

## ***Euridice Suite***

The idea behind the *Euridice Suite* was to present the well-known myth from a new perspective of someone other than the main character Orpheus. I wanted to explore Eurydice's emotional journey, as she experiences the traumatic events, described in the legend, differently from Orpheus, going through a dramatic swirl of insights, reflections (*Riflessioni*), grief, and, finally, inspiration and rediscovery (*Ritrovamenti*).

### **BACKSTORY:**

Eurydice, the beloved wife of Orpheus, had died from a fatal sting of a venomous snake. She is held in the Underworld that is ruled by Hades, the god of the dead. After losing his beloved wife, heart-broken Orpheus, a musician, played his lyre and sang so mournfully that all the gods wept and told him to travel to the Underworld to rescue Eurydice. In appreciation of his beautiful music, Hades allowed Orpheus to take his wife back to the world of the living, but only on one condition: he must lead her out of the Underworld and not look back until both had reached the upper world. If he as much as glances at her for a moment, she will be taken back to the dead and will never return.

### **SYNOPSIS**

#### *SCENE I - Riflessioni*

Eurydice finds herself in the Underworld. She questions her surroundings and expresses her fear and grief of not hearing the voice of her beloved Orpheus.

Eurydice realizes that she still has her senses and is puzzled by the concept of her death. She sees her reflection in the surrounding waters, and she starts reflecting back on what had happened.

She recalls a memory of her wedding dance with Orpheus, re-living the moment of happiness, music, dancing, sun, flowers, and love. In her reflective delusion, she starts calling to Orpheus, asking him whether he still feels her love now that she is gone. Suddenly, realizing her fate more clearly, Eurydice gives blessings to Orpheus and urges him to stay strong and go on living his life without her while keeping his devotion for music despite the cruel fate that struck them both. Singing her own "funeral march", she says her last "goodbye" to Orpheus.

#### *SCENE II – Ritrovamenti*

Eurydice sees Orpheus entering the Underworld. In the mix of emotions, happy but concerned Eurydice gives her loving support to Orpheus, encouraging him to obey the condition of their return.

Eurydice prompts Orpheus to sing and lead their way walking straight out of the Underworld without looking back at her. She slowly follows him, reminding him of the power of his music that was born out of their love, and affirming her devotion for his songs, repeatedly encouraging and inspiring him to keep walking forward and sing.

Suddenly, Eurydice is overcome by her own lament about their fate and seems to be losing faith in their successful escape out of the Underworld. In despair, Orpheus tries to turn around to console his wife, but Eurydice stops him in fright, giving him a passionate warning of what could happen if he looked back at her. Her words of encouragement “Go on, sing, and don’t look back” end the scene.

\*\*\*NOTE: The outcome of this story has been presented in both tragic and happy interpretations in musical works throughout history. I intentionally left the ending of the *Euridice Suite* vague. After Eurydice stops Orpheus from turning back, it is unclear whether he managed to catch a glimpse of her and she sings her last words as she is dying, or whether she stopped Orpheus in time, in which case she continues singing her words of reassurance as they both make a safe escape out of the Underworld. I leave it up to the listeners and performers to choose their own interpretation of the ending.

The *Euridice Suite* is dedicated to the late **Prof. Richard Burke** in gratitude for his wisdom, generous support, and guidance during the process of its creation.

SPECIAL THANKS TO **Marilena Ruscica** who wrote the beautiful poetry that was implemented in the Part I “*Riflessioni*”, and with whom I shared many inspiring creative moments.

## SCENE I – *Riflessioni*

Lyrics by **Marilena Ruscica**

### LA MORTE

Dove sono? Che freddo! Che accade?  
La nebbia mi avvolge... Il buio mi acceca...

Sola... Suono non odo,  
Eppure desta, senza la voce...  
Senza Orfeo e il suo canto:  
Non vivo... Morta!

### RECITATIVO

Ma... respiro... e vedo! Vedo!...

### RIFLESSIONI

Vedo fiori bianchi  
Ad ornar' la sposa,  
Sole del mattino,  
La vita, l'amor...  
Danza nuziale,  
Note e sorrisi...  
Sole, fiori... Danza... danza... d'amore...

### DEATH

Where am I? How cold it is! What is happening?  
The fog surrounds me... The dark blinds me...

All alone... Cannot hear a sound,  
Still, I am awake, without my voice...  
Without Orpheus and his singing:  
I am not alive... I am dead!

### RECITATIVE

But... I breathe... and I can see! I see!...

### REFLECTION

I see the white flowers  
Adorning the bride,  
The morning sun,  
Life, love...  
The wedding dance,  
Music and smiles,  
Sun, flowers... Dance... dance of love,

## MEMORIA DELLA DANZA

Passi... O, le note...  
La danza io ballai...  
Le dita tue, Orfeo,  
Dolci per me, amate,  
Esperte e nervose...

Le corde mie tese toccasti, poeta.  
Cosí la danza diéde passo all'amore,  
giro di sacra passion, danza d'amor...

Sacro girotondo,  
giro di passione,  
danza di amore...

Gioia infinita, note, sole, prato, fiori...

Passi, note...  
Danza d'amore...  
Sacro\_amor...

## RECITATIVO

Ah, Orfeo!  
Sentilo? Ricordi? Senti?

## LAMENTO

Odimi, sentimi,  
Compiro io questo viaggio da sola.  
Pensa a me,  
Canta a me.  
Conservo il tuo dono eterno.  
Canta! Vivi!

## MARCIA FUNEBRE

Ora che la morte mi condusse qui  
Non pensar che tempo  
Si sia per te fermato...

E se non potessi mai a te ritornare,  
Il dolor sopporta  
In solitudine terrena crudel...

Addio, Orfeo!

## MEMORY OF THE DANCE

The steps... O, the notes...  
I danced the dance...  
Your fingers, Orpheus,  
Sweet and loving for me,  
Capable and nervous...

Poet, you strung my outstretched strings.  
And so the dance gave way to love,  
A swirl of sacred passion, a dance of love...

A sacred circle,  
A swirl of passion,  
A dance of love...

Infinite joy, the notes, the sun, the grass, the flowers...

The steps, the notes...  
The Dance of love...  
Sacred Love...

## RECITATIVE

Ah, Orpheus!  
Can you hear it? Do you remember? Can you feel?

## LAMENT

Hear me, feel me,  
I will be making this trip alone.  
Think about me,  
Sing to me.  
I will cherish your gift forever.  
Sing! Live!

## FUNERAL MARCH

Now that Death led me here,  
Do not think that the time  
Should stop for you...

And if I could never go back to you,  
You will endure the pain  
In a cruel earthly solitude...

Farewell, Orpheus!

## SCENE II – *Ritrovamenti*

Lyrics by **Nika Leoni**, edits by **Marilena Ruscica**

## RECITATIVO

Orfeo! Sei qui!  
Orfeo, io son morta!

## RECITATIVO

Orpheus! You are here!  
Orpheus! I have died!

Ma... anche tu sei qui, Orfeo!...  
Ci puoi salvare?  
Tu ci puoi salvare,  
Sai che devi fare:  
Puoi cantare... ma non girare!  
Canta, Orfeo, canta!

#### ISPIAZIONE

Canta, Orfeo, canta!  
Il canto tuo arriva sempre a me.  
Non ti girare, canta!  
Son vicino, dietro di te.

Le tue canzoni nascono nel mio amore...  
Son la tua Musa, non aver remore:  
Ti seguio, non ti voltare, no, Orfeo!  
No, no, no!

#### LAMENTO

E' il nostro destino – un gioco del Fato,  
D'esser lontani in mondi diversi.  
E' il nostro destino -  
Cercarci per sempre in quest' universe.

Deh, canta, Orfeo, cosi mi consoli.  
L'amore\_e' pui forte con le tue canzoni.

No! No! Non guardarmi!  
Ricordati solo la mia imagine...  
O mi perderai per sempre  
nel MONDO INFERNALE!

#### FINALE

Orfeo, vai, canta! Non ti girar!...

But... you are also here, Orpheus!...  
Can you save us?  
You can save us,  
You know what to do:  
You can sing... but do not turn around!  
Sing, Orpheus, sing!

#### INSPIRATION

Sing, Orpheus, sing!  
Your singing always reaches me.  
Do not turn around, sing!  
I am right here behind you.

Your songs are born out of my love...  
I am your eternal Muse, don't ever doubt it:  
I will follow you, just don't turn around, Orpheus!  
No, no, no!

#### LAMENT

Our destiny, which is a cruel joke of the Gods,  
Is to be separated in distant worlds.  
It is our destiny to always search for each other  
Around the universe.

So, sing, Orpheus, your singing consoles me.  
With your singing, our love is stronger.

No! No! Don't look at me!  
Only remember my image...  
Or else you will lose me forever  
In the UDERWORLD!

#### FINALE

Sing, Orpheus, and keep walking! Do not look back!

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## ***Love Songs*** by Sara Teasdale

The poetry of Sara Teasdale was my recent discovery and an immediate draw of inspiration. Her book *Love Songs* attracted me with its piquant blend of profound romanticism and gentle sarcasm. The song group presented in this program is a selection from the larger song cycle *Love Songs*, which is still work in progress.

### **1. Less Than The Cloud To The Wind**

Less than the cloud to the wind,  
Less than the foam to the sea,  
Less than the rose to the storm  
Am I to thee.

More than the star to the night,  
More than the rain to the sea,  
More than heaven to earth  
Art thou to me.

### **2. Faults**

They came to tell your faults to me,  
They named them over one by one;  
I laughed aloud when they were done,  
I knew them all so well before,  
Oh, they were blind, too blind to see  
Your faults had made me love you more.

### **3. Pierrot**

Pierrot stands in the garden  
Beneath a waning moon,  
And on his lute he fashions  
A fragile silver tune.

Pierrot plays in the garden,  
He thinks he plays for me,  
But I am quite forgotten  
Under the cherry tree.

Pierrot plays in the garden,  
And all the roses know  
That Pierrot loves his music,  
But I love Pierrot.

### **4. Wild Asters**

In the spring I asked the daisies  
If his words were true,  
And the clever, clear-eyed daisies  
Always knew.

Now the fields are brown and barren,  
Bitter autumn blows,  
And of all the stupid asters  
Not one knows.

### **5. To-Night**

The moon is a curving flower of gold,  
The sky is still and blue;  
The moon was made for the sky to hold,  
And I for you.

The moon is a flower without a stem,  
The sky is luminous;  
Eternity was made for them,  
To-night for us.

### **6. Message**

I heard a cry in the night,  
A thousand miles it came,  
Sharp as a flash of light,  
My name, my name!

It was your voice I heard,  
You waked and loved me so,  
I send you back this word,  
I know, I know!