



Christoph Willibald von Gluck (1714-1787)
Orfeo ed Euridice (Live recording of the 1762 Vienna Version)

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Total playing time: 88. 37

Iestyn Davies, countertenor (Orfeo)

Sophie Bevan, soprano (Eurydice)

Rebecca Bottone, soprano (Amor)

La Nuova Musica

Conducted by **David Bates**

Gluck – Orfeo ed Euridice

The myth of Orpheus and Eurydice is woven into the history of opera. Its story of the power of love and music over the inevitability of death inspired the earliest operatic experiments in the late 16th century, and produced the genre's first masterpiece, Monteverdi's *Orfeo* of 1607. It has recurred in further musical versions by Luigi Rossi, Charpentier, Haydn, Krenek, Birtwistle and others. Each operatic version reveals something of the ideals and aesthetics of its composer's period: some culminate in tragedy, others with a happy ending; some focus on one character rather than another; some have only three principal roles, while others feature more than a dozen.

Gluck's *Orfeo* came about thanks to a happy meeting of artistic collaborators in Vienna in the early 1760s. Count Giacomo Durazzo, the impresario of the city's Burgtheater, had a mind to modernise

opera seria: this was the conventional style of operas by composers such as Handel, Vivaldi and Pergolesi, dictated to a great extent by the librettos written by Metastasio, using a formulaic pattern of recitative interspersed with *da capo* arias. Durazzo's plan involved reconciling the schools of Italian and French music. The heavy French influence on Gluck's *Orfeo* shows; Gluck is in many ways the successor to Lully and Rameau.

Durazzo had in 1760 already brought together several artists sympathetic to his reformist ideas: besides the composer Gluck there was the choreographer Gasparo Angiolini, the set designer Giovanni Maria Quaglio and the writer Ranieri de' Calzabigi. Together they created *Don Juan*, a 'balletpantomime' notable for its dramatic coherence and its revival of what was believed to be "le goût des Anciens".

Opera had always sought to revive the art of the ancients — this had been the



David Bates
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stimulus behind the earliest experiments in the genre around 1600. But now, after excavations of the ruins of the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum had begun in earnest during the 1730s and 1740s, the resurgence of interest in the classical world had a different slant. The archaeologist Johann Joachim Winckelmann, a contemporary of Gluck, published his *'Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Works'* in 1755: "the one way for us to become great, perhaps inimitable, is by imitating the ancients". Gluck similarly sought to return to ancient, uncorrupted ways, rescuing *opera seria* from "abuses...which have too long disfigured Italian opera". In fact, the phrase Winckelmann used to describe the ideals he deemed worth imitating in Greek art – "a noble simplicity and a calm grandeur" – became a motto for the age, and was paraphrased by Gluck in his writings on music. It is perhaps our key to understanding a piece such as *Orfeo ed Euridice*.

The artistic team behind the new *Orfeo* was armed in various ways for the task of reforming opera: the librettist Calzabigi was an expert on the works of Metastasio, having produced a complete edition of his libretti during the 1750s, but viewed the older man's work with a critical eye and saw how it could be adapted using knowledge of French operatic style. Gluck's music reflects this: the opera combines arias, duets, dances and numerous chorus numbers in a way that is infinitely more fluid than the strict pattern of alternating *secco* (unaccompanied) recitatives and arias that prevailed in *opera seria*. And a significant addition to the team was the castrato singer Gaetano Guadagni – the *primo uomo* of operas and oratorios by Handel and others. His interpretation of the role of Orfeo was informed by the training he received in London from the celebrated Shakespearean actor David Garrick, who promoted realistic acting, rather than the bombastic style which dominated the stage in the first half of the 18th century. Together



Iestyn Davies
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with the new, narrative choreography of Angiolini (perhaps influenced by his French contemporary Noverre) and the set designs of Quaglio, the creative team was to set new standards for musical drama.

After a buoyant overture, we are plunged into a scene of lamentation at the death of Euridice; this opening scene is reminiscent of the scene of mourning which opens Rameau's *Castor et Pollux*, one of the most popular operas in France at the time. The sound of the cornett (frequently used in Viennese churches during the 18th century) is a coincidental reminder of the instruments that had accompanied Monteverdi's *Orfeo* 150 years before.

Above the chorus, Orfeo can be heard crying out the single word "Euridice", in an arresting departure from the formal utterances of Italian *opera seria*. This is followed by a recitative, but this too is surprising: the Italian text is accompanied by the orchestra, not just the customary

harpsichord continuo. Orfeo's first aria, *Chiamo il mio ben così*, is not the traditional *da capo* aria of *opera seria* but a *rondeau* – a form, used throughout the opera, that alternates lyrical refrains with sections of more direct dramatic expression.

The aria culminates in a dramatic recitative *Numi! Barbari Numi* as Orfeo vows to rescue his bride from the underworld. He is interrupted by a character familiar from almost every French opera of the period: Amore, or Cupid, who offers help to our hero in a coquettish triple-time aria, *Gli sguardi trattieni*.

Act II opens with a dance and chorus for furies and spectres in the underworld. Their threatening chanting is juxtaposed magically with the sound of the harp, evoking Orfeo's lyre. Again, Gluck is attempting dramatic and structural devices utterly foreign to *opera seria*. Just as the opera's opening chorus had been



Rebecca Bottone

punctuated by Orfeo's dramatic cries of "Euridice", so here Orfeo's plaintive pleas for leniency are interrupted by violent "No's" from the chorus as they refuse to cooperate.

Finally, however, the gentle plucking of the harp makes the furies relent, and by the second scene of Act II, Orfeo has been admitted to the Elysian fields, where he finds himself surrounded by a dancing 'chorus of heroes and heroines'; one can imagine Angiolini's new style of dramatically expressive choreography set in the Quaglio's Arcadian stage designs.

The chorus finally ushers in Euridice, ready to be led back to the world above. In Gluck's characterisation, Euridice reveals a far more feisty personality than in Monteverdi's opera. Indeed, Cupid's injunction that Orfeo may neither look at his wife nor explain to her the reason why he may not, leads to a fully-fledged lover's tiff. During a vigorous duet (*Vieni, appaga*

il tuo consorte), Euridice exclaims to Orfeo that she would rather stay dead, than live with her apparently unfeeling husband. Her aria which follows (*Che fiero momento*) is one of rage.

The tension mounts in the succeeding recitative to the story's dramatic climax – the moment where Orfeo turns to look at Euridice. Unlike Monteverdi's version, where Orfeo acts on romantic impulse alone, Gluck's protagonist here is responding to something deeper, more empathetic: a desire to assuage his lover's insecurities, even if it means he will lose her once more. Monteverdi's Orfeo had been condemned by the chorus for his weakness. In contrast, Gluck's Orfeo responds to his wife's bewilderment with strength of character and stoic resolution: it is, in fact, an act of noble self-sacrifice typical of Metastasian *opera seria*.

Orfeo's famous aria, *Che farò senza Euridice*, is perhaps the epitome of the



Sophie Bevan
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'bella semplicità' (beautiful simplicity) advocated by Gluck and Calzabigi. Here, there are no Metastasian similes, no extravagant roulades, and no opportunities for wild cadenzas by the soloist. Instead, Gluck employs the simple *rondeau* form, and the purity of diatonic C major.

Orfeo is saved from suicide only by Amore, who rewards him for his devotion by reuniting him with Euridice (understandably bewildered to find herself alive for a third time). The shepherds and shepherdesses who had lamented at the very start now return, dancing and singing in praise of Love. This *deus ex machina* happy ending would have been expected by Gluck's 18th century audience, who would otherwise be disturbed by the moral implications of undeserved suffering: a divergence from classical tragedy, which had no qualms about horrifically tragic endings.

Ironically enough, the archaeologist Winckelmann's admiration of the white

purity of classical sculpture was a fallacy: we now know that the Athenian Parthenon would have been covered in colourful paint. Similarly, Gluck's and Calzabigi's vision of the antique world was inescapably a product of the beliefs and constraints of their own time.

The dramatic and musical innovations in *Orfeo ed Euridice* had powerful repercussions: before the end of 18th century, it had been seen all over Europe, from St Petersburg to Stockholm, from Barcelona to Dublin. Gluck capitalised on the work's French features by making a French-language version for Paris in 1774.

The opera made a first appearance in London as early as 1770, featuring once more Guadagni in the title role; but this production proved to be the first of numerous bowdlerisations of the piece: extra music by other composers was added; and over the years new characters were introduced, choruses were cut and in 1792 a

version was performed at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, where virtually the only part of the original score that survived — amid music by Handel, Bach and Sacchini — was Orpheus's famous '*Che farò*'.

This recording is almost completely true to the original 1762 performance. Only one addition has been made: an exquisite evocation of the Elysian Fields taken from Gluck's Paris version, for solo flute and strings.

James Halliday



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Christoph Willibald Gluck
Orfeo ed Euridice (1762 Vienna Version)

Libretto by Ranieri de' Calzabigi

Atto Primo, Scena Prima

Sinfonia

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.
Ed ascolta il tuo sposo infelice,
che piangendo ti chiama, e si lagna,
come quando la dolce compagna
tortorella amorosa perdé.

Orfeo

Basta, basta, o compagni:
il vostro lutto aggrava il mio.
Spargete purpurei fiori,
inghirlandate il marmo,
partitevi da me:
restar vogl'io solo

Act One, Scene One

Overture

Chorus

Ah! If around this funeral urn,
Eurydice, sweet spirit, you hover,
Hear the complaints, the laments, the sighs
which we mourners utter for you.
And hearken to your unhappy husband,
who, weeping, calls you and makes moan.
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

fra queste ombre funebri ed oscure
coll'empia compagnia di mie sventure.

Larghetto

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'idolo del mio cor
non mi risponde.

Euridice! Euridice!
Ombra cara, ove sei?
Piange il tuo sposo,
ti domanda agli dèi,
a' mortali ti chiede e sparse a' venti

among these dark and mournful shades
with the pitiless company of my
misfortunes.

Larghetto

Chorus

Ah! If around this funeral urn,
Eurydice, sweet spirit, you hover,
hear the complaints, 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.

Eurydice, Eurydice,
beloved shade, where are you?
Your husband weeps,
begs the gods for you
and asks for you among mortals,

son le lagrime sue, i suoi lamenti.

Cerco il mio ben così
in queste, ove morì,
funeste sponde.

Ma sola al mio dolor,
perché conobbe amor,
l'eco risponde.

Euridice! Euridice! Ah, questo nome
san le spiagge, e le selve
l'appresero da me.
Per ogni valle Euridice risuona;
in ogni tronco scrisse il misero Orfeo,
Orfeo infelice,
Euridice, idol mio, cara Euridice.

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.

yet scattered to the wind are his tears and
his laments.

8
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.

9
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.

10
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.

Numi! barbari numi!
D'Acheronte e d'Averno pallidi abitator,
la di cui mano avida delle morti mai
disarmò, mai trattener non seppe
beltà né 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
dei più intrepidi eroi, nel vostro orrore,
la mia sposa, il mio ben...

Scena Seconda

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:

11
Oh 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 Two

Love

Love will assist you!
Orpheus, Jupiter has taken pity on your
grief.
It is granted you to pass
the sluggish waters of Lethe alive!

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 che io tema!

Amore

Sai però con qual patto l'impresa hai da
compir?

Orfeo

Parla.

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.

Love

Have you courage enough for this extreme
trial?

Orpheus

You promise me Eurydice,
and you think I could be afraid!

Love

Then know on what conditions you must
complete the task?

Orpheus

Speak!

Amore

Euridiceti si vieta il mirar, finché non sei
fuor dagli antri di Stige,
e il gran divieto rivelarle non déi;
se no, la perdi,e di novo, e per sempre;
e in abbandono al tuo fiero desio
sventurato vivrai.
Pensaci; addio.

Gli sguardi trattieni,
affrena gli accenti;
rammenta se peni,
che pochi momenti
hai più da penar.
Sai pur che talora
confusi, tremanti
con chi gl'innamora
son ciechi gli amanti,
non sanno parlar?

Orfeo

Che disse! che ascoltai!
Dunque Euridice

Love

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.

13

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?

14

Orpheus

What said he? What did I hear?
That Eurydice will live

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'alma amato oggetto:
assistetemi, o dèi, la legge accetto.

Presto

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.

Presto

Atto Secondo, Scena Prima

Ballo

Coro

Chi mai dell'Erebo
fra le caligini,
sull'orme d'Ercole
e di Piritoo
conduce il piè?
D'orror l'ingombrino
le fiere Eumenidi,
e lo spaventino
gli urli di Cerbero,
se un dio non è.

Ballo

Coro

Chi mai dell'Erebo
fra le caligini,
sull'orme d'Ercole
e di Piritoo
conduce il piè?
D'orror l'ingombrino

Act Two, Scene One

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

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

le fiere Eumenidi,
e lo spaventino
gli urli di Cerbero
se un dio non è.

20

Ballo

Orfeo

Deh! placatevi con me,
furie, larve, ombre sdegnose.

Coro

No.

Orfeo

Vi renda almen pietose
il mio barbaro dolor.

22

Coro

Misero giovine!
che vuoi, che mediti?
Altro non abita
che lutto e gemito
in quelle orribili
soglie funeste.

overwhelm him with horror,
and the howls of Cerberus
terrify him
if he is not a god.

Ballet

Orpheus

Oh be merciful to me,
ye Furies, ye spectres, ye angry shades.

Chorus

No.

Orpheus

May my cruel grief
at least earn your pity.

Chorus

Wretched youth,
what seek you? What is your purpose?
Here dwell naught
but grief and lamenting
in these fearful,
mournful regions.

23

Orfeo

Mille pene, ombre moleste,
come voi sopporto anch'io;
ho con me l'inferno mio,
me lo sento in mezzo al cor.

24

Coro

Ah quale incognito affetto flebile,
dolce a sospendere vien l'implacabile
nostro furor.

25

Orfeo

Men tiranne, ah! voi sareste
al mio pianto, al mio lamento,
se provaste un sol momento
cosa sia languir d'amor.

26

Coro

Ah quale incognito affetto flebile,
dolce a sospendere vien l'implacabile nostro
furor!
Le porte stridanosu' neri cardini
e il passo lascino sicuro e libero
al vincitor.

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 Seconda

Ballo

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 sussurrar!
Questo è il soggiorno
de' fortunati eroi.
Qui tutto spira un tranquillo contento,
ma non per me.
Se l'idol mio non trovo,
sperar no 'l 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 sarà?
Chiedasi a questo

Scene Two

Ballet

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

che mi viene a incontrar stuolo felice.
Euridice dov'è?

Coro

Giunge Euridice!

Vieni a' regni del riposo,
grande eroe, tenero sposo,
raro esempio in ogni età.
Euridice Amor ti rende;
già risorge, già riprende
la primiera sua beltà.

Ballo

Orfeo

Anime avventurose,
ah! tollerate in pace le impazienze mie:
se foste amanti,
conoscereste a prova
quel focoso desio
che mi tormenta,
che per tutto è con me.
Nemmeno in questo
placido albergo

which comes to meet me.
Where is Eurydice?

Chorus

Eurydice is coming!

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.

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

esser poss'io felice,
se non trovo il mio ben.

Coro

Viene Euridice.
Torna, o bella, al tuo consorte,
che non vuol che più diviso
sia da te, pietoso, il ciel.
Non lagnarti di tua sorte,
ché può dirsi un altro Eliso
uno sposo sì fedel.

can I be happy
if I do not find my love.

33**Chorus**

Here is Eurydice!
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.

Atto Terzo, Scena Prima

Orfeo

Vieni: segui i miei passi,
unico amato oggetto
del fedele amor mio.

Euridice

Sei tu! M'inganno?
Sogno? Veglio? 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

Come! ma con quale arte?
ma per qual via?

Act Three, Scene One

34**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?

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!
lo dunque, in braccio
all'idol mio, fra' più soavi lacci
d'Amore e d'Imeneo,
nuova vita vivrò!

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
so dar fede a me stesso.

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!

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.

Euridice

E un dolce sfogo
del tenero amor mio, nel primo istante
che tu ritrovi me, ch'io te riveggo,
t'annoia, 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 mi abbracci! non parli!
Guardami almen.
Dimmi: son bella ancora
qual era un dì?
vedi: che forse è spento

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 ... (O 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 colour in my cheeks

il roseo mio volto?
Odi: che forse s'oscurò
quel che amasti
e soave chiamasti
splendor de' sguardi miei?

Orfeo

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

perhaps faded?
Listen, has the splendour of my eyes
that you loved,
and you called sweet,
perhaps dimmed?

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

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 perduta la memoria,
l'amore, la costanza, la fede!...
E a che svegliarmi dal mio dolce riposo,
or che hai pur spente
quelle a entrambi sì care
d'Amore e d'Imeneo pudiche faci!...
Rispondi, traditor.

Orfeo

Ma vieni e taci!
Vieni: appaga il tuo consorte.

Euridice

No: più cara è a me la morte,
che di vivere con te.

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!
Come, do your husband's bidding!

Eurydice

No, death is dearer to me
than life with you!.

Orfeo

Ah crudel!

Euridice

Lasciami in pace...

Orfeo

No: mia vita, ombra seguace
verrò sempre intorno a te.

Euridice

Ma perché sei sì tiranno?

Orfeo

Ben potrò morir d'affanno,
ma giammai dirò perché.

Euridice

Grande, o numi, è il dono vostro,
lo conosco e grata sono
ma il dolor, che unite al dono,
è insoffribile per me.

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

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

Orfeo

Grande, o numi, è il dono vostro,
lo conosco e grato 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!...
Perché 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.

Che fiero momento!
Che barbara sorte!
Passar dalla morte
a tanto dolor!

Orpheus

Great is your gift, ye gods!
I recognise 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 laboured. I tremble, I sway
and feel my heart wildly beating
with anguish and terror.

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Oh bitter moment!
Oh cruel fate!
To pass from death
to such sorrow!

Avvezza al contento
d'un placido oblio,
fra queste tempeste
si perde il mio cor.

Orfeo

(Ecco un nuovo tormento!)

Euridice

Amato sposo, m'abbandoni così!
Mi struggo in pianto, non mi consoli!
I duol m'opprime i sensi,
non mi soccorri!...
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...

I was used to the peace
of a tranquil oblivion;
but in these tempests
my heart is shattered.

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?

Orfeo

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... mi sento... languir.

Orfeo

No sposa... ascolta... se sapessi... (Ah! che
fo?... ma fino a quando
in questo orrido inferno
dovrò penar!)

Euridice

Ben... mio...ricordati... di... me...

Orfeo

Che affanno!...
Oh come mi si lacera il cor!
Più non non resisto;
smanio, fremo, deliro... ah mio tesoro!...

Euridice

Giusti dèi, che m'avvenne. Io... manco...
io... mo... ro...

Orfeo

Ahimè! dove trascorsi!
Ove mi spinse un delirio d'amor!...

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?)

Eurydice

Dearest, remember ... me!

Orpheus

What torment!
Oh 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?

Sposa!... Euridice!...
Euridice!... Consorte! Ah più non vive,
la chiamo in van, misero me, la perdo,
e di nuovo e per sempre! oh legge! oh
morte!
oh ricordo crudel! non ho soccorso,
non m'avanza consiglio. lo veggio solo
(oh fiera vista!) il luttuoso aspetto
dell'orrido mio stato;
saziati sorte rea, son disperato.

Che farò senza Euridice!
Dove andrò senza il mio ben!
Euridice! Oh dio! rispondi,
io son pure il tuo fedel.
Euridice! Ah! non m'avanza
più soccorso, più speranza
né dal mondo, né dal ciel!
Che farò senza Euridice!
Dove andrò senza il mio ben!

Ma finisca, e per sempre,co' la vita il dolor!
Del nero Avernosono ancor sulla via; lungo
cammino
non è quel, che divideil mio bene da me.

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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! Oh death!
Oh 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!

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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!

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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.

Si: aspetta, o cara ombra dell'idol mio.
Ah! questa volta senza lo sposo tuo non
varcherai
l'onde lente di Stige.

Scena Seconda

Amore

Orfeo! che fai?

Orfeo

E chi sei tu, che trattenere ardisci
le dovute a' miei
casi ultime furie?

Amore

Questo furore
calma, deponi e riconosci Amore

Orfeo

Ah! sei tu... Ti ravviso;
il duol finora tutti i sensi m'opprime.
A che venisti?
In sì fiero momento,
che vuoi da me?

Yes, wait, dear shade of my beloved!
Wait, wait! No, this time you shall not cross
Lethe's sluggish waters without your
husband.

Scene Two

Love

Orpheus, what are you doing?

Orpheus

And who are you who dare to restrain
my last fury,
which my plight justifies?

Love

Calm your anger, lay down your weapon,
and recognise Love!

Orpheus

Ah, is it you? I recognise you!
Grief clouded all my senses before.
Why have you come?
In this bitter moment,
What do you want with 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 veggio! oh numi!
Sposa...

Euridice

Consorte!

Orfeo

E pur t'abbraccio!

Euridice

E pure al sen ti stringo!

Orfeo

Ah! quale riconoscenza mia...

Love

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!

Eurydice

My husband!

Orpheus

Can I really embrace you?

Eurydice

Can I clasp you to my bosom?

Orpheus

My gratitude to you.

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 Terza

**Ballo. Maestoso - Grazioso - Allegro -
Andante - Allegro**

Love

Enough! Come, happy lovers,
let us go back to earth:
return to enjoy it

Orpheus

Oh happy day!
Oh merciful Amor!

Eurydice

Oh joyful, blissful moment!

Love

My contentment compensates for a
thousand woes!

Scene Three

**Ballet. Maestoso - Grazioso - Allegro -
Andante - Allegro**

Orfeo

Trionfi Amore,
e il mondo intero
serva all'impero
della beltà.
Di sua catena
talvolta amara
mai fu più cara
la libertà

Coro

Trionfi Amore,
e il mondo intero
serva all'impero
della beltà.

Amore

Talor dispera,
talvolta affanna
d'una tiranna,
la crudeltà.
Ma poi la pena
oblia l'amante
nel dolce istante
della pietà.

Orpheus

Let Amor triumph,
and all the world
serve the empire
of beauty!
Never was sweeter
the liberty
of her sometimes
bitter chains!

Chorus

Let Amor triumph,
and all the world
serve the empire
of beauty!

Love

The cruelty
of a tyrant
causes now despair,
now distress.
But the lover
forgets his pains
in the sweet moment
of mercy.

Coro

Trionfi Amore,
e il mondo intero
serva all'impero
della beltà.

Euridice

La gelosia
strugge e divora;
ma poi ristora
la fedeltà.
E quel sospetto
che il cor tormenta,
alfin diventa
felicità.

Coro

Trionfi Amore,
e il mondo intero
serva all'impero
della beltà!

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!

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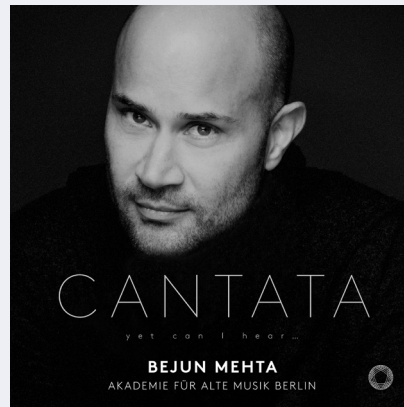
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