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PRESENT

OFFENBACH'S
ORPHEUS IN THE
UNDERWORLD



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THE SYNOPSIS

ORPHEUS IN THE UNDERWORLD

Eurydice longs to be rid of her boring musician husband so that she can romance with Pluto, God of the Underworld, in his earthly disguise as Aristée. When an unfortunate snake bite claims her life, Eurydice is transported to Hell by the lascivious Pluto. Orpheus, her husband, is delighted at the news of her demise which leaves him free to engage in his own extra-marital affairs. However, Public Opinion arrives and compels him to undertake a journey to Heaven to beg Jupiter for the return of his beloved wife, for the sake of appearances, of course.

The gods are discovered lounging about on Mount Olympus. Jupiter has heard of Pluto's abduction of Eurydice in whom he, too, has an interest. Under pressure from Public Opinion to restore Eurydice to Orpheus, Jupiter makes the decision to travel to Hell in person to see that justice is done - as well as to personally investigate the young lady's charms. At the last moment, he agrees to take everyone along on his trip to the Underworld.

Eurydice is languishing in Pluto's boudoir under the unwelcome attention of Pluto's manservant, John Styx. Jupiter arrives and his suspicions that Eurydice has been incarcerated somewhere on the premises are soon confirmed by Cupid and her team of detectives. Transformed into a giant insect, Jupiter tantalizes and then seduces Eurydice. He promises to take her to Mount Olympus after the party which Pluto is throwing for his guests. At the crucial moment, Orpheus, under the watchful eye of Public Opinion, arrives to make yet another appeal for the return of his wife. Jupiter solves the dilemma which leaves everyone - well, almost everyone - exhilarated and happy.



PHOENIX PHACT: Theatre student, **Medina Hahn**, who you will see featured in our next production *Stepping Out* is workshopping *Sex The Musical* for the Belfry Theatre, a new show written by MFA Graduate in Directing, **Ross Desprez**.

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LIGHTING ACCORDING TO TRACY...

I wanted to do something different with this space -- Designer's Notes if you will. I, originally, came from Ontario and received my BA in English and Theatre at the University of Guelph in 1995. In the two years here at the Phoenix, I have assisted Allan Stichbury in his wonderful lighting designs for *Jennie's Story* and *The Learned Ladies*, and Giles Hogle with his exotic lighting design for *Salomé*. I, myself, have designed lights for *Love of the Nightingale*, all the PST '96 shows, *Melville Boys*, *This is for You*, *Anna*, and *Hush*, and of course, *Orpheus in the Underworld*. I was also the Festival Lighting Coordinator for the Beckett Festival.

The most vital thing that I will take away from my two years at UVic is the necessity of communication. Without communication, there is no design and I have found that good communication often shows up as a good design. A lighting designer must take into consideration not just the director's vision, but the set and costume designers' concepts as well. In a perfect world, we'll have the same goals, concepts and visions. In the real world, this is often not the case and the ONLY way to achieve a cohesive visual concept is to talk and to listen.

Of course, no one is 100% altruistic and the lighting designer also wishes to express her vision. She uses a pallet of light and shadow, texture, and a large range of colour to do this. With this pallet, she paints the long suffering actor, the stage, the costume -- in short, everything, with her lights.

In this play, I am working with polarities and extremes. Man's World is too much -- too much colour, too much texture, too much glare -- after all, we have always had a problem with balance. Heaven is a solid sheet of light coloured white on blue with shadows and texture eliminated as much as possible. Hell is far more fun. Lights appear from many different angles and is heavily textured and shadows are encouraged to express our darkness. These lights communicate. They talk to the opera and about the opera. They have a lot to say about us and even, about me.

Tracy Harrington
MFA Candidate in Design
Specializing in Lighting

PHOENIX PHACT: *Orpheus* is Lighting Designer, Tracy Harrington's thesis production, on the road to obtaining her MFA Degree in Design.



Tracy Harrington, MFA Candidate, specializing in lighting checks out some colored gel for her lighting design.



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THE OFFENBACH LEGEND OF ORPHEUS

During its premiere stage run in 1858, Jacques Offenbach's *Orpheus In The Underworld* burst pocket-books and bellies alike. The broadly satirical tone of the work, which pokes fun at Classical mythology, Glucks's operatic setting of the Orpheus legend, as well as contemporary society, generated ample controversy and self-promotion. The key ingredient of this *succès de scandale*, however, was a local critic by the name of Jules Janin. Week after week, his *Journal des Débats* was filled with charges of artistic sacrilege which touched upon every aspect of the production. Offenbach, together with his literary collaborators Hector Crémieux and Ludovic Halevy, patiently waited until Janin turned the spotlight of his attack on the libretto of *Orpheus*. This happened in due course and the creators delighted in finally being able to play their ace. They had used, in their libretto, text lifted verbatim from one of Janin's own columns from earlier that year. Crémieux was quick to share this titbit with Parisian society in the pages of *Figaro*. The mouthpiece of piety had served his purpose and, not surprisingly, conceded.

By the end of the Janin scandal, *Orpheus* was a slick and smoothly-running show. Curiosity seekers encountering the work first-hand discovered the satire to be of a light-hearted nature, and generic as much as it was specific. Many responded to its far-reaching invitation to join in the fun. The *Orpheus* success was a timely one. Despite the relative popularity of Offenbach's earlier thirty-three production, the composer had consistently managed to operate his theatre the Bouffes-Parisian in the red. With *Orpheus*, the box-office receipts were substantial enough that Offenbach's extravagances no longer jeopardized his personal finances or those of the theatre. Everyone shared in the success. The chorus and orchestra grew, as did the salaries. At the close of its initial two hundred and twenty-eight performance run, the *Orpheus* project had grown considerably. Furthermore, it had become downright fashionable. Night after night the reveling Gods brought the house down with the infectious rhythms and frenetic pacing of the still famous cancan. A once outmoded dance, Offenbach's cancan became a symbol of flamboyance and vitality, later captured in Toulouse-Lautrec's *Moulin Rouge* posters and very much in evidence today on the dance stages of Las Vegas.

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Orpheus in the Underworld.

... THE OFFENBACH LEGEND OF ORPHEUS

The unprecedented recognition and financial security which Orpheus afforded Offenbach even helped to secure him French citizenship. The Emperor Napoleon III commanded and honoured a special performance of Orpheus as the feature of a gala event at Paris's Italian Opéra in 1860. Performances of Orpheus soon conquered international stages as well, including those of Offenbach's native Germany. After a carefully nurtured early career, Orpheus began to lead a somewhat independent life and Offenbach turned his creative energies to new opéra-bouffes, opera comiques, operettas and the like. Many were subtle reworkings of the successful ingredients of Orpheus; satires of other mythological legends and over revered composers. However, in 1874, after premiering no less than fifty more works, Offenbach again focused his attention on Orpheus. What has originally catapulted him into the realm of larger-scale works was further transformed into an operetta on a truly grand scale. Each of the original four scenes became an act in its own right. Contemporary revivals of Orpheus include the concise as well as augmented versions.

Unlike many satirical works, the success of Orpheus has never hinged solely on audiences getting a bunch of "inside jokes", although they certainly add another layer of merry-making. The young painter Gustav Doré laced the original costumes and set designs with witty allusions to Napoleon III and his court, whose amorous and other intrigues strikingly resembled those of Orpheus' Gods and were much discussed in the tabloids of the day. Subsequent designers and directors have found ample personalities and activities with which to underscore the work's ongoing topicality. Even without such pointed references, Orpheus' Gods embody an abundance of very human frailties and idiosyncrasies which will undoubtedly remain recognizable for audiences yet to come.

Katherine Syer
School of Music

PHOENIX PHACT: **Richard Stille**, one of our two M.F.A. Candidates in Directing has just directed the popular production of Neil Simon's *Chapter Two* for the Victoria Theatre Guild at Langham Court. He was assisted by **Monica Graham** and **Galen Olstead**, also of the Department of Theatre. Featured in this production were two of our former students, **Bernadette McKelvey** and **Suzanne Isacson**. **Chet Culham** designed the set, **Tim Crofton** designed lights, **Louise Anderson** (Orpheus' Stage Manager) designed the Costumes, Sound Design was by **Matt Husack** and Robert Holliston, **Connie Beel** was Stage Manager, **Jennifer Swan**, Assistant Stage Manager.

MUSICAL NOTES

Opera Nova is the opera program within The School of Music designed to give operatic experience to our voice students. In the past five years we have presented our singers in such diverse operas as *Night Blooming Cereus* by John Beckwith, *Prima Donna* by Arthur Benjamin, *Suor Angelica* by Puccini and *The Beggar's Opera*. Each year we have become a little more ambitious, and it has been gratifying that our last two productions have played to sold out houses. Those houses were in our Recital Hall, transformed for the occasions into a theatre. With help from the Theatre Department we have always managed to create strong effects with a minimum of resources, but it had always been a wish of mine to be able to give the students a real theatrical experience in a real theatre.

With this in mind, two years ago I approached the Theatre Department with the idea of doing *Orpheus in the Underworld* as a joint production in which the theatre students would participate equally with the music students. What you are about to see then is a first, a production in which the considerable resources of both departments have shared their expertise, their students, and their faculty to give you an unforgettable evening of outrageous musical theatre.

To have enjoyed the coming together of two disciplines (which since the beginning of time have always gone hand in hand) has been an exciting experience for all of us.

Alexandra Browning
Musical Director



PHOENIX PHACT: MFA Design Graduate, **Dany Lyne** will design the Costumes for the 1997 Stratford production of *Romeo and Juliet*.

PRODUCTION TEAM FOR ORPHEUS

Production Manager.....	Gysbertus Timmermans*
Technical Director.....	Steve Vrooman*
Assistant Stage Managers.....	Carleigh Baker, Paul Donison, Lindsay Walker
Electrician.....	Brendan Keith
Lighting Board Operators.....	Aaron Martin, Sarah Korzan
Sound Board Operator.....	Michelle Deines
Properties Supervisor.....	Misha Koslovsky
Properties Assistant	Margaret Handford
Properties Team.....	Garth Johnson, Aaron Martin, Chris Oliver
Properties Builders.....	Jeff Henry, Erin Macklem, Denise de Montreuil
Head of Scenic Construction.....	Charles Procure*
Assistant Carpenter.....	Jeremy Gordaneer
Scenic Construction Team	Kellie Barnum, Justin Border, Alan Lundy, Nicola Schicchi, Lindsay Walker
Head of Wardrobe/Cutter.....	Karla D. Stout*
Costume Shop Assistant.....	Karen Levis
Costume Design Team....	Erin Macklem, Amber McGregor, Allison Bottomley
Costume Construction Assistants.....	Mairi Babb, Connie Beel, Allison Bottomley, Doris Bottoni, Carrie Costello, Lana Manuel, Michelle Monteith, Amber MacGregor, Elizabeth Reid
Millinery.....	Connie Beel
Hair Dresser.....	Doris Bottoni
Co-ordinating Wardrobe Supervisor.....	Marlis Schweitzer
Wardrobe Supervisors.....	Genevieve Charbonneau, Heather Young
Dressers	Scott Roberts, Mary Simpson, Jaime Yard, Christopher Bradburn, Kris Johnston, Ellen Bjelica, Maria Dimas
Stage Crew.....	Michael Armstrong, Mike Dimambro, Alexander Cameron, Jennifer Deslippe
Technical Crew for Set, Props, Costumes, Lighting and Ushering.....	Theatre 105 Students
Theatre Manager.....	Bindon Kinghorn*
Assistant Theatre Manager.....	Sandra Guerreiro*
Publicity/Program Editor.....	Marnie Crowe*
Photography.....	Don Pierce
Graphic Design.....	Adam Sawatsky
Front Of House Managers.....	Jasmine Lapointe-Turk, Shendah Sebel
Box Office.....	Shannan Calcutt, Kim Pinel, Louise Anderson, Gwyneth McIntosh, Amy Benson, Helen Devine, Michelle Graham
Opening Night Reception.....	Kim Pinel, Helen Devine
Opening Night Bar.....	University Food Services

* Theatre Department



Director, David Walsh with Lesley O'Connor and Om Mogerman in rehearsal.

OFFENBACH THEN . . .

Perhaps the greatest feather in the cap of Jacques Offenbach, '*musicien extraordinaire*' of the Second Empire, was that for over thirty years he successfully, and brilliantly, bit the hand that fed him - or at least snapped at it. Variouslly dubbed the Emperor of Waltz, the King of Operetta and, most revealingly perhaps, the 'unofficial opposition' in France, the man born in a Jewish ghetto in Cologne, spent an entire career aspiring to be a part of the very system which he so deliciously satirized in his works. Together with another German ex-patriate, Ludovic Halevy, Offenbach transformed the operetta (itself a foreign invention) into the greatest musical expression of Parisian life in the Second Empire. Denied access to the 'Opera', Offenbach built his own theatre, the Bouffes-Parisiens', to perform his operettas, which bore the same relation to grand opera as revue and striptease might today. In its time, the famous cancan, which had been imported from North Africa was considered outrageously provocative - even scandalous. When Offenbach and his librettist, Halevy ridiculed the gods, goddesses and mortals of ancient mythology they were really holding up a mirror to the foibles and follies of their own society. Their music theatre creations rippled with wit, intelligence and humour - penetrating the soft underbelly of a society dancing frenetically and blindly to the edge of the abyss yawning before it. When Emperor-Louis Napoleon slipped away to exile in England following France's humiliating capitulation to Bismarck's Prussian army on September 2, 1870, the Second Empire came ingloriously to an end. With its demise, the operetta, which required the Empire for its own success, faded away like mist in the night.

... AND NOW!

In preparing *Orpheus In The Underworld* for this production, **Allan Stichbury** (Set Designer) and **Mary Kerr** (Costume Designer) and I began with the assumption that most of the political and social (not to mention musical) humour, which would have so stimulated and delighted Offenbach's public, was unlikely to have much resonance for a contemporary, North American audience. Our challenge, then, became how to recreate the inherent atmosphere of the original in some twentieth century manifestation so that the wit and danger of the satire became apparent and accessible. The notion of using Hollywood as a metaphor for Olympus was very appealing. In our collective fantasies, Hollywood has always been the escapist paradise, the dream world to which every young boy or girl at some point aspires. The gossip columns (represented here by Public Opinion) tell us that the picture is not quite as rosy as we imagine, but we still love to believe in the myths. Hell then becomes the place where one and all, gods and mortals alike, can go to let their hair down.

Taking our cue from Maestro Offenbach himself, we have played very fast and loose with myths and tradition, time-period and visual style, to present this quintessential representation of operetta as a weapon of satire wrapped in a musical bouquet with all the verve, aplomb and racy spirit of the original. We hope you enjoy it.

David Walsh
Stage Director



PHOENIX PHACT: Mairi Babb, Cupid in *Orpheus* has won the coveted role of Eliza Doolittle in the Victoria Operatic Society production of *My Fair Lady*. Former Student, **Bonnie Mathers** is directing.

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THE CAST OF ORPHEUS

(In order of appearance)

PUBLIC OPINION..... SUE KELLY• KRISTIN NOWOSAD••
PRIMROSE..... SARA TOPHAM
EURYDICE..... CARLENE WIEBE
ORPHEUS..... KEN LAVIGNE
PLUTO..... CAM CULHAM
JUPITER..... PETER COLLINS•• OM MOGERMAN•
JUNO..... LESLEY O' CONNOR•• STACEY STORREY•
VENUS..... JANELLE McWHIRTER
CUPID..... MAIRI BABB
MARS..... BRIAN ARENS
MORPHEUS..... SARA TOPHAM and JODI TRUSCOTT
DIANA..... LAURA WHALEN
MERCURE..... MARLIS SCHWEITZER
JOHN STYX..... BILL MACKWOOD
CEREBUS..... VICTORIA PEACOCK

EURYDICE UNDERSTUDY..... NONALEE DONG
MERCURE UNDERSTUDY..... KATHY CONEYS

- Performance February 12, 14, 17, 19 & 21
- Performance February 11, 13, 15, 18, 20 & 22

CHORUS

BETH ADAIR
DAVID BROWN
SUSAN BLACK
ODESSA MUELLER
KATHY CONEYS
LISETT RAPOSO
NONALEE DONG
STEPHANIE GILL
JAMES HALLAM
GWYNETH McINTOSH
KRISTA McKEACHIE

JASON MITCHELL
MIKE MELNICK
MORGAN COLLINS
HEIDI MEUNDEL
MONICA DOOLEY
JESSICA RAPP
MILOS REPICKY
NOREEN SMITH
LINDSAY STERK
JAMES UPTON

ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL

February 11, 12, 14, 17, 19, 21 Performances

Violin I	Chloe Kohut Nancy Case Germaine Foofat Freya Putt	Flute	Christa Monasch
		Oboe	Tracy Wright
		Clarinet	Ilona Barber
Violin II	Gabriel Solomon Katie Lee	Bassoon	Jace Stearn
Viola	Mieka Kohut Alexis More	Horn	Kristin Yerex
		Trumpet	Jeffery Wegner
Cello	Cynthia Martens Suzanne Finger	Trombone	Christian Nielsen
Double Bass	Mark Beaty	Timpani & Percussion	Jonathan Eng

February 13, 15, 18, 20, 22 - Performances

Violin I	Jill Wiwcharuk Margaret Dzbik Jody McIvor Megan Chapelas	Flute	Erin Bardua
		Oboe	Elizabeth Crawford
		Clarinet	Adrian Peters
Violin II	Christina Gray Klisala Harrison	Bassoon	Olivia Martin
Viola	Robin Streb Capella Sherwood	Horn	Sarah Wendt
		Trumpet	Niki Bysouth
Cello	Gillian Wayman Jennifer Moersch	Trombone	Matt Wallace
Double Bass	Pablo Seib	Timpani & Percussion	Anita Bonkowski

Orchestra Stage Manager Pablo Seib
 Orchestra Librarian Kristin Yerex



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POP... ACCORDING TO PATI

Do you go to the art gallery once a week darling? Do you go to the supermarket, then? No, and Yes? Well, now, what if I told you that your supermarket *is* an art gallery?? Just think! Color! Composition! Jumbo Size! 33% more for free! Cheap and Chic, darling, and it's all Art! Take it home! Hang it on your wall . . . um, what?

Oh, you only consider those paintings by the guy who ran around splashing paint (right out of a can, even!) onto his canvasses to be Art-with-a-capital-A? That abstract stuff? What's that called? Hmm. Action Painting, oh yes. Abstract Expressionism . . . because it was done by some balding, drunk guy in his ivory tower of self-imposed exile from society, so "sensitive" that he had to portray his inner-most feelings as messy layers of paint . . . Right? Ah, Um of course . . . how . . . *abstract*. How *expressive*. If it is abstract, then it is real art, I guess. Well darling there is a whole other world out there that you're missing. "pop" as in Popular . . . as in their subject matter . . . , let me start at the beginning.

American Pop Art was a realist "movement " that began in the early 1960's in New York, mostly. It occurred in reaction to the all-encompassing oppressiveness of modern Abstract art (at its height in the 1950's) and its turbulent emotional trappings. That Abstract Expressionist stuff, and so on. Apparently, unbeknownst to one another (although who's to say really . . .) a group of young artists began creating and exhibiting within the traditional gallery system, paintings and sculpture that made use of objects and subject matter taken from everyday billboards, Hollywood stars and consumer products like Campbell's soup, as subjects for their work. And, darling, they did not even TRY to change anything, to make the trashy things look more "arty". They *played* with them. They made them BIGGER, BRIGHTER, more GLARING and PLASTIC, and IN-YOUR-FACE than such things already were. They EXAGGERATED everything, and changed nothing-interfering not at all with the recognisability of those cans of soup and comic book characters. It was all very "cool". And these little pieces of everyday life were hung in the hallowed halls of art galleries and museums.

"Horrors" screamed the art critics (and the abstract artists). "Go back to your pre-assigned ivory towers and Emote Creatively! Superman is not Art. Now splash that paint with Conviction!" "No!" they cried. "We will not pretend that the society in which we live does not exist for us! No one can do this, and who would want to? We LIKE Superman and Elvis, and we feel that they illustrate what our society is all about. So we will put them in our art. So there. You can't ignore us forever."

PHOENIX PHACT: Om Mogerma, Jupiter, will be performing in Pacific Opera's production of *Tosca*.

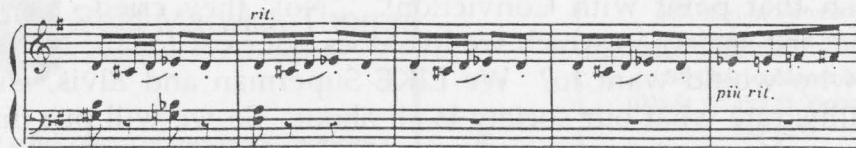
POP CONTINUED ...

And indeed, darling, if Modern art succeeded in fully exploring the idea of "art for Art's sake," then the Pop artists brought about a return to the "topical" in art. Only by the time they did this, the outward appearance of society had changed. A view out of a window in New York would give you the neon signs of Times Square, not the languid sunny pastures or even the horse-drawn carriages of previous, and not always so distant, eras. The new environment was Day-Glo bright, noisy, fabricated, and Larger than Life. Enter the Pop artists, raised in this plastic world with their paintings that would meld spaghetti the thickness of firehoses, with the grill of a new Ford car; exhibiting two foot high soup cans; and constructing a three-dimensional, six foot in diameter stuffed *hamburger* topped with a twelve-inch slice of sweet pickle.

In contrast to the abstract work favored by "high" art circles, Pop art was enthusiastically received by the consumers of "low" art - the general public. Artist Andy Warhol (who painted the soup cans, among other things) caused a riot upon his appearance at one of his solo-show gallery openings. The room was so packed with fans of the artist, that the paintings had to be taken off the walls. Andy and his companion, Edie Sedgewick, became the show. They had to exit the room via the fire escape. It was all so *very* Pop, don't you see, darling? The artist became the art!

By this point, Pop had become more than an art movement, it was all of those things that one associates with the sixties - the scene (be IN!), the fashion (think Minimum skirt - Maximum impact), the music (loud), design, and architecture (bold and primary) . . . even the look of advertising and the media went "Pop", in a strange cross-fertilization of ideas and influences. The high energy of the decade was fueled by the forward-thinking, all-embracing Pop mentality. As Andy Warhol once said; "Once you "got' Pop, you could never see America the same way again . . . all you had to do was *know* you were in the future, and that's what put you there." And the future presented by Pop was big, bright, and happening all around you, darling.

Pati Tozer History In Art



PHOENIX PHACT: BFA Graduate, **Tobi Hunt** is currently working for The Manitoba Theatre Centre on the production of *Death of a Salesman* featuring Broadway actor Judd Hirsch.

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The Guest Speaker for both Dinner Theatre Evenings, March 18 & 25 is the Director of *Stepping Out*, **Linda Hardy**.

Dinner tickets are \$19.00 (includes gst.) Theatre tickets must be paid separately.

For Reservations, please call Sandra Guerreiro at 721-8003

PHOENIX PHACT: B.F.A. Graduate, **Tim Crofton**, directed the recent Victoria Christmas production of *Scrooge*. He is currently working for The Chemainus Theatre Company.

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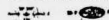


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