non per me.  
Se l'idol mio non trovo,  
Sperar non posso!  
I suoi soavi accenti,  
Gli amorosi suoi sguardi, il suo bel riso,  
Sono il mio solo, il mio diletto Eliso!  
Ma in qual parte ei sarà?  
Chiedasi a questo  
Che mi viene a incontrar stuolo felice.  
Euridice dov'è?

**Coro**

Giunge Euridice!

**Coro**

Vieni a' regni del riposo,  
Grand'eroe, tenero sposo,  
Raro esempio in ogni età!  
Euridice amor ti rende,  
Già risorge, già riprende  
La primiera sua beltà.

*Scene II*

**Ballet**

**Orpheus**

How clear the sky! How bright the sun!  
How new and serene is this light!  
What sweet, enchanting harmony  
Do the song of the birds,  
The purling of the streams,  
The murmur of the breezes  
Make together!  
This is the abode  
Of the blessed heroes!  
Here everything breathes peace and contentment,  
But not for me.  
If I cannot find my idol,  
There is no hope for me!  
Her sweet voice,  
Her loving glances, her tender smile,  
Are my only, my blissful Elysium!  
But where can she be?  
Let me ask this happy crowd  
Which comes to meet me.  
Where is Eurydice?

**Chorus**

Eurydice is coming!

**Chorus**

Come to the realms of bliss,  
Great hero, tender husband,  
Rare example in any age  
Amor returns Eurydice to you,  
Already she revives and recovers  
All the flower of her beauty.

## **Ballo**

### **Orfeo**

Anime avventurose,  
Ah, tollerate in pace le impazienze mie!  
Se foste amanti,  
Conoscerete a prova  
Quel focoso desio,  
Che mi tormenta,  
Che per tutto è con me.  
Nemmeno in questo placido albergo  
Esser poss'io felice,  
Se non trovo il mio ben.

### **Coro**

Viene Euridice!

### **Coro**

Torna, o bella, al tuo consorte,  
Che non vuol che più diviso  
Sia da te pietoso il ciel.  
Non lagnarti di tua sorte,  
Che può dirsi un altro Eliso  
Uno sposo sì fedel.

## **Ballet**

### **Orpheus**

Kind spirits,  
Ah! suffer my impatience in peace!  
If you were lovers  
You would know for yourselves  
The burning desire  
Which torments me,  
Which goes with me everywhere.  
Not even in this peaceful haven  
Can I be happy  
If I do not find my love.

### **Chorus**

Here is Eurydice!

### **Chorus**

Return, fair one, to your husband,  
From whom merciful heaven  
Wishes you never more to be parted.  
Do not lament your lot,  
For a husband so true  
Can be called another Elysium.

# Act 3

## *Scena I*

Orfeo ed Euridice

### **Orfeo**

Vieni, segui i miei passi,  
Unico amato oggetto  
Del fedele amor mio!

### **Euridice**

Sei tu? M'inganno?  
Sogno? Veglio? O deliro?

### **Orfeo**

Amata sposa, Orfeo son io, e vivo ancor!  
Ti venni fin negli Elisi a ricercar.  
Fra poco il nostro cielo, il nostro sole,  
Il mondo di bel nuovo vedrai!

### **Euridice**

Tu vivi? Io vivo?  
Come? Ma con qual arte? Ma per qual via?

### **Orfeo**

Saprai tutto da me.  
Per ora non chieder più!  
Meco t'affretta,  
E il vano importuno timor dall'alma sgombra!  
Ombra tu più non sei,  
Io non son ombra.

### **Euridice**

Che ascolto? E sarà ver?  
Pietosi Numi  
Qual contento è mai questo!  
Io dunque in braccio all'idol mio  
Fra' più soavi lacci  
D'Amore e d'Imeneo  
Nuova vita vivrò!

## *Scene I*

Orpheus and Eurydice

### **Orpheus**

Come, follow my steps,  
Dearest, only object  
Of my faithful love.

### **Eurydice**

Is it you? Am I deceived?  
Am I dreaming or awake? Or delirious?

### **Orpheus**

Beloved wife, I am Orpheus, and I am still alive.  
I came to search for you even in Elysium.  
Soon you will see our sky, our sun,  
Our dear world once again!

### **Eurydice**

You are alive? I am living?  
How? But by what art, by what means?

### **Orpheus**

I will tell you all,  
But do not ask more now!  
Hasten with me,  
And banish vain importunate fear from your soul!  
You are no longer a shade,  
And I am not a shade.

### **Eurydice**

What do I hear? Can it be true?  
Merciful gods,  
What joy this is!  
In my love's arms,  
In the sweet nets  
Of Love and Hymen,  
I will live life anew!

**Orfeo**

Sì, mia speranza!  
 Ma tronchiam le dimore,  
 Ma seguiamo il cammin.  
 Tanto è crudele la fortuna con me,  
 Che appena io credo di possederti,  
 Appena sò dar fede a me stesso.

**Euridice**

E un dolce sfogo del tenero amor mio  
 Nel primo istante che tu ritrovi me,  
 Ch'io ti riveggo  
 T'annoja, Orfeo!

**Orfeo**

Ah, non è ver, ma...  
 Sappi...senti...  
 (Oh legge crudel!)  
 Bella Euridice,  
 Inoltra i passi tuoi!

**Euridice**

Che mai t'affanna  
 In sì lieto momento?

**Orfeo**

(Che dirò?  
 Lo preveddi!  
 Ecco il cimento!)

**Euridice**

Non m'abbracci? Non parli?  
 Guardami almen.  
 Dimmi, son bella ancora,  
 Qual era un dì?  
 Vedi, che forse è spento  
 Il roseo del mio volto?  
 Odi, che forse s'oscurò  
 Quel che amasti,  
 E soave chiamasti,  
 Splendor de'sguardi miei?

**Orpheus**

Yes, my dearest!  
 But let us delay no more  
 And follow our road.  
 So cruel has fortune been with me  
 That I hardly can believe that I possess you.  
 I can scarcely believe myself.

**Eurydice**

Yet a soft pledge of my tender love  
 In the first moment that you find me again,  
 That I see you again,  
 Annoys you, Orpheus!

**Orpheus**

Ah, that is not true, but...  
 Know that...listen...  
 (Oh cruel decree!)  
 Dear Eurydice,  
 Quicken your steps!

**Eurydice**

But what distresses you  
 In this happy moment?

**Orpheus**

(What can I say?  
 I foresaw it!  
 This is the moment of danger!)

**Eurydice**

You do not embrace me? Nor speak?  
 At least look at me.  
 Say, am I still beautiful  
 As I was once before?  
 Look, has the color in my cheeks  
 Perhaps faded?  
 Listen, has the splendor of my eyes  
 That you loved,  
 And you called sweet,  
 Perhaps dimmed?

**Orfeo**

(Più che l'ascolto,  
Meno resisto.  
Orfeo, coraggio!)  
Andiamo, mia diletta Euridice!  
Or non è tempo  
Di queste tenerezze,  
Ogni dimora è fatale per noi.

**Euridice**

Ma...un sguardo solo...

**Orfeo**

È sventura il mirarti.

**Euridice**

Ah, infido!  
E queste son l'accoglienze tue!  
Mi nieghi un sguardo,  
Quando dal caro amante  
E dal tenero sposo  
Aspettarmi io dovea  
Gli amplessi e i baci!

**Orfeo**

(Che barbaro martir!)  
Ma vieni e taci!

**Euridice**

Ch'io taccia! E questo ancora  
Mi restava a soffrir?  
Dunque hai perduto  
La memoria, l'amore,  
La costanza, la fede?  
E a che svegliarmi dal mio dolce riposo  
Or ch'hai pur spento  
Quelle a entrambi sì care d'Amore  
E d'Imeneo pudiche faci!  
Rispondi, traditor!

**Orfeo**

Ma vieni, e taci!

**Orfeo**

Vieni, appaga il tuo consorte!

**Orpheus**

(The more I listen,  
The less can I resist.  
Courage, Orpheus!)  
Come, my beloved Eurydice!  
Now is not the time  
For these tendernesses;  
Any delay is fatal for us.

**Eurydice**

One single look!

**Orpheus**

To look at you would be disastrous.

**Eurydice**

Ah, faithless one!  
And this is your welcome!  
You deny me a glance  
When I should expect  
From a true lover  
And tender husband  
Embraces and kisses!

**Orpheus**

(Cruel torture!)  
Do come, and be silent!

**Eurydice**

I be silent! Did I have  
To suffer this too?  
Have you then forgone  
Memory, love,  
Faith and constancy?  
For what was I awakened from my soft repose,  
Now that you have extinguished  
Those chaste torches  
So dear to both Love and Hymen?  
Reply, traitor!

**Orpheus**

Do come, and be silent!

**Orpheus**

Come, do your husband's bidding!

**Euridice**

No, più cara è a me la morte,  
Che di vivere con te!

**Orfeo**

Ah, crudel!

**Euridice**

Lasciami in pace!

**Orfeo**

Nò, mia vita, ombra seguace  
Verrò sempre intorno a te!

**Euridice**

Ma perchè sei sì tiranno?

**Orfeo**

Ben potrò morir d'affanno,  
Ma giammai dirò perchè!

**Euridice ed Orfeo**

Grande, o Numi, è il dono vostro!  
Lo conosco e grata/grato io sono!  
Ma il dolor, che unite al dono,  
È insoffribile per me!

**Euridice**

Qual vita è questa mai  
Che a vivere incomincio!  
E qual funesto,  
Terribile segreto  
Orfeo m'asconde!  
Perchè piange, e s'affligge?  
Ah, non ancora troppo  
Avvezza agli affanni,  
Che soffrono i viventi,  
A sì gran colpo  
Manca la mia costanza;  
Agli occhi miei  
Si smarrisce la luce,  
Oppresso in seno,  
Mi diventa affannoso il respirar.  
Tremo, vacillo,  
E sento fra l'angoscia e il terrore  
Da un palpito crudel vibrarmi il core.

**Eurydice**

No, death is dearer to me  
Than life with you!

**Orpheus**

Cruel one!

**Eurydice**

Leave me in peace!

**Orpheus**

No, my life, I will always come after you  
Like a haunting shadow.

**Eurydice**

Then why are you so harsh?

**Orpheus**

I well could die of sorrow,  
But I will never tell you why.

**Eurydice and Orpheus**

Great is your gift, ye gods!  
I recognize it and am grateful!  
But the grief which accompanies  
Your gift is past all bearing!

**Eurydice**

What life is this now  
Which I am about to lead?  
And what fatal,  
Terrible secret  
Does Orpheus hide from me?  
Why does he weep and grieve?  
Ah, I am as yet unaccustomed  
To the sorrows  
Suffered by the living!  
Beneath so great a blow  
My constancy fails,  
The light fades  
Before my eyes;  
My breath, locked in my bosom,  
Becomes labored.  
I tremble, I sway  
And feel my heart wildly beating  
With anguish and terror.

**Euridice**

Che fiero momento,  
 Che barbara sorte  
 Passar dalla morte  
 A tanto dolor!

Avvezzo al contento  
 D'un placido oblio,  
 Fra queste tempeste  
 Si perde il mio cor.

Vacillo, tremo...

**Orfeo**

Ecco un nuovo tormento.

**Euridice**

Amato sposo,  
 M'abbandoni così?  
 Mi struggo in pianto;  
 Non mi consoli?  
 Il duol m'opprime i sensi,  
 Non mi soccorsi?  
 Un'altra volta, oh stelle,  
 Dunque morir degg'io  
 Senza un amplesso tuo,  
 Senza un addio?

**Orfeo**

Più frenarmi non posso,  
 A poco a poco  
 La ragion m'abbandona,  
 Oblio la legge,  
 Euridice, e me stesso! E...

**Euridice**

Orfeo, consorte!  
 Ah...mi sento...languir.

**Orfeo**

Nò, sposa! Ascolta!  
 Se sapessi...  
 A che fò?  
 Ma fino a quando  
 In questo orrido inferno dovrò penar?

**Eurydice**

O bitter moment!  
 O cruel fate!  
 To pass from death  
 To such sorrow.

I was used to the peace  
 Of a tranquil oblivion,  
 But in these tempests  
 My heart is shattered.

I sway, I tremble...

**Orpheus**

Here is a new torment.

**Eurydice**

Beloved husband,  
 Will you leave me thus?  
 I am consumed with grief;  
 Will you not console me?  
 Sorrow overwhelms my senses;  
 Will you not aid me?  
 O stars, must I then die  
 Once more  
 Without an embrace from you,  
 Without a farewell?

**Orpheus**

I can restrain myself no longer;  
 Little by little  
 My reason is forsaking me.  
 Eurydice, I forget the decree  
 And myself! And...

**Eurydice**

Orpheus, husband!  
 Ah!...I feel...faint.

**Orpheus**

No, beloved! Listen!  
 If you knew...  
 ah, what am I doing?  
 How long must I suffer  
 In this fearful hell?

**Euridice**

Ben mio, ricordati...di...me!

**Orfeo**

Che affanno!

Oh, come mi si lacera il cor!

Più non resisto...

Smania...fremo...delirio...

Ah! Mio tesoro!

**Euridice**

Giusti Dei, che m'avenne?

Io manco, io moro.

**Orfeo**

Ahimè! Dove trascorsi?

Ove mi spinse

Un delirio d'amor?

Sposa! Euridice!

Euridice! Consorte!

Ah più non vive,

La chiamo invan!

Misero me!

La perdo, e di nuovo e per sempre!

Oh legge! Oh morte!

Oh ricordo crudel!

Non ho soccorso,

Non m'avanza consiglio!

Io veggo solo (ah, fiera vista!)

Il luttuoso aspetto

Dell'orrido mio stato!

Saziati, sorte rea!

Son disperato!

**Orfeo**

Che farò senza Euridice?

Dove andrò senza il mio ben?

Euridice! Euridice!

Oh Dio! Rispondi!

Io son pure il tuo fedel!

Euridice! Euridice!

Ah, non m'avanza

Più soccorso più speranza,

Nè dal mondo, nè dal ciel!

**Eurydice**

Dearest, remember...me!

**Orpheus**

What torment!

O how my heart is torn!

I can resist no more...

I rant...I tremble...I rave...

Ah! My treasure!

**Eurydice**

Merciful gods, what is happening?

I faint...I die.

**Orpheus**

Alas! What have I done?

Where has love's frenzy

Driven me?

Beloved Eurydice!

Eurydice! My wife!

Ah! She lives no longer,

I call her in vain!

Woe is me!

I have lost her again, and for ever.

Cruel decree! O death!

O bitter reminder!

There is no help,

No counsel for me!

I see only (ah, cruel sight!)

The mournful signs

Of my terrible plight.

Be satisfied, malevolent fate!

I am in despair!

**Orpheus**

What shall I do without Eurydice?

Where shall I go without my love?

Eurydice! Eurydice!

O heavens! Answer!

I am still true to you!

Eurydice! Eurydice!

Ah, there is no help,

No hope for me

Either on earth nor in heaven!

**Orfeo**

Ah finisca e per sempre colla vita il dolor!  
Del nero Averno  
Già sono insù la via!  
Lungo cammino non è  
Quel che divide il mio bene da me.  
Sì, aspetta, o cara ombra dell'idol mio!  
Aspetta, aspetta!  
Nò, questa volta senza lo sposo tuo  
Non varcherai l'onde lente di Lete.

*Scena II*

Amore e detti

**Amore**

Orfeo, che fai?

**Orfeo**

E chi sei tu,  
Che trattenere ardisce  
Le dovute a miei casi  
Ultime furie mie?

**Amore**

Questo furore calma,  
Deponi, e riconosci Amore!

**Orfeo**

Ah sei tu? Ti ravviso!  
Il duol finora tutti i sensi m'opresse.  
A che venisti  
In sì fiero momento?  
Che vuoi da me?

**Amore**

Farti felice!  
Assai per gloria mia soffristi, Orfeo,  
Ti rendo Euridice il tuo ben.  
Di tua costanza maggior prova non chiedo  
Ecco: risorge  
A riunirsi con te.

**Orfeo**

Che veggo! Oh Numi!  
Sposa!

**Orpheus**

Ah! May grief end my life, and for ever!  
I am already upon the path  
to black Avernus!  
It is not a long road  
Which divides me from my love.  
Yes, wait, dear shade of my beloved!  
Wait, wait!  
No, this time you shall not cross  
Lethe's sluggish waters without your husband.

*Scene II*

Amor and the previous

**Amor**

Orpheus, what are you doing?

**Orpheus**

And who are you  
Who dare to restrain  
My last fury,  
Which my plight justifies?

**Amor**

Calm your anger,  
Lay down your weapon, and recognize Love!

**Orpheus**

Ah, is it you? I recognize you!  
Grief clouded all my senses before.  
Why have you come  
In this bitter moment?  
What do you want with me?

**Amor**

To make you happy!  
Orpheus, you have suffered enough for my glory;  
I give you back your beloved Eurydice.  
I seek no greater proof of your fidelity.  
Here she is: she rises  
To be reunited with you.

**Orpheus**

What do I see? Ye gods!  
My wife!

**Euridice**

Consorte!

**Orfeo**

E pur t'abbraccio?

**Euridice**

E pure al sen ti stringo!

**Orfeo**

Ah, quale riconoscenza mia.

**Amore**

Basta!

Venite! Avventurosi amanti,  
Usciamo al mondo,  
Ritornate a godere!

**Orfeo**

Oh fausto giorno,  
Oh Amor pietoso!

**Euridice**

Oh lieto, fortunato momento!

**Amore**

Compensa mille pene  
Un mio contento!

*Scena III e Ultima*

**Balli****Orfeo e Coro**

Trionfi Amore,  
E il mondo intiero  
Serva all'impero  
Della beltà!

Di sua catena  
Talvolta amara  
Mai fù più cara  
La libertà!

**Eurydice**

My husband!

**Orpheus**

Can I really embrace you?

**Eurydice**

Can I clasp you to my bosom?

**Orpheus**

My gratitude to you.

**Amor**

Enough!

Come, happy lovers,  
Let us go back to earth:  
Return to enjoy it!

**Orpheus**

O happy day!  
O merciful Amor!

**Eurydice**

O joyful, blissful moment!

**Amor**

My contentment compensates  
For a thousand woes!

*Scene III*

**Ballet****Orpheus and Chorus**

Let Amor triumph,  
And all the world  
Serve the empire  
Of beauty!

Never was sweeter  
The liberty  
Of her sometimes  
Bitter chains!

**Amore**

Talor dispera,  
Talvolta affanna  
D'una tiranna  
La crudeltà!

Ma poi la pena  
Oblia l'amante  
Nel dolce istante  
Della pietà!

**Coro**

Trionfi Amore,  
E il mondo intiero  
Serva all'impero  
Della beltà!

**Euridice**

La gelosia  
Strugge e divora,  
Ma poi ristora, la fedeltà.  
E quel sospetto  
Che il cor tormenta  
Al fin diventa  
Felicità!

**Coro**

Trionfi Amore,  
E il mondo intiero  
Serva all'impero  
Della beltà!

**Amor**

The cruelty  
Of a tyrant  
Causes now despair,  
Now distress.

But the lover  
Forgets his pains  
In the sweet moment  
Of mercy.

**Chorus**

Let Amor triumph,  
And all the world  
Serve the empire  
Of beauty!

**Eurydice**

Jealousy consumes  
And devours,  
But faith restores.  
And that suspicion  
Which torments the heart  
At last turns  
To delight.

**Chorus**

Let Amor triumph,  
And all the world  
Serve the empire  
Of beauty!

# 1996 *Orfeo ed Euridice* Tour

**April 8 & 9**

Iowa City, Iowa

*Hancher Auditorium of the University of Iowa*

**April 12—14**

Boston, Massachusetts

*The Wang Center for the Performing Arts*

**April 24 & 25**

Costa Mesa, California

*Orange County Performing Arts Center*

**April 26—28**

Los Angeles, California

*Wiltern Theatre*

**May 1—3**

Berkeley, California

*Zellerbach Hall*

**May 16—18**

Brooklyn, New York

*Brooklyn Academy of Music*

**August 16, 17, 19, 20**

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*Edinburgh International Festival*



Mark Morris, *Rondo*,  
photo by Dan Rest

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