



LEMS 9002

ORFEO

CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI (1567 - 1643)

Libretto by Alessandro Striggio

ARTEK

Gwendolyn Toth, director

Jeffrey Thomas, Orfeo

Dana Hanchard, Euridice, La Musica

Timothy Leigh Evans, Pastore, Spirito

Jessica Tranzillo, Ninfa, Prosperina

Michael Brown, Apollo, Pastore, Spirito, Eco

Jennifer Lane, Messaggiera, Speranza, Pastore

Paul Shipper, Caronte, Plutone, Pastore

Coro di Spiriti: Jennifer Lane, Timothy Leigh Evans, Grant Herreid, Michael Brown, Paul Shipper

Richard Stone, chitarrone, copy after Edlinger-Tieffenprochar, Robert Meadow, 1979

Grant Herreid, chitarrone, Ivo Magherini, 1993

Astrid Nielsch, arpa doppia, copy after Italian models, Tim Hobrough, 1989

Paul Shipper, 5-course guitar, copy after Voboam, Lawrence K. Brown, 1992

6-course lute, copy after Frei, Lawrence K. Brown, 1991

field drum, Ben Harms, 1990

Gwendolyn Toth, Italian harpsichord, David Bayer, 1978 (courtesy of Frederick Renz)

contin organ, Gerrit Klop, 1986

Italian virginal, Zuckerman Harpsichords, 1980

Arthur Haas, Italian harpsichord, David Sutherland, 1982 (courtesy of Richard Nelson)

Frederick Renz, table organ ("Tafelorgel") with regal, hand-operated bellows, after Praetorius Syntagma Musicum, Herman Greunke, 1975 (courtesy of the Early Music Foundation)

David Myford, violin, English/ French composite, 17th century

Olga Gussow, violin, copy after Stradivari, David Rubio, 1984

David Miller, viola, Matthias Albani, 1687
 Gretchen Paxson, viola, German (unknown), ca. 1875
 Lisa Terry, violincello, German, 1957; refit by William Monical, 1993
 viola da gamba, copy after Karp, Peter Tourin, 1986
 Patricia Ann Neely, violine, after da Salo, Dominik Zuchowicz, 1990
 Adam Gilbert, soprano recorder, after Ganassi, Von Huene, 1990 bass curtal, Philip
 Levin, 1988
 Tom Zajac, soprano recorder, after Ganassi, David Coomber, 1991
 tenor trombone, after Neuschel, Frank Tomes/Christopher Monk, 1988
 Paula Rand, bass curtal, Graham Lyndon-Jones & Barbara Stanley, 1986
 Michael Collver, cornetto, John McCann, 1993
 Douglas Kirk, cornetto, John McCann, 1992
 Karen Hansen, alto trombone, Richard Hansen, 1980 tambourine, Ben Harms
 Eric Anderson, alto trombone, after Michael Nagel, Meinl Lauber, 1975
 Mack Ramsey, tenor trombone, after Neuschel 1553, Christopher Monk, 1985
 Daniel Green, bass trombone, Bohm & Meinl

DISC 1 [49:21]

- 1 Toccata
1:57
Prologue
- 2 Ritornello - Dal mio Permesso amato (La Musica) 5:56

ACT 1

- 3 In questo lieto e fortunato giorno (Pastore)
1:31
- 4 Vieni Imeneo (Choro)
:52
- 5 Muse, onor di Parnaso (Ninfa)
:53
- 6 Lasciate i monti (Choro)
1:51
- 7 Ma tu, gentil cantor (Pastore)
:43
- 8 Rosa del ciel (Orfeo)
2:09
- 9 Io non diro qual sia (Euridice)
:50
- 10 Lasciate i monti (Choro)
:55
- 11 Vieni Imeneo (Choro)
:52
- 12 Ma s'il nostro gioir (Pastore)
:48
- 13 Ritornello - Alcun non sia (Pastore)
3:32

- 14 Ecco Orfeo (Choro)
:37
- ACT II
- 15 Sinfonia - Ecco pur ch'a voi ritorno (Orfeo)
3:05
- 16 Ritornello - Vi ricorda, o boschi ombrosi
(Orfeo) 2:12
- 17 Mira, deh mira Orfeo (Pastore)
:27
- 18 Ahi, caso acerbo (Messaggiera)
3:05
- 19 In un fiorito prato (Messaggiera)
2:43
- 20 Ahi, caso acerbo (Pastore)
1:15
- 21 Tu se' morta (Orfeo)
2:41
- 22 Ahi, caso acerbo (Choro)
1:21
- 23 Ma io ch'in questa lingua (Messaggiera)
1:30
- 24 Sinfonia 1:03
- 25 Chi ne consola (Due Pastori)
2:01
- 26 Ahi, caso acerbo (Choro)
:29
- 27 Ma dove (Due Pastori)
2:15
- 28 Ahi, caso acerbo (Choro)
:39
- 29 Ritornello :54

DISC II [61:46]

- ACT III
- 1 Sinfonia :47
- 2 Scorto da te mio Nume (Orfeo)
1:41
- 3 Ecco l'atra palude (Speranza)
2:49
- 4 Dove, ah dove (Orfeo)
:55
- 5 O tu ch'innanzi mort'a queste rive
(Caronte) 1:37
- 6 Sinfonia :32
- 7 Possente spirto (Orfeo)

- 9:03
 8 O de le luci miei (Orfeo)
 1:05
 9 Sol tu, nobile Dio (Orfeo)
 1:09
 10 Ben mi lusinga alquanto (Caronte)
 2:18
 11 Sinfonia :33
 12 Ei dorme (Orfeo)
 2:13
 13 Sinfonia - Nulla impresa (Choro di Spiriti)
 3:34

ACT IV

- 14 Signor, quel infelice (Proserpina)
 2:16
 15 Benche severo (Plutone)
 2:22
 16 O de gli habitator (Spirito)
 1:07
 17 Quali gratie ti rendo (Proserpina)
 1:54
 18 Pietade, oggi (Choro di Spiriti)
 :23
 19 Ecco il gentil cantor (Spiriti)
 :16
 20 Ritornello - Qual honor (Orfeo)
 1:09
 21 Ma mentre io cnato (Orfeo)
 1:20
 22 O dolcissimi lumi (Orfeo)
 :35
 23 Ahi, vista troppo dolce (Euridice)
 :58
 24 Torna a l'ombre di morte (Spirito)
 :23
 25 Dove ten vai (Orfeo)
 :59
 26 Sinfonia - E la virtute (Choro di Spiriti)
 3:26

ACT V

- 27 Ritornello :45
 28 Questi i campi (Orfeo)
 1:40
 29 Vuoi vi doleste (Orfeo)

	2:45
30	Ma tu, anima mia (Orfeo) 1:09
31	Tu bella fusti (Orfeo) 1:04
32	Hor l'altre donne (Orfeo) :42
33	Sinfonia :34
34	Perch'a lo sdegno (Apollo) 3:54
35	Salam cantand'al Cielo (Apollo, Orfeo) 1:12
36	Ritornello - Vanne Orfeo felice a pieno (Choro) 1:07
37	Moresca 1:06

"Tomorrow evening His Highness the Prince is to have performed...a piece that will be unique because all the performers speak musically," wrote a gentleman in Mantua to his brother in Rome, on February 23, 1607. The work that occasioned this anticipatory report was *Orfeo*. The prince who commissioned it (Francesco Gonzaga) and the piece's composer (Claudio Monteverdi) and librettist (Alessandro Striggio) all referred to the creation as "una favola in musica", a fable in music. They could scarcely have imagined that their fable would someday be viewed as the fountainhead of the most exalted of musical genres, the Opera. More than 300 years later, Sir Thomas Beecham would ponder the birth of the "extravagant art". "I have often wondered," he wrote in his memoirs, "whether its creator would not have paused after the first experimental effort if he could have foreseen the incredible amount of trouble he was bringing into the world".

Orfeo was not the first stage work to display attributes of what we today consider opera. A tiny cluster of pioneering stage-works preceded it as attempts to unify poetry, stage action, and music into a dramatic whole, exalting declamatory monodies over traditional polyphonic textures. *Dafne*, by composer Jacopo Peri and poet Ottavio Rinuccini, was apparently the earliest, dating from 1597-98, but only six fragments of it survive. Two settings of Rinuccini's *Euridice*—one by Peri with interpolations by Giulio Caccini, the other entirely Caccini's—are the most cited of these proto-operas. Peri's *Euridice* was premiered in Florence, at the Pitti Palace, in 1600; rather than reflecting any spirit of collaboration, Caccini's input resulted from his refusal to allow singers under his jurisdiction to perform in his rival's opera unless some of his own numbers were included in the score. Hoping to enter the history books as the first to publish an opera, Caccini rushed his own *Euridice* into print in 1600/01, though it would not be performed until 1602 (also at the Pitti Palace). Clearly, the first opera composers recognized that their undertaking was a radical and significant artistic development.

While this was going on in Florence, Monteverdi was ensconced a hundred miles to the north, in Mantua, where he had landed in 1590 or 1591 as a string player in the service of Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga. Monteverdi was also active as a composer, principally of

madrigals and other secular music. There is no question that, as the century turned, he kept abreast of the musical refinements taking place in Florence. but rather than simply ape the new style of his contemporaries, Monteverdi absorbed it, digested it, and combined it with the other influences that informed his creativity. From the virtuoso singers of Ferrara and Mantua - principally the acclaimed concerto di donne - he acquired an understanding of florid singing and the expressive possibilities of embellishment. From the Florentine intermedi, the song-and-dance extravaganzas that marked festive occasions, he observed how successive set-pieces could energize a lengthy production through their contrast and variety , All of these came together in Monteverdi's Orfeo. Although it is not the first opera, it is the first opera of great genius.

At its premiere, Orfeo lacked certain outward aspects of what we would recognize as opera. It was played out before a private audience - the members of the Accademia degl'Invaghati, a club of intellectual gentlemen whose members included the librettist Striggio (who was also a diplomat) and Francesco Gonzaga (Duke Vincenzo's son), who had commissioned it. On February 24, 1607, the Accademia gathered at the Ducal Palace for the unveiling of Orfeo, in a room that had probably been pressed into makeshift service as a theatre. (A proper, dedicated theatre did not open in Mantua until the following year). The presentation probably resembled a modern opera-in-concert more than a fully-staged production. Sets seem to have been minimal - probably limited to a single change of a flat backdrop - and the size of the room would have limited the amount of action.

The premiere was a great success, and a second performance, for the ladies of the city, was arranged for a week later. A third presentation seems to have fallen through when the state occasion to which it was connected was canceled. It is possible that the opera's ending changed in the week separating the two performances; this could explain why printed copies of Striggio's libretto, which seem to have been distributed at the premiere, take a different tack from the ending as it appears in Monteverdi's score, which was published in 1609. By that time, the only other performance of Orfeo - and then only of excerpts - seems to have taken place in Monteverdi's native Cremona. More complete stagings may have taken place around 1610 in Turin, Florence, and Milan, and in 1614 it may have been presented as the first opera ever seen or heard in Salzburg. Orfeo would then fall silent for almost 300 years, until it was revived by Vincent d'Indy (in 1904, in Paris) and made accesible to puzzled performers through editions by such notable composers as Gian Francesco Malipiero, Carl Orff, and Ottorino Respighi.

Monteverdi's Orfeo is structured in five acts, preceded by an attention-getting toccata and a Prologue in which Music (which will prove important to the ensuing plot) is anthropomorphized to proclaim her powers and to introduce the drama. Each of the five acts sets a new scene for the action as it unrolls. In the first, the shepherds of Thrace sing and dance to celebrate the marriage of the musician Orfeo and his beloved Euridice. The festivities spill over into the ensuing act until a messenger arrives with the dread news that Euridice has been killed by a serpent. In the third act, Orfeo descends to Hell, where, finding even the magic of his music powerless, he tricks the ferryman Charon in order to gain access to Pluto, god of the underworld. Pluto releases Euridice to her lover on the

condition that Orfeo not turn back to look at her until they have arrived back in the land of the living; but Orfeo does not turn back, and Euridice descends again into Hell. The Thracian plains are deserted in Act V, and only Echo responds to Orfeo's lamentation; but the all-powerful god Apollo eventually ushers Orfeo to Heaven, where he can gaze on the image of Euridice in the stars.

The hero is onstage nearly throughout the opera, and all other characters - even that of Euridice - are secondary in comparison. Their music, however is far from negligible. Orfeo is granted great arias, Act I's "Rosa del ciel" and Act III's "Possente spirito" chief among them. But other segments of the score, once heard, are equally unforgettable: the shepherds' opening dance, or the Messengers riveting monody and her listeners' response of "Ahi, caso acerbo". Every scene gets around to Orfeo sooner or later, but the detail that surrounds him is as carefully worked out and molded into a harmonious equilibrium, a musical counterpart to the way Shakespeare (Monteverdi's great contemporary) would leaven personal crisis with bucolic interludes and the magical power of music in *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*, only four years later. Monteverdi's score is a shifting kaleidoscope of straightforward dance movements, homophonic and polyphonic madrigals, canzonettas (much like the composer's coeval *Scherzi Musicali*), expressive stretches of newfangled monody, and even forward-looking arias. But it's far more than just a musical encyclopedia of its time: Orfeo is among the most entertaining and moving of all operas, a compelling work of the lyric stage that is far more than a sum of its parts.

This recording of Orfeo capped a four-performance production of the opera in the Hall of the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, in New York City. Although the recording was taped separately from the live performances, it reflects musical decisions that were themselves informed by the exigencies of staging. In the following interview, Gwendolyn Toth (who directed the production's music and co-directed its staging) shares her thoughts about the production, the recording, and the masterpiece at hand.

INTERVIEW WITH GWENDOLYN TOTH

James Keller: Can you identify a point of departure that served as a springboard for your conception of this production of Orfeo?

Gwendolyn Toth: Absolutely: Maxfield Parrish's painting "Daybreak", which became the inspiration for the production's set. This was strictly a Romantic impulse of my own, rather than something that relates specifically to Monteverdi's Orfeo; yet its evocation of the Elysian Fields and the way it depicts the relationship with this opera. "Daybreak" was the most famous picture Parrish ever painted, and millions of prints were made of it. It became a national icon in America in the 1920's: a chicken in every pot, "Daybreak" in every parlor. I don't have great qualms about doing a production that reveals an early-twentieth-century conception of ancient Greece, much as Monteverdi's Orfeo was an early-seventeenth-century conception of classical Greece. Neither has much to do with classical Greece, really.

JK: How did you decide about the scale of your production?

GT: We didn't have the money or the space to do a really Baroque production, which would require a real pit and elaborate costumes - both of which are costly and space-

consuming. The hall was small, though actually not so very different from the hall in Mantua where we believe the opera was first performed. By keeping the set compact - 18 feet by 16 feet at its extremes, and spread over three levels - we could seat an audience of 200 at each performance. That mandated a chamber conception of the opera. I therefore used solo singers for Orfeo and Euridice (with Euridice doubling as La Musica), and five more singers for all the remaining roles and ensemble work.

We know Monteverdi used about fifteen singers in Orfeo, but of course the economics of his production were different. Actually, there is an advantage to using a small ensemble: you can cast a strong singer on every part. In some Orfeo productions, you will find strong leads, and then a steep decline in the small roles. In any case, our intention was not to recreate the ultimate historical performance of Orfeo.

That would strike me as a misapplication of energy. Being creative is still an important part of making music; putting all my energy towards recreating somebody else's creativity is less interesting to me.

JK: Did the production situation compel you to alter other aspects, apart from doubling up roles?

GT: Not much. We only had room for three plucked-instrument players in the continuo, though we wished we could have had four; but we come close to the spirit of the composer's sounds. There's a spot in Act II where Monteverdi calls for a clavicembalo among the instruments on-stage, and we just didn't have space for it. Also in Act II, an alto shepherd sings a brief solo, identifying the Messenger who just entered to deliver the tragic news of Euridice's death. But the singer to whom we would have assigned that part was also singing the Messenger - and she obviously couldn't play both parts at the same time! So we had the bass singer deliver the alto shepherd's part an octave lower. It wasn't exact, but it was a negligible adjustment. We could have changed this in the recording, but by then it seemed completely unimportant.

We kept some special aural effects from the production: for instance, in the Toccata, you hear the instruments approach from offstage, perform onstage, then exit offstage. And at the end of the show, Apollo and Orfeo go upstage to "Heaven". When we did the recording, however, we did move from the side hall into the main church of St. Mary the Virgin, which offered a more expansive acoustic. It's not "historical", either, but it sounds beautiful.

JK: What did you use for your performing edition?

GT: We all used facsimiles of the 1615 print. Orfeo was published twice - in 1609 and 1615 prints - and I figured the later edition would have cleaned up typos that might have slipped into the first. Numerous modern editions are available, each with their own strengths and weaknesses. Some transpose the score in ways that would have been incompatible with the quarter-comma meantone tuning system we used.

Playing from period scores helps focus the performers on the appropriate musical issues. For example, you may find six whole-notes strung together in the bass-line, followed by two separate ones. That says something to me: the single ones must be more active in the continuo realization. Things may be happening over the tied notes, but there's more musical gesture when they're not tied. All modern editions, except John Eliot Gardiner's,

play havoc with these ties; and his version presented transposition problems. But we prefer to work from facsimiles in any case. It helps us get inside the composer's mind.

JK: Still, Monteverdi doesn't provide much directive when it comes to realizing the continuo. You must work that up entirely from scratch.

GT: We improvise it, of course, except for deciding in advance who plays in what sections. We all play from a single unrealized bass line; most of us have never done anything like that. The art of continuo has advanced way beyond the level of basic harmonic progressions. This group is at the level of questioning the philosophies of realization, and making quite subtle distinctions. Most of the members of this continuo group have worked together so much that they're able to improvise together with astonishing ensemble - as you hear with our lute players. Apart from them (with some doubling on guitar), the group comprised two harpsichords (the second used sparingly), organ, regal, and harp.

JK: No sustaining instruments, other than the organ and regal?

GT: There are several moments when Monteverdi calls for a bowed bass, when the Messenger comes in and announces that something terrible has happened. It's enigmatic. I can't quite yet see the reason. Current research tells us that the bowed bass was not yet a part of continuo practice. Instead, Orfeo is coming out of the Renaissance tradition in which you have distinct consorts of instruments: the vocal consort, the brass consort (which underscores the underworld and the spirits), the string consort for general ritornelli, and then the most modern "consort", which is the continuo. The idea of using just a plucked harpsichord or lute plus a bowed bass was a much later 17th century development.

All the same, we do sustain musical activity - not by repeating tied bass notes, but rather by adding some sort of impulse within the continuo group. That's critical for the style of monody, where the singer's rhythm bounces off the rhythms of the bass line and the continuo ensemble. The singer's choices inspire reactions from the continuo players, and vice-versa. The easy singers to play with are those who know every note of the bass line. The style comes less easily to those who are more attached to the sort of modern operatic training that says, "You sing, they will follow." Monteverdi didn't think that way. Singers of monody must listen in two parts.

JK: Monteverdi's Orfeo has so much to recommend it. Why do you think it's so rarely produced?

GT: It's hard for me to understand. It's such a magical, appealing piece - a real opera, with a real plot from beginning to end. But there are some difficulties. It requires a big, Baroque orchestra with good cornetto players (which are very scarce). And, outside of early-music circles, the casting of the lead role can be a problem. It lies rather low for many tenors; and then, too, a lot of singers look at all those 32nd-notes and say "You must be out of your mind!" It's not their accepted way of showing off vocally: Monteverdi's pyrotechnics have nothing to do with the modern conception of singing high notes at climaxes.

JK: But Monteverdi's late operas, *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* and *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*, have managed to become almost standard operatic fare.

GT: Yes, but I think you can do them with a modern string orchestra pretty much as written. You have to actually adapt the instrumentation to be able to perform Orfeo with modern singers and orchestras.

JK: The subtlety of Monteverdi's composition takes Orfeo a big step beyond the Peri and Caccini operas that preceded it, don't you think?

GT: They seem simplistic in comparison. I think Monteverdi had a very rich harmonic imagination, and a much better sense of long gesture. While the others could achieve sweet moments, Monteverdi could make something happen over the span of a whole act. I have not, however, performed either Peri's and Caccini's Euridice, much though I'd like to. People complain that they're boring, but I'm not comfortable judging them at this point.

We think of these early operas primarily as musical works. But they're also poetry. Striggio was considered on a par with Monteverdi as the author of Orfeo. We think of Monteverdi as more important and enduring, of course - rather curiously so, when you consider that our modern conception of staging is much more text-based than music-based. That's one of the reasons that our staging stressed the importance of Baroque gesture, which I view as intimately tied to the practice of poetic declamation. And that's tied to the musical sound. I truly believe - and have heard it happen - that when a performer gets the physical gesture right, the musical style is affected.

JK: You have directed all three of Monteverdi's extant operas. In fact, your Monteverdi cycle at Milwaukee's Skylight Opera attracted considerable national attention. Can you articulate your gut response to each of them?

GT: Orfeo is so simple and childlike, like a fairy tale - rather pastoral, with the shepherds setting the tone. It has a happy ending, if somewhat bittersweet. Then you have Ulisse, which is so dark. There's something bittersweet about Ulisse, too, but the work never seems quite complete. Pieces seem to stop before they're really finished; with the exception of Penelope's lament, everything just withers away. A lot of the score is lost, and I suspect those passages must have lightened it. There's a start-and-stop quality to Poppea, too, and I agree with those who believe that not all of the score is by Monteverdi. Poppea is very broad, full of down-to-earth passions and emotions - so different from Orfeo, which exhibits a clean, sanitized Maxfield Parrish world in which we're all children in a sort of Utopia.

JK: I infer that you find Orfeo the most satisfying of the three.

GT: Oh yes. It's a complete conception unto itself; it has its own style. Even if it is partly Renaissance and partly Baroque, it doesn't really feel like a grab-bag of both. Orfeo is all of a piece, whose diverse parts work together perfectly.

Since 1990, James M. Keller has written about music on staff at The New Yorker. In addition, he frequently contributes essays and criticism to such publications as Opera News, Travel & Leisure, and Early Music America (among many others) and serves as the program annotator for the Orchestra of St. Luke's and St. Luke's Chamber Ensembles. In an earlier life, he directed the Yale Collegium Musicum.

ARTEK is a New York City ensemble reflecting the artistic vision of founding director Gwendolyn Toth. In 1986, ARTEK began as a series of historically informed chamber music concerts on period instruments in churches with Ms. Toth and her colleague from the New York early music community. Now, ARTEK has grown into one of America's premier early music organizations; the ensemble's yearly series of orchestra, dance, theater and chamber music events in New York City regularly receives critical acclaim.

Ms. Toth has guided ARTEK to prominence through her unerring ability to create outstanding programs of both well-known masterpieces presented in a fresh, creative setting and rarely heard gems of seventeenth and eighteenth century music literature. Her approach to the basic sound of the ensemble encompasses an extensive, rich sounding continuo section. She has consistently identified outstanding vocal talent in her casting; ARTEK's singers are America's finest voices in the early music field. Monteverdi's Orfeo was originally produced by ARTEK in New York City in November, 1993 under the direction of Gwendolyn Toth and Alan Tjaarda Jones at the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, during the Monteverdi 250th Anniversary Year.

Recognized as one of America's leading early music performers, Gwendolyn Toth performs with equal ease on the harpsichord, organ, fortepiano, and clavichord. She has been heard in concert throughout North America, Europe and the Far East, and on radio networks in Holland, Germany, France, and America's National Public Radio. As director of ARTEK, she has led performances of major choral and orchestral works of Monteverdi, Purcell, Bach, Handel, Haydn and Mozart. Her interpretations have been acclaimed for their spirit and intelligence; Opera News named her one of Ten Outstanding Young Conductors in 1988 for direction of the complete operas of Claudio Monteverdi at the Skylight Opera in Milwaukee. In contemporary music, Ms. Toth has worked and recorded with eminent composer/performers such as John Cage, Rhys Chatham, Petr Kotik, Dave Soldier, Louis Andriessen, and Elliot Sharp at the Brooklyn Academy of Music Next Wave Festival, The Kitchen, Bang on a Can Festival, and the Cage Nachttag in Koln.

The outstanding American tenor, Jeffrey Thomas, has enjoyed a major international career with appearances as soloist with symphony orchestras and baroque orchestras under conductors Herbert Blomstedt, Edo de Waart, Christopher Hogwood, Ton Koopman, Gustav Leonhardt, Seiji Ozawa, Roger Norrington, Andrew Parrott, Robert Shaw, and David Zinman. He made his operatic debut at the Spoleto Festival in 1981, after which he received one of the San Francisco Opera's prestigious Adler Fellowships. Currently, he is Artistic and Music Director of the American Bach Soloists, with whom he has directed performances and recordings of more than 25 cantatas, the Mass in B minor, the Musical Offering, motets, chamber music, and works by Schutz, Pergolesi, Haydn, and Beethoven. Mr. Thomas is an avid exponent of contemporary music as well, and has premiered the song cycles of several new composers, including two written especially for him.

Dana Hanchard, soprano, has received great acclaim in the U.S. and abroad for her performances in diverse repertoire. She has sung Tigrane in Handel's Radamisto at the Gottingen Festival under Nicholas McGegan; Nerone in Monteverdi's L'Incoronazione di Poppea under John Eliot Gardiner; Poppea in the same opera with director Jonathan Miller and conductor Jane Glover for Glimmerglass Opera and the Brooklyn Academy of Music; and Euridice in Gluck's Orfeo with Mark Morris and conductor Christopher Hogwood. Her concert career includes performances with orchestras and ensembles on the major concert stages of the world. In 1994, Ms. Hanchard was awarded the Jan de Gaetani Prize of the Walter Naumberg competition.

Jessica Tranzillo, soprano, has sung with ARTEK since 1989. Her roles have included Ottavia in Monteverdi's Coronation of Poppea, the Angel in Alessandro Stradella's Christmas Cantata, as well as solos in Handel's Messiah, Bach's St. John Passion and Magnificat, Purcell's Fairy Queen, and Monteverdi's Vespers of 1610. As an oratorio soloist, she has toured in Austria, Germany and Hungary, and Rome. She is a frequent soloist at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City. In the field of contemporary music, she has sung the East Coast premieres of works by Bruce Saylor, Charles Callahan, and Anthony Fedell.

Mezzo-soprano Jennifer Lane has been a regular soloist with ARTEK since its founding in 1986. She has sung leading opera roles to great acclaim in the U.S., Canada, France, Germany, Monaco, and Spain.

Although best-known for her appearances in baroque opera productions with Les Arts Florissants and at the Gottingen and Aix-en-Provence festivals, she is also a proponent of contemporary opera. Ms. Lane has performed the title role in Augusta Read Thomas' *Ligeia*, based on the life and work of Edgar Allan Poe, under Mstislav Rostropovich at the Evian Festival. She also sings the dual roles of Dido/Sorceress in the Mark Morris Dance Group's television production of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*.

Timothy Leigh Evans, tenor, has been singing since the age of five. He holds degrees from Huddersfield School of Music and is a Licentiate of both the Royal Academy and Trinity College, London. He is a member of Waverly Consort and Western Wind Vocal Ensemble and has sung with ARTEK since 1993. As a specialist in the performance of early music, Mr. Evans has appeared in New York's major concert halls and has toured the U.S., Mexico, Australia, Portugal, Hong Kong, and Holland. He recently made his Lincoln Center debut in Bach's B minor Mass with Joshua Rifkin.

Tenor Michael Brown has been heard in opera and concert in the U.S., Canada, Europe, and Africa. He has received rave notices for his portrayal of the Archangel in the New York Ensemble for Early Music's production of *Herod at Spoleto U.S.A.*, and for the role of Sandy in the Boston Shakespeare Company's production of P.M. Davies' *The Lighthouse*. He has sung Bach at Saint Ann's in Brooklyn with the Princeton Pro Musica, and with Music Before 1800. He has performed with the Clarion Music Society, the Mannes Camerata, and in music of Lukas Foss and Manuel De Falla with the New Philharmonic of New Jersey. He is a member of the a cappella sextet, Talisman.

Paul Shipper, bass, has performed and/or recorded over twenty bass roles in the baroque opera literature. He has appeared at most of the world's leading music festivals, including Cracow, Edinburgh, Hong Kong, Spoleto, Ravinia, Utrecht, and the Boston Early Music Festival. As a singer, lutenist, and recorder player, he is a member of New York's Ensemble for Early Music, Nottingham Fair, the Mannes Camerata, the New York Alta Band, and a founding member of Ex Umbris. Mr. Shipper has also performed and recorded with Pomerium, the Baltimore Consort, the Smithsonian Chamber Players and others.

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Libretto: L'Orfeo

Cast:

LA MUSICA (Soprano)
ORFEO (Tenor or Baritone)
EURYDICE (Soprano)
MESSENGER (Mezzosoprano)
HOPE (Mezzosoprano)
CHARON (Bass)
PLUTO (Bass)
PROSPERINE (Soprano)
APOLLO (Tenor or Baritone)
A NYMPH (Soprano)
ECHO (Soprano)

CHORUS

Nymphs and Shepards, infernal Spirits

PROLOGUE

Toccata

Ritornello

MUSIC

From my beloved Permessus I come to you,
illustrious heroes, noble scions of kings,
whose glorious deeds Fame relates,
though falling short of the truth, since the target is too high.

I am Music, who in sweet accents
can calm each troubled heart,
and now with noble anger, now with love,
can kindle the most frigid minds.

Singing to a golden lyre, I am wont
sometimes to charm mortal ears;
and in this way inspire souls with a longing
for the sonorous harmony of heaven's lyre.

Hence desire spurs me to tell you of Orpheus,
the immortal glory of Pindus and Helicon,
Orpheus who drew wild beasts to him by his singing,
and who subjugated Hades by his entreaties.

Now while I alternate my songs, now happy, now sad,
let no small bird stir among these trees,
no noisy wave be heard on these riverbanks,
and let each little breeze halt in its course. FIRST ACT

FIRST SHEPHERD

On this happy and auspicious day
which has put an end to the amorous torments
of our demi-god, let us sing, shepherds,
in such sweet accents
that our strains shall be worthy of Orpheus.
Today fair Eurydice's heart,
formerly so disdainful,
has been touched with compassion;
today Orpheus has been made happy
in the bosom of her for whom he once
sighed and wept so much amongst these woods.

Therefore, on so happy and auspicious a day
which has put an end etc.

CHORUS of NYMPHS & SHEPHERDS

Come, Hymen, ah come,
and let your fiery torch
be like a rising sun

to bring these lovers peaceful days
and henceforth banish afar
the horrors and shadows of anguish and grief.

NYMPH

Ye Muses, the honour of Parnassus, beloved by heaven,
tender consolation to the dejected heart,
let your harmonious lyres
rend the dark veil from every cloud;
and while we today,
on well-tuned strings,
invoke Hymen's favour on our Orpheus,
let your singing accord with our playing.

Balletto

CHORUS of NYMPHS & SHEPHERDS

Leave the mountains,
leave the fountains,
charming, happy nymphs,
and in these meadows
rejoice your fair feet
with your accustomed dances.

Here let the sun behold
your roundelays,
lovelier far than those
which the stars in heaven
dance to the moon
in the darkness of night.

Ritornello

Leave the mountains, etc.

Then let these lovers' locks
be honoured by you
with fair flowers,
that now they may rejoice,
happy at the ending of torments,
satisfied in their desires.

Ritornello

THIRD SHEPHERD

But you, gentle singer, if once you made
these fields weep at your laments,
why now do you not make the vales and hills
rejoice with you to the sound of your famous lyre?
Let some happy song that Love may inspire
bear witness to your heart.

ORPHEUS

Rose of heaven, light of the world, and worthy
offspring of him who holds the universe in thrall,
O Sun, who dost encircle and see all
from thy celestial orbits,
tell me, hast thou ever seen
a lover more joyful and fortunate than I?
Happy indeed was the day,
my dearest, when first I saw you,
and happier still the hour
when I sighed for you,
since you too sighed at my sighing;
happiest of all the moment
when you gave me your white hand
as a pledge of pure faith.
Had I as many hearts
as eternal heaven has eyes,
Or these pleasant hills and verdant May have leaves,
all would be full to overflowing
with that joy which today delights me.

EURYDICE

I will not say how great
is my joy at your rejoicing, Orpheus,
since my heart is no longer with me,
but resides with you in the company of Love.
Ask of it, therefore, if you wish to know
how gladly it rejoices and how much it loves you.

Balletto

CHORUS of NYMPHS & SHEPHERDS

Leave the mountains,
leave the fountains,
charming, happy nymphs,
and in these meadows
rejoice your fair feet
with your accustomed dances.

Here let the sun behold
your roundelays,
lovelier far than those
which the stars in heaven
dance to the moon
in the darkness of night.

Come, Hymen, ah come,
and let your fiery torch
be like a rising sun
to bring these lovers peaceful days
and henceforth banish afar
the horrors and shadows of anguish and grief.

SECOND SHEPHERD

But if our joy derives from heaven,
as everything we encounter down here is from heaven,
it is surely meet that we should devoutly
offer up incense and prayers:
therefore let each turn his steps to the temple,
to pray to him who holds the world in his right hand,
that he may long preserve our well-being.

Ritornello

FIRST & SECOND SHEPHERDS

Let there be no one who, in despair, gives himself up in prey
to grief, though at times it may powerfully
assail us and darken our lives.

Ritornello

NYMPH, THIRD & FOURTH SHEPHERDS

For after a malign cloud, its womb heavy
with a fearful storm, has affrighted the world,
the sun displays more brightly his radiant beams.

Ritornello

THIRD & FIRST SHEPHERDS

And after the sharp frost of naked winter,
Spring decks the fields with flowers.

CHORUS of NYMPHS & SHEPHERDS

Here is Orpheus, for whom but recently

sighs were food and tears drink:
today he is so happy
that he has nothing more to long for. SECOND ACT

Sinfonia

ORPHEUS

See now, I return to you,
dear woods and beloved hills,
made blessed by that sun
through whom alone my darkness is lightened.

Ritornello

FIRST SHEPHERD

Look, Orpheus, how the shade
of those beech trees invites us,
now that Phoebus darts
burning rays from heaven.

Ritornello

SECOND SHEPHERD

On these grassy banks
let us rest, and let each
in his own way let loose his voice
to the murmur of the waters.

Ritornello

FIRST & SECOND SHEPHERDS

In this flowery meadow
every sylvan deity
is often wont
to linger for his pleasure.

Ritornello

Here Pan, the shepherds' god,
has sometimes been heard lamenting,
sweetly recalling
his unrequited loves.

Ritornello

Here the charming dryads,
a company always decked with flowers,
have been seen gathering roses
with white fingers.

Ritornello

CHORUS of NYMPHS & SHEPHERDS

Therefore, Orpheus, make worthy
of the sound of your lyre
these fields, where there blows
a breeze with the perfumes of Araby.

Ritornello

ORPHEUS

Do you recall, O shady woods,
my long, bitter torments,
when the rocks, their hearts softened,
replied to my laments?

Say, did I not then seem to you
more wretched than any other?
Now Fortune has changed her tune
and turned my woes into rejoicing.

Once I lived in sadness and sorrow;
now I rejoice, and those anxieties
that I have suffered for so many years
make my present happy state more dear.

Through you alone, lovely Eurydice,
I bless my torments;
after sorrow, one is all the more content,
after woe, one is all the happier.

FIRST SHEPHERD

See, O see, Orpheus, how all around
the woods and the meadow smile.
Then continue, with your golden plectrum,
to sweeten the air on so blessed a day.

MESSENGER

Ah, bitter blow! Ah, wicked, cruel Fate!
Ah, baleful stars! Ah, avaricious heaven!

FIRST SHEPHERD

What mournful sound disturbs this happy day?

MESSENGER

Alas! Must I then,
while Orpheus delights heaven with his music,
pierce his heart with my words?

THIRD SHEPHERD

This is the gentle Sylvia,
fair Eurydice's sweetest companion
Oh, what sadness is in her face!
What has happened now? Ah, ye gods above,
do not avert your kindly gaze from us!

MESSENGER

Shepherd ' cease your singing,
for all our gaiety has turned to pain.

ORPHEUS

Whence do you come and whither are you going?
Nymph, what news do you bring?

MESSENGER

I come to you, Orpheus,
as an ill-fated bearer of tidings
still more ill-fated and more tragic.
Your lovely Eurydice ...

ORPHEUS

Alas! what do I hear?

MESSENGER

Your beloved bride is dead.

ORPHEUS

Woe is me!

MESSENGER

In a flowery meadow,
with her other companions,
she was wandering, gathering flowers
to make of them a garland for her tresses,
when a treacherous snake
that was lurking in the grass
bit her in the foot with its venomous fangs.

And lo, immediately her fair face
lost its colour, and in her eyes that lustre
with which she put the sun to shame grew dim.
Then we all, horrified and dismayed,
were around her, seeking to revive
her ebbing spirits
with cold water and powerful spells;
but alas! all was in vain,
for opening her drooping eyes a little
and calling for you, Orpheus,
after a deep sigh
she expired in my arms; and I was left
with my heart full of pity and fear.

FIRST SHEPHERD

Ah, bitter blow! Ah, wicked, cruel Fate!
Ah, baleful stars! Ah, avaricious heaven!

SECOND SHEPHERD

At the bitter news
the unhappy man seems dumb as a stone,
for through excess of grief he cannot grieve.

FIRST SHEPHERD

Ah, he who did not feel pity for your adversity,
wretched lover, bereft of all your happiness,
would surely have the heart of a tiger or bear.

ORPHEUS

You are dead, my life, and I still breathe?
You have gone from me,
never more to return, and I remain?
No, for if my songs have any power at all
I will surely descend to the deepest abyss and,
having softened the heart of the King of Shadows,
will bring you back with me to see the stars again.
Oh, if malign destiny denies me this,
I will remain with you in the company of death.
Farewell, earth! Farewell, sky, and sun, farewell!

CHORUS of NYMPHS & SHEPHERDS

Ah, bitter blow! Ah, wicked, cruel Fate!
Ah, baleful stars! Ah, avaricious heaven!
Let not mortal man trust
in fleeting and frail happiness,
for soon it flies away, and often

the precipice is close to the highest summit.

MESSENGER

But I, who in my tongue
have borne the knife
that has slain Orpheus's loving heart,
abhorrent to the shepherds and the nymphs,
abhorrent to myself, where shall I hide me?
An ill-omened creature of the night, I will forever
shun the sun, and in a lonely cavern
lead a life in keeping with my sorrow.

Sinfonia

FIRST & SECOND SHEPHERDS

Alas, who can console us?
Or rather, who will grant us
a living fountain in our eyes
that we may weep as we should
on this mournful day,
now all the sadder for having been more joyful?
Today a cruel blast has extinguished
the two brightest lights
of our woods,
Eurydice and Orpheus,
one stung by a serpent,
the other, alas, pierced by grief.

CHORUS of NYMPHS & SHEPHERDS

Ah, bitter blow! Ah, wicked, cruel Fate!
Ah, baleful stars! Ah, avaricious heaven!

FIRST & SECOND SHEPHERDS

But where, ah where now are
the lovely, cold limbs
of the luckless nymph
in which that sweet soul chose
her worthy dwelling, that today
has departed in the flower of her youth?
Let us reverently, shepherds,
go to find them
and with bitter tears
let due tribute,
at least, be paid by us to her lifeless body.

CHORUS of NYMPHS & SHEPHERDS

Ah, bitter blow! Ah, wicked, cruel Fate!
Ah, baleful stars! Ah, avaricious heaven!

RitornelloTHIRD ACT

Sinfonia

ORPHEUS

Guided by thee, O goddess
of Hope, thou only solace
of afflicted mortals, I have at last
reached these gloomy and sombre realms
where no ray of sunshine ever penetrated.
Thou, my companion and guide,
hast led my feeble and faltering steps
along such strange and unknown paths
where I still hope today
to see once more those blessed orbs
which alone bring daylight to my eyes.

HOPE

Here is the horrible quagmire, here the boatman
who ferries naked spirits to the far shore,
where Pluto has his vast realm of shadows.
Beyond that inky pool, beyond that river,
in those wastes of weeping and grief,
cruel destiny conceals the one who was everything to you.
Now you have need of a stout heart and an entrancing song.
Thus far I have led you, but further I may not
come with you, for a harsh law forbids it,
a law inscribed in iron on hard stone
at the hideous threshold of the lowest kingdom,
which in these words declares its ruthless intent:
"Abandon all hope, ye who enter."
Therefore, if you are still determined in your heart
to set foot in the city of sorrow,
I must hasten away and return
to my usual abode.

ORPHEUS

Where, ah where art thou going,
my heart's sole sweet comfort,
since now the goal of my long journey
is in sight not far away?
Why dost thou turn and abandon me, alas,
at this perilous stage?

What well?wisher now will help me on
if thou dost desert me, sweetest Hope?

CHARON

O you who rashly approach these shores
before death, stay your steps;
it is not given to mortal man to plough these waves,
nor can the living have shelter with the dead.
What? Perhaps, as an enemy of my lord,
you wish to drag Cerberus from the gates of Tartarus?
Or, your heart inflamed with lewd desire,
you long to abduct his dear consort?
Curb your foolish presumption, for never more
shall living body enter my boat,
for I still retain in my soul bitter memories
of former outrages, and just anger.

Sinfonia

ORPHEUS

Mighty spirit and fearsome deity,
without whom no soul separated from its body
can presume to gain passage to the other shore,

I am not living: no, for since my dear wife
is deprived of life, my heart no longer remains with me,
and without a heart, how can it be that I am alive?

To her I have made my way through the turbid air,
yet not to Hades, for wherever
such beauty is found has paradise in it.

I am Orpheus, who follow Eurydice's steps
through these murky deserts
where no mortal man has ever trod.

O serene light of my eyes,
if one glance from you can restore me to life,
ah, who would deny me solace in my anguish?

You alone, noble god, can give me aid,
nor need fear, since I arm my fingers only
with sweet strings on a golden lyre,
against which the most obdurate spirit steels itself in vain.

CHARON

Your lament and your song,
inconsolable singer, indeed
somewhat seduce me
and delight my heart.
But far, ah far from my breast must pity lie,
a sentiment unworthy of my valour.

ORPHEUS

Ah, hapless lover that I am,
may I not then hope
that the citizens of Avernus will hear my pleas?
Wherefore, like an unhappy errant shade
of an unburied corpse,
I am to be deprived of both heaven and hell?
Thus does pitiless destiny will
that in this horror of death,
far from you, my beloved,
I should call your name in vain
and wear myself out in imploring and weeping.
O give me back my love, ye gods of Tartarus!

Sinfonia

He is asleep, and even if my lyre
cannot arouse pity
in that stony heart, at least his eyes
cannot avoid slumber at my singing.
Up then! Why do I tarry longer?
It is high time to land on the other shore
if there is no one to prevent it;
let courage prevail if my prayers are to be in vain.
Opportunity is a fleeting flower of time
that must be plucked at the right moment.
He enters the boat and crosses over, singing to the sound of an organ.
Whilst my eyes pour forth streams of bitter tears,
give me back my love, ye gods of Tartarus!

Sinfonia

CHORUS of SPIRITS

No enterprise by man is undertaken in vain,
nor can Nature further defend herself against him.
He has ploughed the waving fields
of the uneven plain and scattered the seed
of his labour, whence he has reaped golden harvests.

Wherefore, so that the memory
of his glory shall live,
Fame has loosened her tongue to speak of him
who tamed the sea with fragile barque
and mocked the fury of the winds of the north and south.

Sinfonia

FOURTH ACT

PROSERPINE

My lord, this unhappy man
who wanders through these vast fields
of death, crying "Eurydice!",
and whom you too have just heard
making such sweet lament,
has aroused such pity in my heart
that once again I return to beseech
your godhead to accede to his entreaties.
Oh, if ever you have drawn
the sweetness of love from these eyes,
if the smoothness of this brow has pleased you
that you call your heaven, and on which
you swear not to envy Jove his lot,
I implore you, by that fire
with which Love set your great soul aflame,
permit Eurydice to return
to enjoy those days
that she used to spend in festivity and song,
and console the grief of the wretched Orpheus.

PLUTO

Although stern and unyielding Fate
may oppose your wishes, dear wife,
yet nothing now may be denied
to such beauty, combined with such pleading.
Despite the fatal decree, Orpheus may recover
his beloved Eurydice.
But before his feet are clear of these abysses
he may not once turn his eager eyes towards her,
for a single glance will inevitably
bring about her eternal loss.
Thus I ordain it. Now, my servants,
make known my will within my kingdom
so that Orpheus understands it
and Eurydice understands it,

and no one hope to change it.

FIRST SPIRIT

O mighty king of the dwellers in eternal shadows,
your command shall be our law,
for our thoughts may not seek
other hidden reasons for your will.

SECOND SPIRIT

Will Orpheus lead his wife
from these dreaded caverns? Will he apply his mind
and not let it be overcome by youthful ardour
nor forget his solemn orders?

PROSERPINE

What thanks can I render you,
my kind lord, now that you have granted
my entreaties so noble a gift?
Blessed be the day when first I pleased you
blessed the abduction and the sweet deception,
since, to my good fortune,
while losing the sun I gained you.

PLUTO

Your sweet words revive in my heart
the ancient wound of love.
Let not your soul become so desirous
of heavenly delight
that it forsake the marriage bed.

CHORUS of SPIRITS

Compassion and Love
triumph today in Hades.

FIRST SPIRIT

Behold the noble singer
who leads his wife up to the skies above.

ORPHEUS

What honour will be worthy of you,
my all-powerful lyre,
since you have succeeded in softening
every stubborn heart in the realm of Tartarus?

You shall have a place
amid the loveliest images of the heavens,

where the stars shall dance in circles,
now slowly, now quickly, to your sound.

Completely happy through you,
I shall see the beloved face
and be gathered today
to my lady's snow?white breast.

But while I sing, ah me! who can assure me
that she is following me? Alas,
who hides the sweet light of her beloved eyes from me?
Perhaps the gods of Avernus,
impelled by envy, so that I
should not be fully happy down here,
prevent me from looking at you,
blessed and radiant eyes,
which can bless others with a mere look?
But what do you fear, my heart?
What Pluto forbids, Love commands.
I must obey
a more powerful divinity
who conquers both men and gods.

There is a noise behind the scenes.

But what do I hear? Woe is me!
Perhaps the enamoured Furies
are taking up arms with such frenzy against me
to snatch my treasure from me? And I allow it?

Orpheus turns round.

O sweetest eyes, now I see you,
now I ... but alas! what eclipse obscures you?

THIRD SPIRIT

You have broken the law and are unworthy of mercy.

EURYDICE

Ah, sight too sweet and too bitter!
Thus, then, through excess of love you lose me?
And I, unhappy one, lose
the power any longer to enjoy
either light or life, and lose you too,
O my husband, more precious than all else.

FIRST SPIRIT

Return to the shadows of death,
unhappy Eurydice,
and hope no more to see the stars again,
for henceforth Hades is deaf to your prayers.

ORPHEUS

Where are you going, my life? See I follow you!
But who prevents me, alas? Am I dreaming or delirious?
What occult power among these horrors
drags me against my will
from these horrors I love and leads me
to the hateful light?

Sinfonia

CHORUS of SPIRITS

Virtue is a ray
of celestial beauty,
prize of the soul, where alone it is valued.
It does not fear the ravages of time;
on the contrary, with man
the years increase its splendour.
Orpheus conquered Hades and then
was conquered by his emotions.
Worthy of eternal glory is only he
who has victory over himself.

Sinfonia FIFTH ACT

Ritornello

ORPHEUS

These are the plains of Thrace, and this the place
where grief pierced my heart
at the bitter tidings.
Since I no longer have any hope
of regaining my lost treasure
by pleading,
weeping and sighing,
what else can I do but turn to you,
sweet woods, once the comfort
of my anguish, when it pleased heaven
to make you pine with me
in pity at my pining?
You grieved, O mountains, and you mourned,

ye rocks, at the departure of our sun.
And I will mourn with you evermore,
and give myself up forever to my pain and grief.

ECHO
.. aye, grief!

ORPHEUS
Kind, loving Echo,
thou who art disconsolate
and dost seek to console me in my sorrow,
although these eyes of mine have already,
through weeping, become two fountains,
in such grievous and cruel misery
I still have not tears enough.

ECHO
... enough!

ORPHEUS
Had I the eyes of Argus
and all were to pour forth a sea of tears,
their sorrow would not suffice for such woe.

ECHO
... Oh!

ORPHEUS
If thou hast pity for my misery, I thank thee
for thy kindness.
But while I lament,
ah, why dost thou answer me
only with my last syllables?
Return my laments to me in full.

But you, my dearest soul, if ever your cold shade
should return to these friendly slopes,
accept from me this final homage,
for now I dedicate to you my lyre and my song,
as, on the altar of the heart,
I already offered you my ardent spirit in sacrifice.

You were beautiful and wise, and to you
bounteous heaven confided all its graces,
while to all other women it was sparing of its gifts.
Every praise in every tongue for you is meet,

for in your lovely body you harboured a soul still lovelier,
as modest as worthy of honour.

Now other women are haughty and faithless,
callous and fickle to those who adore them,
devoid of judgement and all nobility of thought,
so that their conduct is, rightly, not praised.
Therefore may it never happen that Love
should pierce my heart with his golden arrow for a worthless woman.

Sinfonia

Apollo descends in a cloud, singing.

APOLLO

Why thus do you give yourself over as prey
to anger and grief, my son?
A generous heart does not advise
? no, it does not?
being a slave to its own passions.
Since I see you overcome
by reproach and danger,
I am come from heaven to give you aid.
Listen to me now, and you shall have praise and life.

ORPHEUS

Kindly father, you arrive at my time of direst need,
for already anger and love had brought me,
in utmost grief,
to a desperate end.
Here I am, then, attentive to your arguments,
heavenly father: now impose on me your will.

APOLLO

Far too greatly did you delight
in your happy fortune,
now too greatly do you bewail
your hard and bitter lot.
Do you still not know how,
on earth, nothing that delights is lasting?
Therefore, if you wish to enjoy immortal life,
come with me to heaven, which invites you.

ORPHEUS

Shall I never more see
the sweet eyes of my beloved Eurydice?

APOLLO

You can cherish her fair features
in the sun and stars.

ORPHEUS

Of such a father I should
indeed be an unworthy son
if I did not follow your true counsel.

APOLLO AND ORPHEUS

rising to Heaven

We rise singing to Heaven,
where truly virtue findeth
worthy and meet reward in peace and gladness.

CHORUS of NYMPHS & SHEPHERDS

Orpheus' cup of joy is filled,
he is ris'n to realms supernal,
there are pain and sorrow stilled,
there is peace and bliss eternal.
Joyous hearts and altars smoking
offer we, thy grace invoking.

Thus to all of us is given
who obey the Lord Eternal,
he shall taste the joys of Heaven,
who on earth has brav'd th'infernal.
He who sows his seed in sorrow
fruits of grace shall reap tomorrow.

Moresca



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