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The Story of *Orpheus and Eurydice* as told in *L'Orfeo* vs. "Hadestown"

Annotated Bibliography

Abstract

An analysis of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice as told in Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* and Mitchell's "Hadestown," with some brief history and context of the time periods in which these works were written and performed, and how certain ideals and values have changed and altered over time within society. In addition to descriptions of musical form and orchestration of these works, comparisons between both works will be made as they relate to the original myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, as well as discussion on how much of the origin story was retained with each retelling.

Dissertations and Theses

1. Schwindt, Joel. "Academicism in Monteverdi's Oratory and Symmetry as Manifestations of the Accademia Degli Invaghiti's Philosophy and Practice." PhD diss., Brandeis University, 2014.

Schwindt begins with an introduction that outlines the main ideas addressed in the dissertation such as the academic and social philosophy during the time when *Orfeo* was composed, and the topic of oratory. Form and analysis are also addressed in chapters one, two and three, specifically conceptualizations of symmetry, and musical allegory. Schwindt includes evidence from a vast range of sources, as well as excerpts and examples from the score and photographs and charts for reference. This dissertation is relevant and essential to further understanding the form of Monteverdi's work *Orfeo*, as well as additional context on the work itself.

Magazine / Newspaper

2. Stasio, Marilyn. "Hadestown." *Variety*, no. 4 (May 24, 2016).

Stasio begins by describing the tone and style of the show to be "elegiac" and "hypnotic." The auditorium seating plan is set in "theater-in-the-round" to engage the audience in this unique experience. Stasio is using the evidence she collected from her viewing and observation of the show Hadestown. In addition to set design and auditorium configuration, Stasio discusses specific musical numbers, the characters and major plot points of the story. Marilyn Stasio is a New York city author, writer, and literary critic. She has served as a dramaturg at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center which means she has vast experience writing reviews for theater and opera. Since I have never seen the show

Hadestown, a review of the show such as this would help my understanding of the physical context for the story.

3. Tauer, Kristen. "Eye: Reeve Carney, Eva Noblezada Deepen Their Friendship in 'Hadestown.'" *WWD* (April 17, 2019): 19.

In this article, Tauer interviews "Hadestown" co-stars Reeve Carney and Eva Noblezada who play Orpheus and Eurydice respectively. They discuss their relationship on and off stage and recount their first chemistry read. The evidence Tauer gathers is directly from her recounts of the interview. Her authority comes from her position as the Deputy Eye Editor at WWD where she covers art and culture. This article can be used for additional context in analyzing the characters of "Hadestown" and how the actors use their own personal experiences to bring their respective characters to life on stage.

Music Scores

4. Gluck, Christoph Willibald. Libretto by Ranieri de Calzabigi. *Orpheus*, Leipzig: C. F. Peters, 1910.

For my research, this score will function as an original source in deciphering the form and text from other adaptations of the story of Orpheus.

5. Lampe, John Frederick. Libretto by Lewis Theobald. *Orpheus and Eurydice*, Covent Garden Theatre: C.F Catalogue of the Larpent plays, 1953.

In addition to the Gluck score, this will also be used as an original source. It will be relevant to compare the libretto written by Theobald, to the one written by de Calzabigi.

Scholarly Journal Articles

6. Atack, Carol. Review of *Embattled. How Ancient Greek Myths Empower Us to Resist Tyranny*, by Katz E. Anhalt. *The Classical Review* 72, no. 2 (2022): 723-6.

In this article, Atack reviews Anhalt's *Embattled. How Ancient Greek Myths Empower Us to Resist Tyranny*, which is a follow up to her previous work *Enraged: Why Violent Times Need Ancient Greek Myths*. Both works follow a similar outline of using Greek retellings to stimulate discussion modern politics and other social issues. Atack observes that this work focuses more on the Odyssey, but its arguments are relevant to the understanding of contemporary myth as seen in "Hadestown." Dr. Carol Atack is a professor of Classics at the University of Cambridge. Her evidence and authority come from her own observations and analysis of her studies and of Anhalt's work.

7. Pistone, Amy. Review of *Enraged: Why Violent Times Need Ancient Greek Myths* by Emily Katz Anhalt, *The Classical Journal* 114, no. 4 (2018): 508–510.

Pistone’s main argument in her review of Anhalt’s *Enraged: Why Violent Times Need Ancient Greek Myths* centers around how she wanted to see more explicit engagement with the idea of Greek exceptionalism. Anhalt argues the importance of Greek myth, and how they can show us about the democratic process in a broader light. For evidence, Pistone uses direct quotes from the book and references Anhalt in direct conversation. Overall, Pistone’s review is positive, and she says that she enjoyed reading the book and that it could be useful for teaching. Amy Pistone, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of classical civilizations at Gonzaga university. Her authority is based on her own experience and knowledge in her professional field. This review goes along well with the book as an additional source and point of reference in understanding the modernization of Orpheus and Eurydice in “Hadestown,” and the impact these stories still have on us.

8. Venning, Dan. Review of “Hadestown” by Anaïs Mitchell. *Theatre Journal* 71, no. 4 (2019): 514–515.

In this article, Venning discusses his thoughts in a formal review of Mitchell’s work “Hadestown.” Like Nia Wilson’s review, the work is introduced with some light background information on Mitchell and her inspiration and how the show came to be. Venning reveals that although Orpheus is the protagonist, the story centers around Hades and Persephone, specifically their marriage and how their relationship has changed over time. Venning uses his own observations and analysis to draw his conclusions, and references specific songs from the show itself. Venning is an assistant professor of theater and dance at Union College, specializing in theater history, drama literature and performance criticism. He is qualified in his authority to review “Hadestown,” and his review is positive. The article review will help provide insights into the work, through the lens of a theater professional.

9. Wilson, Nia. “Hadestown: Nontraditional Casting, Race, and Capitalism.” *TDR: Drama Review* 65, no. 1 (2021): 188–192.

Wilson discusses how white supremacy factors into the reimagined myth of Orpheus and Eurydice that is “Hadestown,” specifically within the boundaries of economic inequality, environmental exploitation, and collective action. Wilson talks about how Mitchell’s inspiration for the soundtrack came from an album she wrote in 2010. This album centered around themes of climate change, labor exploitation and sexual manipulation, and the story and soundtrack of “Hadestown” builds on these themes. Wilson explains how the underworld functions as an underground industrial plant, and that Hades acts as a neoliberal capitalist. The rift and conflict between Hades and his wife Persephone are reflected in the changing climate in the world above ground. Wilson discusses how the casting of Hermes and Hades as white, or non-white drastically

changes the meaning behind the story entirely. Wilson draws mostly from her own observations and analysis of the story of “Hadestown” for evidence, and her claims are well supported with examples from the plot. This article provides helpful insights into the modern retelling of the classic story. The additions add a new layer of depth to the characters and seeing them portrayed on Broadway helps people understand certain issues and potential conflicts in their own everyday lives.

Secondary or Tertiary Monographs

10. Anhalt, Emily Katz. *Enraged: Why Violent Times Need Ancient Greek Myths*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017.

Emily Katz Anhalt’s book *Enraged: Why Violent Times Need Ancient Greek Myths* discusses how Greek myth is a valuable tool for engaged modern citizenship. The argument Anhalt makes is if “a story is not your own, you can assess its participants more objectively.” Anhalt draws from the classic myths as evidence to support her claims. Emily Katz Anhalt is a professor at Sarah Lawrence College, specializing in Greek epic and lyric poetry. Her authority is based on her knowledge of the classics, and her observation and analysis through studies in her field. This source is relevant in understanding the modern retelling of Orpheus and Eurydice in “Hadestown.”

Sound and Video Recordings (physical format)

11. Monteverdi, Claudio. *L’Orfeo*. Conducted by William Christie. Recorded with Les Arts Florissants, Teatro Real de Madrid, May 2008. Dynamic, 2007. CD.

This audio recording of *L’Orfeo* is relevant in the study of musical form and orchestration of Monteverdi’s work. It also provides insight into the story of this version of the myth of Orpheus and Euridice. Although this is not the recording of the first or original performance of the work, it will be treated as original source material within the boundaries of my research for this project.

Streaming Audio

12. Mitchell, Anaïs, “Hadestown (Original Broadway Cast Recording)” featuring Rachel Chavkin, Reeve Carney, André De Shields, Amber Gray, Eva Noblezada, Patrick Page, and Liam Robinson, Sing it Again Records, July 26, 2019, Spotify streaming audio, 320 kbps.
https://open.spotify.com/album/1J1yxODbNlqKbwRqJxYJUP?si=QHSri7_HT0m8iu3jkgp46dQ

The “Hadestown (Original Broadway Cast Recording)” featuring Rachel Chavkin, Reeve Carney, André De Shields, Amber Gray, Eva Noblezada, Patrick Page, and Liam Robison won the 2020 Grammy Award for Best Musical Theater Album, and the Tony for Best Musical that same year, also winning in seven other categories. The awards were presented to composer, lyricist and playwright Anaïs Mitchell. The soundtrack conveys a modern retelling of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. The opening number introduces the main characters, Orpheus, Eurydice, Hades, Persephone and Hermes, who acts as the narrator. Much of the plot is based on the original myth, with modern adaptations in the character storylines as well as orchestration. As Hadestown is one of the main points of my research paper topic, listening to the soundtrack will be essential to my understanding of this version of the story. The soundtrack will also help when comparing it to L’Orfeo and noting its relevance to the original myth.