



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
January 24, 2012



“WEIRD AND WONDERFUL, DEVASTATINGLY LOVELY...”

Phoenix production of *Eurydice* immerses audience in kinetic sculptural world

2011/2012 Season

3 EURYDICE

February 16 – 25, 2012

By Sarah Ruhl

Directed by Jeffrey Pufahl, MFA Candidate

Production Designer Mary Kerr

Lighting Designer Bryan Kenney

Sound Designer Neil Ferguson

Stage Manager Sarah Watson

A quirky, contemporary retelling of the Orpheus and the Underworld myth through Eurydice's eyes.

Free PreShow Lecture:

February 17 at 7pm

Linda Hardy speaks with the director and design team about their concepts for the play.

4 THE MAROWITZ HAMLET

March 15 – 24, 2012

By William Shakespeare & Charles Marowitz

Guest directed by Charles Marowitz

Marowitz rethinks Shakespeare's masterpiece by cutting it up and piecing it back together again.

With influences by artists like Alexander Calder, Henri Matisse, and Yves Klein, Production Designer Mary Kerr's innovative and kinetic set for the University of Victoria's Phoenix Theatre production of *Eurydice*, will find the audience on a "...weird and wonderful, devastatingly lovely..." (New York Times) journey to the underworld from February 16-25, 2012.

Directed by MFA Candidate Jeffrey Pufahl, the story of *Eurydice* boldly reimagines the classic myth of Orpheus in the Underworld. However, where Orpheus's story stops at the gates, we, through the eyes of the quirky title character Eurydice, experience a surreal world devoid of memories where she meets talking stones, a playfully sinister Underlord, and her long-lost father. Written by the prolific New York playwright Sarah Ruhl, *Eurydice* is very much a story of Ruhl and her own father, who she lost to cancer at the age of twenty.

"Told through the lens of myth and imagination, the play is not a realistic exploration of this story, but rather an expression of the complexity of Ruhl's emotional journey," says Pufahl. *"This play, coupled with the power of the myth and the limitless nature of dreaming, allows us to expand our perception of life and death and explore our attachments to the dead and the living."*

The audience will be immersed in the world of *Eurydice* as soon as they step into the theatre. Pufahl and Kerr have conceptualized an atmosphere that uses the entirety of the Phoenix's thrust theatre space. Vibrant and bold scenery pieces are choreographed and function like part of a great kinetic sculpture. Viewed as an extension of the set, the expanded group of talking stones also mimic the role of a traditional Greek chorus.

"I try to interpret how people subjectively experience life," Ruhl said in a New Yorker article profiling the rising off-Broadway sensation. *"Everyone has a great, horrible opera inside him. I feel that my plays, in a way, are very old-fashioned. They're pre-Freudian in the sense that the Greeks and Shakespeare worked with similar assumptions. Catharsis isn't a wound being excavated from childhood."* Ruhl's plays have won and been nominated for various awards, including her play, *The Clean House* which was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in 2005 and was named one of the top ten theatrical attractions in New York in 2006 by Entertainment Weekly. She was awarded the MacArthur Fellowship (called the "Genius Grant") in 2006.

The ancient Greek poet Pindar referred to Orpheus as the "Father of Songs" with music that was said to charm living things, rocks, trees, and even Hades, God of the underworld when Orpheus played for him the saddest music in the world while trying to recover his love Eurydice. Pufahl and Sound Designer Neil Ferguson, will draw upon these musical influences and include a plethora of music ranging from classical music by Frederick Delius, Erik Satie, Henryk Gorecki, to ambient down-tempo techno music by Brian Eno.

A labour of love for almost a year, this production of *Eurydice* is a culmination of Pufahl and Kerr's vast experience. Although a master's student, Pufahl already has both a degree in Music from McGill University and a degree in Theatre Performance from the Cincinnati Conservatory. Kerr has a distinguished career as a leading production designer in theatre, dance, opera, television, exhibition and special events design dance and was inducted to the Royal Society of Canada in 2010. Lighting Designer and MFA student Bryan Kenney has the challenge of lighting a multitude of the theatre's spaces that rarely see light and setting the atmospheric mood of the different worlds. Sarah Watson is the Stage Manager.

Everyone is welcome to attend a **FREE preshow lecture** on Friday, February 17 at 7pm. Join Professor Linda Hardy in conversation with the director and the design team as they discuss the concept and designs for the play.

Information is available online at phoenixtheatres.ca or by calling **250-721-8000**.

The performance schedule for *Eurydice* is as follows:

Public Preview Performances @ 8pm: February 14 (Oooh! Valentine's Day!) & 15

Evening Performances @ 8pm: February 16 (Opening Night), 17, 18, 20 (extra Monday night), 21, 22, 23, 24, 25

Matinee Performances @ 2pm: Saturday, February 25

Single Tickets: \$13 Student / \$18 Senior / \$22 Adult / \$24 Weekends @ 8pm (Previews \$7.00, available after 5pm)

Pre-show Lecture @ 7pm: Friday, February 17

Phoenix Box Office opens February 7 in person or by calling: **(250) 721-8000**.

Department of Theatre and

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