

# Love and Loss in Death's Kingdom:



Orpheus  
and  
Eurydice

Metamorphoses 1 B



**Our Poem on This Theme:**

**Alice Friman, “Orpheus and Eurydice in Spain”**

**pp. 7 - 9**



# JOSEPH CAMPBELL™



## THE HERO WITH A THOUSAND FACES

# The Hero's Journey:





All of the great mythologies and much of the mythic story-telling of the world are from **the male point of view**. When I was writing *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* and wanted to bring female heroes in, I had to go to the fairy tales. These were told by women to children, you know, and you get a different perspective.

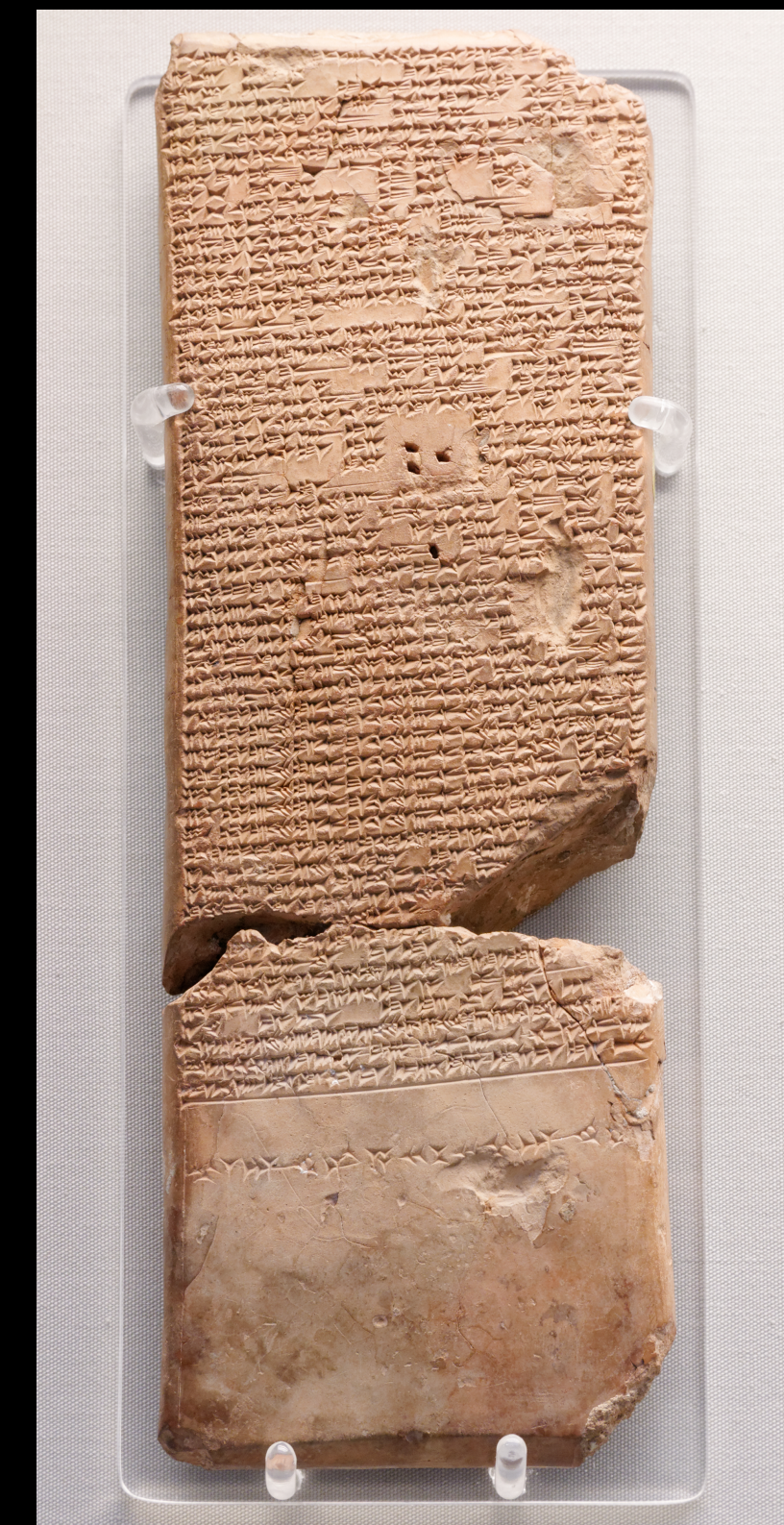
— Joseph Campbell

[**YET** he acknowledges that...]

**The World's Oldest Literary Work  
is a Priestess's Account of Divine Aid:**

***The Exaltation of Inanna***

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9\\_4UVlubKxk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_4UVlubKxk)





**...and let's not forget this female shaman buried in central Germany, c. 7000 BCE**



[https://www.livescience.com/archaeology/bad-durrenberg-headdress-an-elaborate-9-000-year-old-headpiece-worn-by-a-female-shaman-in-europe?utm\\_term=18DE4DB3-56F2-42FD-9FC6-B725F8C49432&lrh=2bba61d8d91e60b322b49fb9d0c4b9ae9361f05328fde7815cbe40db3c9b044c&utm\\_campaign=368B3745-DDE0-4A69-A2E8-62503D85375D&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=F2FCC773-AF76-4BA5-B142-F177E446F700&utm\\_source=SmartBrief](https://www.livescience.com/archaeology/bad-durrenberg-headdress-an-elaborate-9-000-year-old-headpiece-worn-by-a-female-shaman-in-europe?utm_term=18DE4DB3-56F2-42FD-9FC6-B725F8C49432&lrh=2bba61d8d91e60b322b49fb9d0c4b9ae9361f05328fde7815cbe40db3c9b044c&utm_campaign=368B3745-DDE0-4A69-A2E8-62503D85375D&utm_medium=email&utm_content=F2FCC773-AF76-4BA5-B142-F177E446F700&utm_source=SmartBrief)



For Those of You Fortunate Enough to Have Taken George Young's *Aeneid* Class:



Vergil tells of a **living man** who enters the Underworld, receives prophetic vision from his **dead father**, and returns with the golden bough given to him by a **living priestess**.

In the *Odyssey*, Vergil's model, a **living man** descends to the Underworld, meets his **dead mother**, consults a **dead prophet**, and returns to his **living crew**.





**For those of us who took George Young's *Inferno* class:**

A **dead** but eternally-living **woman** **successfully** commands an immortal poet to escort a **living man** out of Hell and ultimately to Heaven.

In the Orpheus myth, a **living man** attempts to lead a **dead woman**, his bride, out of the Underworld — **to no avail**.

**In both cases, the dominant motivation was Love; one was a *commedia*, the other, a tragedy.**



# Classical Greek Sources of Orpheus Myth

*Agamemnon, Medea, Iphigenia at Aulis, Bacchae, Cyclops*

## **Plato, *Symposium*:**

**“Thus heaven itself has a peculiar regard for ardor and resolution in the cause of Love. And yet the gods sent Orpheus away from Hades empty-handed, and showed him the mere shadow of the woman he had come to seek. Eurydice herself they would not let him take, because he seemed, like the minstrel he was, to be a lukewarm lover, lacking the courage to die as Alcestis died for love, and choosing rather to scheme his way, living, into Hades. And it was for this that the gods doomed him, and doomed him justly, to meet his death at the hands of women.”**

(179 d) Michael Joyce, tr.



# Classical Latin Sources of Orpheus Myth

Vergil, *Georgics* ( IV. 655 - 764 )

Horace, *Odes* ( I. 12. 7-12 )

Ovid, *Metamorphoses* ( X. 1 - 111, 143 - 179 ; XI. 1 - 43 )



## **An Ovidian Wink at a Venerable Myth...**

**[Orpheus to Hades:]**

**“Love has overcome me, a god well-known in the upper world,**

**but whether here or not I do not know; and yet I surmise that he is known**

**here as well, and if the story of that old-time ravishment is not false, you, too,**

**were joined by love.”**

***(Metamorphoses, X. 26 - 30)***

F.J. Miller, tr.

**...or is it just 21st-century me?**



## *Yet Another Ovidian Tweek?*

[For three years after losing Eurydice the second time, Orpheus spurned the advances of women attracted to him.] “He set the example for the people of Thrace of giving his love to tender boys, and enjoying the springtime and first flowering of their youth.”

*(Metamorphoses X. 83 -85)*

F.J. Miller, tr.



## Interesting Parallel: *Genesis* 19

**23** By the time Lot reached Zoar, the sun had risen over the land. **24** Then the Lord rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah—from the Lord out of the heavens. **25** Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, destroying all those living in the cities—and also the vegetation in the land. **26** But Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

**27** Early the next morning Abraham got up and returned to the place where he had stood before the Lord. **28** He looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah, toward all the land of the plain, and he saw dense smoke rising from the land, like smoke from a furnace.

**29** So when God destroyed the cities of the plain, he remembered Abraham, and he brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had lived.



Alexandre-Auguste Hirsch

*Calliope Teaching Orpheus*

(1865)







***Nymphs Listening  
to the Songs  
of Orpheus***

Charles Jalabert (1853)





*Orfeo ed Euridice*

Titian

(1509)





**J.R. Stanhope – *Orpheus and Eurydice on the Banks of the Styx***



**Peter Paul Rubens**

(1577 - 1640)

*Orpheus  
and  
Eurydice*





*Orpheus Leading Eurydice Out of the Underworld*

Camille Corot

(1861)







**Rodin**

***Orpheus and Eurydice***

**(1893)**





*Death of Orpheus*

red-figure bell krater

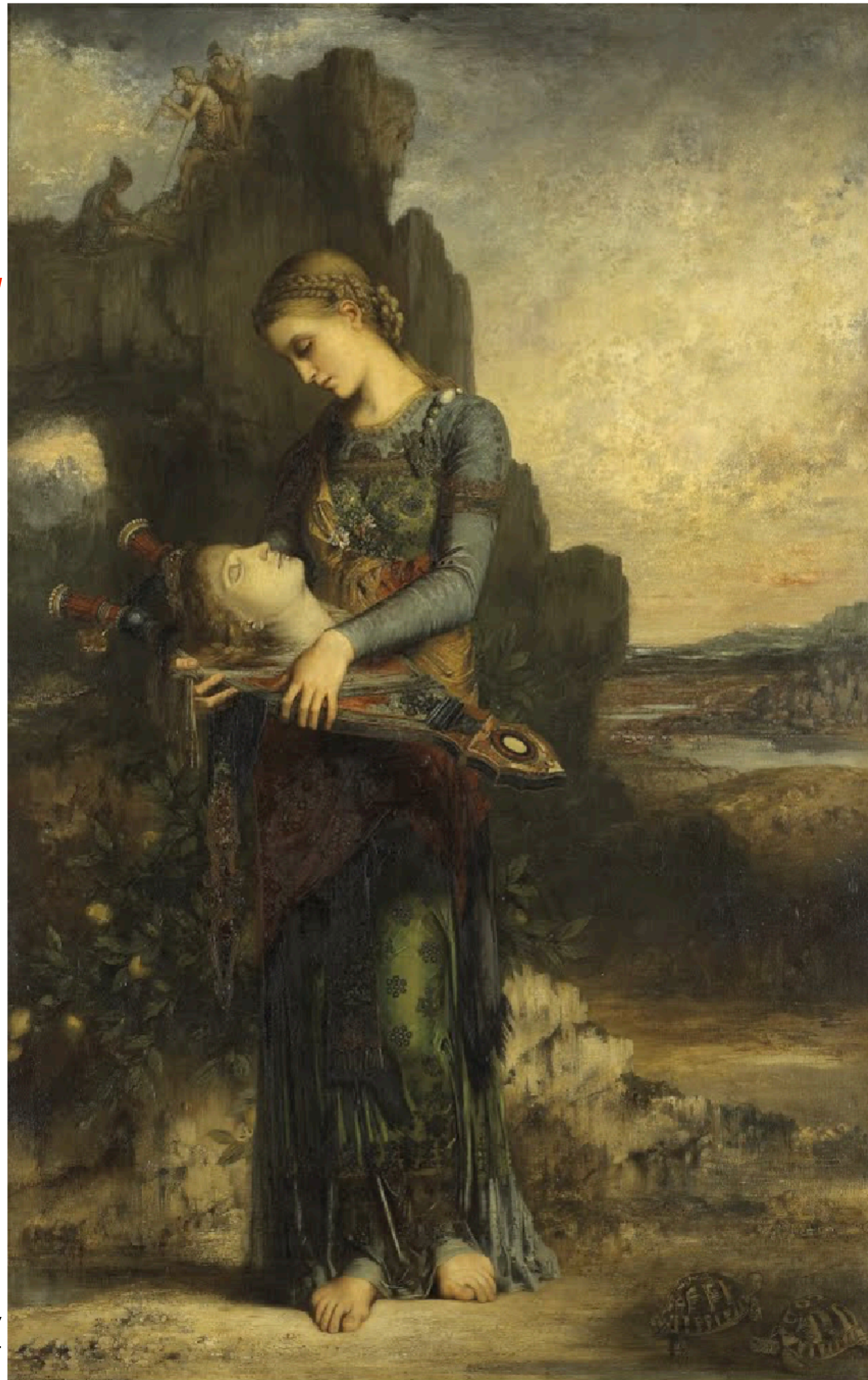
(Athens, 4th century)





***Thracian Girl  
Carrying the Head  
of Orpheus  
on His Lyre***

**Gustave Moreau  
(1865)**



“The poet's head rests on his lyre, and the girl is gazing at him with a melancholy air. The two faces, strangely similar with their closed eyes, seem absorbed in infinite contemplation.

“The horrible ordeal is followed by a calm scene mysteriously free of morbidity and bathed in a twilight glow, with a fantastic landscape in the background worthy of Leonardo Da Vinci.

“The diagonal compositions suggest a playing card, in which the musicians in the top left corner are balanced by the turtles, lower right, whose carapace, according to the [myth](#), was used to make the first lyre.”



# Monteverdi, *L'Orfeo*



**1607**

**(Earliest Opera Still Performed)**



# *Orfeo ed Euridice*

Christoph Willibald Gluck

(1762)





**Franz Liszt** *Orpheus, S.98* (1854)

Composed as an introduction to Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*





# Jacques Offenbach



1858



## Jean Cocteau's film *Orphée* (1950)





Marcel Camus

*Orfeu Negro* (1959)

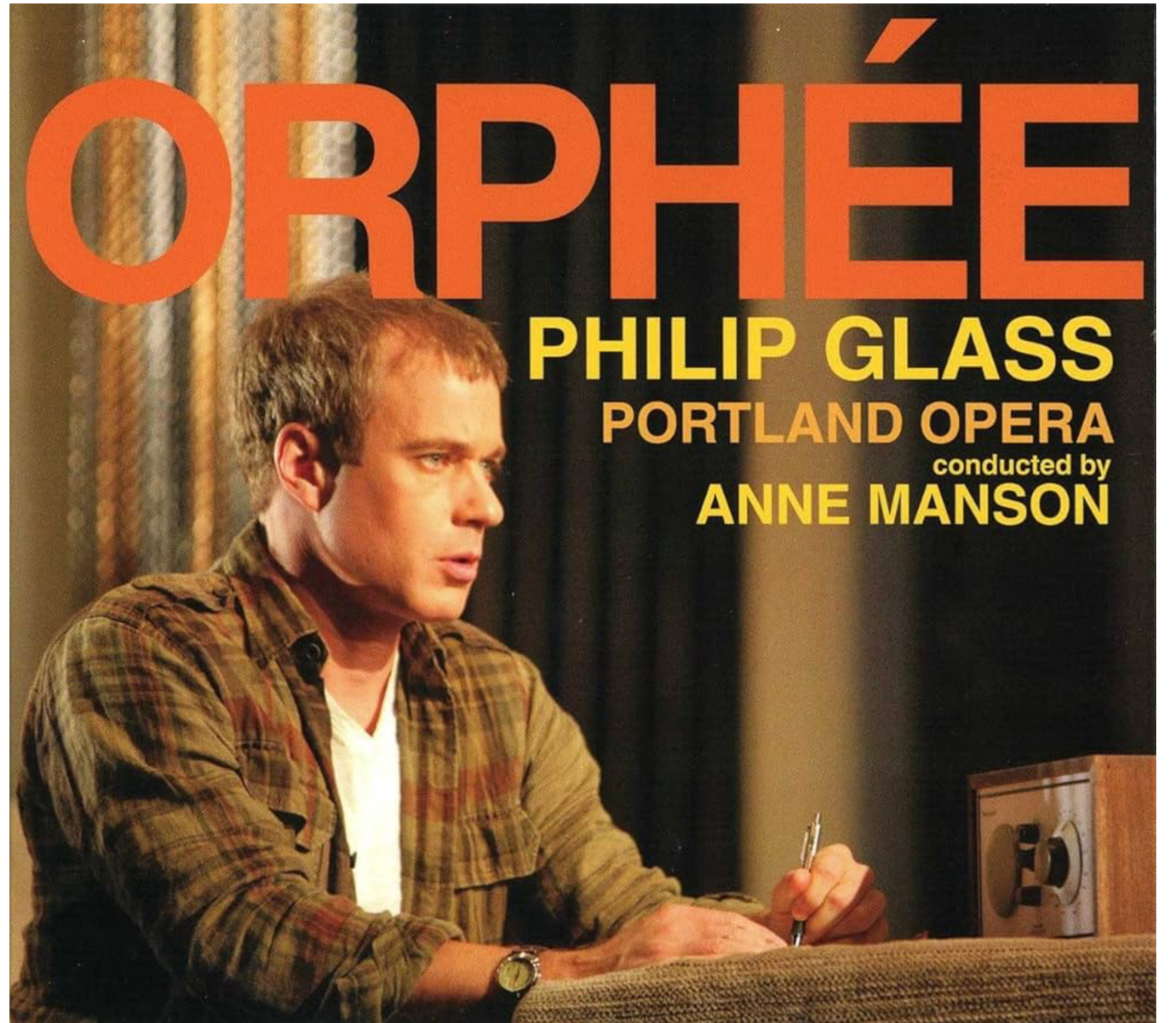




*Orphée*, a stage opera

by Phillip Glass

based on Jean Cocteau's film





# Orphée Suite For Piano

V. Music Interlude  
Act II, Scene 5

by Philip Glass  
transcribed for piano  
by Paul Barnes

$\text{♩} = 120$

**Glass:**

**Orfée**

**Piano**

**Suite**

# Orphée Suite For Piano

VII. Orphée's Bedroom  
Final Scene

by Philip Glass  
transcribed for piano  
by Paul Barnes

$\text{♩} = 104$

"Were you watching me sleep?" "Yes, my love."



from **Philip Glass's *Orphée Suite***

A black and white close-up portrait of Philip Glass, showing his face from the nose up. He is wearing round glasses and has a serious expression. The background is plain white.

**IV. ORPHEE AND THE PRINCESS**  
PHILIP GLASS





**Travaillez! Travaillez! Heurtebise.  
(Work, Heurtebise!)**

***Le Retour d'Orphée***

**(Orphée's Return),**

**Vocal/Instrumental**

**- Philip Glass**



# Jóhann Jóhannsson

*Orphée* (2016)

[inspired by Cocteau's film  
and Ovid's poetry]



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AftMNmDH00&list=PLiN-7mukU\\_RHH2I3UnJdhEPcwIVdC98b-](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AftMNmDH00&list=PLiN-7mukU_RHH2I3UnJdhEPcwIVdC98b-)



**John Mellencamp**

*Orpheus Descending*

(2023)

JOHN MELLENCAMP  
ORPHEUS DESCENDING



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wzz48XjPb3s&list=PLcPtyuoB5ZmvN2JsYNSPAXDCO-zFd96PZ&index=1>



**The Bard himself  
celebrated our hero:**



**Orpheus**

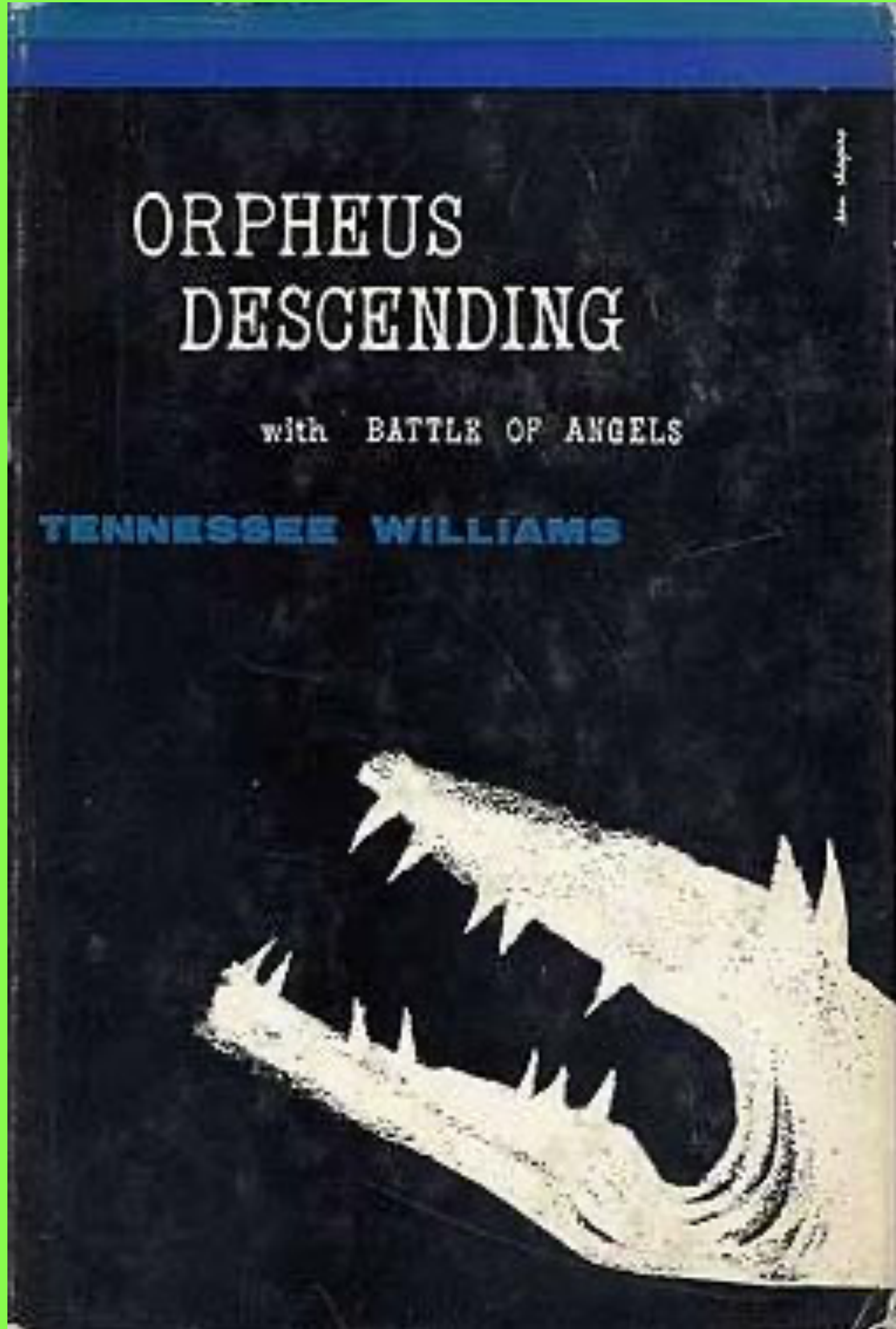
**Orpheus with his lute made trees  
And the mountain tops that freeze  
Bow themselves when he did sing:  
To his music plants and flowers  
Ever sprung; as sun and showers  
There had made a lasting spring.**

**Every thing that heard him play,  
Even the billows of the sea,  
Hung their heads and then lay by.  
In sweet music is such art,  
Killing care and grief of heart  
Fall asleep, or hearing, die.**

**William Shakespeare**



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KIMoPicysXY>



<< play in three acts

(1957)

# Tennessee Williams

motion picture >>

(1990)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aIYCNn3uF4c>



English texts recited:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sa-ANSwbi\\_c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sa-ANSwbi_c)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KR623DVjsaU>

English texts sung

to musical accompaniment:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=12jahVaZX9E>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=yDcYShTpLFY>

# SONNETS TO ORPHEUS

RAINER MARIA RILKE



TRANSLATED AND WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
DAVID YOUNG

(1923)



## Mary Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses* (1996)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T1sS1qVFCkg>



**Play: 2003**



**Opera: 2020**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pV7uY3v4JLY>



# Valerie Morignat Photography



**Orpheus**

**Eurydice**





Middle English *Sir Orfeo*



Edwin Muir's "Orpheus's Dream"

Gottfried Benn's "*Orpheus' Tod*"

Anne Beresford's "Orpheus Arrives in a New World"

Marguerite Yourcenar's *La Nouvelle Eurydice*

Edward Eaton's *Orpheus and Eurydice*

Ann Wroe's "Orpheus: The Song of Life"

Muriel Stuckel's *Eurydice désormais* (Eurydice from now on)

Adrian Wright's "Orpheus"

Elizabeth Jennings's "Orpheus"

Christine Furniva's "The Animals to Orpheus"

Günter Kunert, "Orpheus" sequence

[Source: Brian O. Murdoch]



# Margaret Atwood, *Orpheus and Eurydice Cycle*

(1976 - 1986)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yF8cgj8Pmw>





**Zeus**



**Eurydice**



**Orpheus**

(8-episode series  
on Netflix)