

SIDE 1 - Orpheus & Eurydice

FIRST MOVEMENT

Scene 1

*A young man – Orpheus –
and a young woman – Eurydice.
They wear swimming outfits from the 1950s.
Orpheus makes a sweeping gesture with his arm, indicat-
ing the sky.*

EURYDICE. All those birds?

He nods.

EURYDICE. For me? Thank you.

*They make a quarter turn and he makes a sweeping
gesture.*

He makes a gesture of giving the sea to Eurydice.

EURYDICE. And – the sea! Now?

Orpheus opens his hands.

EURYDICE. It's mine already?

Orpheus nods.

EURYDICE. Wow.

They kiss. He indicates the sky.

EURYDICE. Surely not – surely not the sky and the stars too.

Orpheus nods.

EURYDICE. That's very generous.

Orpheus nods.

EURYDICE. Perhaps too generous?

Orpheus shakes his head.

EURYDICE. Thank you.

She crawls on top of him and kisses his eyes.

EURYDICE. What are you thinking about?

ORPHEUS. Music.

EURYDICE. How can you think about music? You either hear it or you don't.

ORPHEUS. I'm hearing it then.

EURYDICE. Oh.

(Pause.)

I read a book today.

ORPHEUS. Did you?

EURYDICE. Yes. It was very interesting.

ORPHEUS. That's good.

EURYDICE. Don't you want to know what it was about?

ORPHEUS. Of course.

EURYDICE. There were – stories – about people's lives – how some come out well – and others come out badly.

ORPHEUS. Do you love the book?

EURYDICE. Yes – I think so.

ORPHEUS. Why?

EURYDICE. It can be interesting to see if other people – like dead people who wrote books – agree or disagree with what you think.

ORPHEUS. Why?

EURYDICE. Because it makes you – a larger part of the human community. It had very interesting arguments.

ORPHEUS. Oh. And arguments that are interesting are good arguments?

EURYDICE. Well – yes.

ORPHEUS. I didn't know an argument should be interesting. I thought it should be right or wrong.

EURYDICE. Well, these particular arguments were very interesting.

ORPHEUS. Maybe you should make up your own thoughts. Instead of reading them in a book.

EURYDICE. I do. I do think up my own thoughts.

ORPHEUS. I know you do. I love how you love books. Don't be mad.

Pause.

ORPHEUS. I made up a song for you today.

EURYDICE. Did you!?

ORPHEUS. Yup. It's not *interesting* or *not* -interesting. It just – is.

EURYDICE. Will you sing it for me?

ORPHEUS. It has too many parts.

EURYDICE. Let's go in the water.

*They start walking, arm in arm,
on extensive unseen boardwalks, towards the water.*

ORPHEUS. Wait – remember this melody.

He hums a bar of melody.

EURYDICE. I'm bad at remembering melodies. Why don't you remember it?

ORPHEUS. I have eleven other ones in my head, making for a total of twelve.

You have it?

EURYDICE. Yes. I think so.

ORPHEUS. Let's hear it.

*She sings the melody.
She misses a few notes.
She's not the best singer in the world.*

ORPHEUS. Pretty good. The rhythm's a little off. Here – clap it out.

*She claps.
He claps the rhythmic sequence for her.
She tries to imitate.
She is still off.*

EURYDICE. Is that right?

ORPHEUS. We'll practice.

EURYDICE. I don't need to know about rhythm. I have my books.

ORPHEUS. Don't books have rhythm?

EURYDICE. Kind of. Let's go in the water.

ORPHEUS. Will you remember my melody under the water?

EURYDICE. Yes! I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER YOUR MELODY! It will be imprinted on my heart like wax.

ORPHEUS. Thank you.

EURYDICE. You're welcome. When are you going to play me the whole song?

ORPHEUS. When I get twelve instruments.

EURYDICE. Where are you going to get twelve instruments?

ORPHEUS. I'm going to make each strand of your hair into an instrument. Your hair will stand on end as it plays my music and become a hair orchestra. It will fly you up into the sky.

EURYDICE. I don't know if I want to be an instrument.

ORPHEUS. Why?

EURYDICE. Won't I fall down when the song ends?

ORPHEUS. That's true. But the clouds will be so moved by your music that they will fill up with water until they become heavy and you'll sit on one and fall gently down to earth. How about that?

EURYDICE. Okay.

They gaze at each other.

ORPHEUS. It's settled then.

EURYDICE. What is?

ORPHEUS. Your hair will be my orchestra and – I love you.

EURYDICE. I love you too.

ORPHEUS. How will you remember?

EURYDICE. That I love you?

ORPHEUS. Yes.

EURYDICE. That's easy. I can't help it.

ORPHEUS. You never know. I'd better tie a string around your finger to remind you.

EURYDICE. Is there string at the ocean?

ORPHEUS. I always have string. In case I come upon a broken instrument.

He takes out a string from his pocket.

He takes her left hand.

ORPHEUS. This hand.

He wraps string deliberately around her fourth finger.

ORPHEUS. Is this too tight?

EURYDICE. No – it's fine.

ORPHEUS. There – now you'll remember.

EURYDICE. That's a very particular finger.

ORPHEUS. Yes.

EURYDICE. You're aware of that?

ORPHEUS. Yes.

EURYDICE. How aware?

ORPHEUS. Very aware.

EURYDICE. Orpheus – are we?

ORPHEUS. You tell me.

EURYDICE. Yes.

I think so.

ORPHEUS. You *think* so?

EURYDICE. I wasn't thinking.

I mean – Yes. Just: Yes.

ORPHEUS. Yes?

EURYDICE. Yes.

ORPHEUS. Yes!

EURYDICE. Yes!

ORPHEUS. May our lives be full of music!

Music.

He picks her up and throws her into the sky.

EURYDICE. Maybe you could also get me another ring – a gold one – to put over the string one. You know?

ORPHEUS. Whatever makes you happy. Do you still have my melody?

EURYDICE. It's right here.

She points to her temple.

They look at each other. A silence.

EURYDICE. What are you thinking about?

ORPHEUS. Music.

Her face falls.

ORPHEUS. Just kidding. I was thinking about you. And music.

EURYDICE. Let's go in the water. I'll race you!

She puts on her swimming goggles.

ORPHEUS. I'll race you!

EURYDICE. I'll race you!

ORPHEUS. I'll race you!

EURYDICE. I'll race you!

They race towards the water.

SIDE 2 - Eurydice & Nasty Interesting Man

There's Orpheus!

He's not dancing.

MAN. (*Shouting from off-stage*) So, who's this guy you're marrying?

EURYDICE. (*shouting*) His name is Orpheus.

MAN. (*as he attempts to open the champagne, off-stage.*) Orpheus.
Not a very interesting name. I've heard it before.

EURYDICE. (*shouting*) Maybe you've heard of him. He's kind of famous. He plays the most beautiful music in the world, actually.

MAN. I can't hear you!

EURYDICE. (*shouting*) So the letter was delivered – here – today?

MAN. That's right.

EURYDICE. Through the post?

MAN. It was – mysterious.

The sound of champagne popping.

He enters with one glass of champagne.

MAN. Voila.

He drinks the champagne.

So. Eurydice. Tell me one thing. Name me one person you find interesting.

EURYDICE. Why?

MAN. Just making conversation.

He sways a little, to the music.

EURYDICE. Right. Um – all the interesting people I know are dead or speak French.

MAN. Well, I don't speak French, Eurydice.

He takes one step toward her.

She takes one step back.

EURYDICE. I'm sorry. I have to go. There's no letter, is there?

MAN. Of course there's a letter. It's right here.

He pats his breast pocket.

MAN. Eurydice. I'm not interesting, but I'm strong. You could teach me to be interesting. I would listen. Orpheus is too busy listening to his own thoughts. There's music in his head. Try to pluck the music out and it bites you. I'll bet you had an interesting thought today, for instance.

She tilts her head to the side, quizzical.

I bet you're always having them, the way you tilt your head to the side and stare...

She jerks her head back up.

Musty dripping sounds.

EURYDICE. I feel dizzy all of a sudden. I want my husband. I think I'd better go now.

MAN. You're free to go, whenever you like.

EURYDICE. I know.

I think I'll go now, in fact. I'll just take my letter first, if you don't mind.

She holds out her hand for the letter.

He takes her hand.

MAN. Relax.

She takes her hand away.

EURYDICE. Good-bye.

She turns to exit.

He blocks the doorway.

MAN. Wait. Eurydice. Don't go. I love you.

EURYDICE. Oh no.

MAN. You need to get yourself a real man. A man with broad shoulders like me. Orpheus has long fingers that would tremble to pet a bull or pluck a bee from a hive –

EURYDICE. How do you know about my husband's fingers?

MAN. A man who can put his big arm around your little shoulders as he leads you through the crowd, a man

who answers the door at parties.... A man with big hands, with big stupid hands like potatoes, a man who can carry a cow in labor.

The man backs Eurydice against the wall.

MAN. My lips were meant to kiss your eyelids, that's obvious!

EURYDICE. Close your eyes, then!

He closes his eyes, expecting a kiss.

She takes the letter from his breast pocket.

She slips under him and opens the door to the stairwell.

He opens his eyes.

She looks at the letter.

EURYDICE. It's his handwriting!

MAN. Of course it is!

He reaches for her.

EURYDICE. Good-bye.

She runs for the stairs.

She wavers, off-balance, at the top of the stairwell.

MAN. Don't do that, you'll trip!

EURYDICE. Orpheus!

From the water-pump:

ORPHEUS. EURYDICE!

She runs, trips and pitches down the stairs, holding her letter.

She follows the letter down, down down...

Blackout. A clatter. Strange sounds – xylophones, brass bands, sounds of falling, sounds of vertigo.

Sounds of breathing.

SIDE 3 - Stones

SECOND MOVEMENT

The underworld.

There is no set change.

Strange watery noises.

Drip, drip, drip.

*The movement to the underworld is marked
by the entrance of stones.*

Scene 1

THE STONES. We are a chorus of stones.

LITTLE STONE. I'm a little stone.

BIG STONE. I'm a big stone.

LOUD STONE. I'm a loud stone.

THE STONES. We are all three stones.

LITTLE STONE. We live with the dead people in the land of
the dead.

BIG STONE. Eurydice was a great musician. Orpheus was
his wife.

LOUD STONE. (*correcting Big Stone.*) Orpheus was a great
musician. Eurydice was his wife. She died.

LITTLE STONE. Then he played the saddest music.
Even we –

THE STONES. The stones –

LITTLE STONE. Cried when we heard it.

The sound of three drops of water hitting a pond.

LITTLE STONE. Oh, look,
she is coming into the land of the dead now.

BIG STONE. Oh!

LOUD STONE. Oh!

LITTLE STONE. Oh!

We might say – "Poor Eurydice" –

LOUD STONE. But stones don't feel bad for
dead people.

The sound of an elevator ding.

An elevator door opens.

Inside the elevator, it is raining.

Eurydice gets rained on inside the elevator.

She carries a suitcase and an umbrella.

*She is dressed in the kind of 1930s suit that women wore
when they eloped.*

She looks bewildered.

The sound of an elevator ding.

Eurydice steps out of the elevator.

The elevator door closes.

*She walks towards the audience and opens her mouth,
trying to speak.*

There is a great humming noise.

She closes her mouth.

The humming noise stops.

*She opens her mouth for the second time,
attempting to tell her story to the audience.*

There is a great humming noise.

She closes her mouth – the humming noise stops.

She has a tantrum of despair.

STONES. Eurydice wants to speak to you.

But she can't speak your language anymore.

She talks in the language of dead people now.

LITTLE STONE. It's a very quiet language.

LOUD STONE. Like if the pores in your face
opened up and talked.

BIG STONE. Like potatoes sleeping in the dirt.

*The stones look at Big Stone as though that were a dumb
thing to say.*

LITTLE STONE. Pretend that you understand her
or she'll be embarrassed.

BIG STONE. Yes – pretend for a moment
that you understand
the language of stones.

LOUD STONE. Listen to her the way you would listen
to your own daughter
if she died too young
and tried to speak to you
across long distances.

*Eurydice shakes out her umbrella.
She approaches the audience.
This time, she can speak.*

EURYDICE. There was a roar, and a coldness –
I think my husband was with me.
What was my husband's name?

Eurydice turns to the stones.

My husband's name? Do you know it?

The stones shrug their shoulders.

How strange. I don't remember.
It was horrible to see his face
when I died. His eyes were
two black birds
and they flew to me.

I said no – stay where you are –
he needs you in order to see!

When I got through the cold
they made me swim in a river
and I forgot his name.

I forgot all the names.

I know his name starts with my mouth
shaped like a ball of twine –

Oar – oar.

I forget.

They took me to a tiny boat.
I only just fit inside.
I looked at the oars
and I wanted to cry.
I tried to cry but I just drooled a little.
I'll try now.

She tries to cry and finds that she can't.

EURYDICE. What happiness it would be to cry.

(She takes a breath.)

I was not lonely
only alone with myself
begging myself not to leave my own body
but I *was* leaving.

Good-bye, head – I said –
it inclined itself a little, as though to nod to me
in a solemn kind of way.

(She turns to the stones.)

How do you say good-bye to yourself?

They shake their heads.

A train whistle.

Eurydice steps onto a platform, surveying a large crowd.

EURYDICE. A train!

LITTLE STONE. The station is like a train but
there is no train.

BIG STONE. The train has wheels that are not wheels.

LOUD STONE. There is the opposite of a wheel and the
opposite of smoke and the opposite of a train.

A train pulls away.

EURYDICE. Oh! I'm waiting for someone to meet me, I
think.

Eurydice's Father approaches and takes her baggage.

FATHER. Eurydice.

SIDE 4 - Eurydice & Father

EURYDICE. (*to the stones*) At last, a porter to meet me!

(*to the father*) Do you happen to know where the bank is? I need money. I've just arrived. I need to exchange my money at the Bureau de Change. I didn't bring traveler's checks because I left in such a hurry. They didn't even let me pack my suitcase. There's nothing in it! That's funny, right? Funny – ha ha! I suppose I can buy new clothes here. I would *really* love a bath.

FATHER. Eurydice!

EURYDICE. What is that language you're speaking? It gives me tingles. Say it again.

FATHER. Eurydice!

EURYDICE. Oooh – it's like a fruit! Again!

FATHER. Eurydice – I'm your father!

EURYDICE. (*strangely imitating*) Eurydice – I'm your father. How funny! You remind me of something but I can't understand a word you're saying. Say it again!

FATHER. Your father.

STONES. (*to the father*) Shut up, shut up!

She doesn't understand you.

She's dead now too.

You have to speak in the language of stones.

FATHER. You're dead now. I'm dead, too.

EURYDICE. Yes, that's right. I need a reservation. For the fancy hotel.

FATHER. When you were alive, I was your father.

STONES. Father is not a word that dead people understand.

BIG STONE. He is what we call subversive.

FATHER. When you were alive, I was your tree.

EURYDICE. My tree! Yes, the tall one in the back yard! I used to sit all day in its shade!

She sits at the feet of her father.

EURYDICE. Ah – there – shade!

LITTLE STONE. There is a problem here.

EURYDICE. Is there any entertainment at the hotel? Any dancing ladies? Like with the great big fans?

FATHER. I named you Eurydice. Your mother named all the other children. But Eurydice I chose for you.

BIG STONE. Be careful, sir.

FATHER. Eurydice. I wanted to remember your name. I asked the stones. They said: Forget the names – the names make you remember.

LOUD STONE. We told you how it works!

FATHER. One day it would not stop raining.

I heard your name inside the rain – somewhere between the drops – I saw falling letters. Each letter of your name – I began to translate.

E – I remembered elephants. U – I remembered ulcers and under. R – I remembered reindeers. I saw them putting their black noses into snow. Y – youth and yellow. D – dog, dig, daughter, day. Time poured into my head. The days of the week. Hours, months....

EURYDICE. The tree talks so beautifully.

STONES. Don't listen!

EURYDICE. I feel suddenly hungry! Where is the porter who met me at the station?

FATHER. Here I am.

EURYDICE. I would like a continental breakfast, please. Maybe some rolls and butter. Oh – and jam. Please take my suitcase to my room, if you would.

FATHER. I'm sorry, Miss, but there are no rooms here.

EURYDICE. What? No rooms? Where do people sleep?

FATHER. People don't sleep here.

EURYDICE. I have to say I'm very disappointed. It's been such a tiring day. I've been traveling all day – first on a river, then on an elevator that rained, then on a train...I thought someone would meet me at the station...

Eurydice is on the verge of tears.

STONES. Don't cry! Don't cry!

SIDE 5 - Eurydice & Father**Scene 6**

The father enters the string room with a letter on a silver tray.

FATHER. There is a letter for you, miss.

EURYDICE. A letter?

He nods.

FATHER. A letter.

He hands her the letter.

FATHER. It's addressed to you.

EURYDICE. There's dirt on it.

Eurydice wipes the dirt off the letter.

She opens it.

She scrutinizes it.

She does not know how to read it.

*She puts it on the ground, takes off her shoes,
stands on the letter, and shuts her eyes.*

*She thinks, without language for the thought,
the melody: There's no place like home...*

FATHER. Miss.

EURYDICE. What is it?

FATHER. Would you like me to *read* you the letter?

EURYDICE. "Read you the letter"?

FATHER. You can't do it with your feet.

*(The father guides her off the letter, picks it up and
begins to read.)*

It's addressed to Eurydice. That's you.

EURYDICE. That's you.

FATHER. You.

It says: I love you.

EURYDICE. I love you?

FATHER. It's like your tree.

EURYDICE. Tall?

The father considers.

EURYDICE. Green?

FATHER. It's like sitting in the shade.

EURYDICE. Oh.

FATHER. It's like sitting in the shade with no clothes on.

EURYDICE. Oh! – yes.

FATHER. (*reading*) I'm going to find you. I play the saddest music –

EURYDICE. Music?

He whistles a note.

FATHER. It's like that.

She smiles.

EURYDICE. Go on.

FATHER. You know I hate writing letters. I'll give this letter to a worm. I hope he finds you.

Love,

Orpheus

EURYDICE. Orpheus?

FATHER. Orpheus.

A pause.

EURYDICE. That word!

It's like – I can't breathe.

Orpheus! My husband.

Eurydice looks at her father.

She recognizes him.

EURYDICE. Oh!

She embraces her father.

SIDE 6 - Eurydice & Child**Scene 14**

*The Father leaves for work.
He takes his briefcase.
He waves to Eurydice.
She waves back.
She is alone in the string room.
She touches the string.*

*The Lord of the Underworld enters on his red tricycle.
Music from a heavy metal band accompanies his entrance.
His clothes and his hat are too small for him.
He stops pedaling at the entrance to the string room.*

CHILD. Knock, knock.

EURYDICE. Who's there?

CHILD. I am Lord of the Underworld.

EURYDICE. Very funny.

CHILD. I am.

EURYDICE. Prove it.

CHILD. I can do chin-ups inside your bones. Close your eyes.

She closes her eyes.

EURYDICE. Ow.

CHILD. See?

You're pretty.

EURYDICE. You're little.

CHILD. I grow downward. Like a turnip.

EURYDICE. What do you want?

CHILD. I wanted to see if you were comfortable.
You're not itchy?

EURYDICE. No.

CHILD. That's good. Sometimes our residents get itchy.
Then I scratch them.

EURYDICE. I'm not itchy.

CHILD. What's all this string?

EURYDICE. It's my room.

CHILD. Rooms are not allowed!

(To the stones.)

Tell her.

STONES. ROOMS ARE NOT ALLOWED!

CHILD. Who made your room?

EURYDICE. My father.

CHILD. Fathers are not allowed! Where is he?

EURYDICE. He's at work.

CHILD. We'll have to dip you in the river again and make sure you're good and dunked.

EURYDICE. Please, don't.

CHILD. Oooh – say that again. It's nice.

EURYDICE. Please, don't.

CHILD. Say it in my ear.

EURYDICE. *(towards his ear)* Please, don't.

CHILD. I like that.

(A seduction:)

I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house down!

(He blows on her face.)

I mean that in the nicest possible way.

EURYDICE. I have a husband.

CHILD. Husbands are for children. You need a lover. I'll be back.

(to the stones)

See that she's...comfortable.

STONES. We will!

CHILD. Good-bye.

EURYDICE. Good-bye.

STONES. Good-bye.

CHILD. I'm growing. Can you tell? I'm growing!

He laughs his hysterical laugh and speeds away on his red tricycle.

Scene 15

*A big storm. The sound of rain on a roof.
Orpheus in a rain slicker.*

ORPHEUS. (*shouting above the storm*) If a drop of water enters
the soil
at a particular angle, with a particular pitch,
what's to say a man can't ride one note
into the earth like a fireman's pole?

*He puts a bucket on the ground to catch rain falling.
He looks at the rain falling into the bucket.
He tunes his guitar, trying to make the pitch of each note
correspond with the pitch of each water drop.*

*Orpheus wonders if one particular pitch
might lead him to the underworld.
Orpheus wonders if the pitch
he is searching for might
correspond to the pitch of a drop
of rain, as it enters the soil.
A pitch.*

ORPHEUS. Eurydice – did you hear that?

Another pitch.

Eurydice? That's the note. That one, right there.