

EURYDICE
by Sarah Ruhl

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Production Team

Director	Kay Lynn Er	kay.er.23@ucl.ac.uk
Producer	Bea Salazar	bea.salazar.23@ucl.ac.uk

Timeline

First round of auditions	24-25 March
Callbacks	26 March
Casting results	27 March
Table read	28/29 March
First week of rehearsals	w/c 27 April
Provisional Show date(s)	1-13 June

Synopsis

“In *Eurydice*, Sarah Ruhl reimagines the classic myth of Orpheus through the eyes of its heroine. Dying too young on her wedding day, Eurydice must journey to the underworld, where she reunites with her father and struggles to remember her lost love. With contemporary characters, ingenious plot twists, and breathtaking visual effects, the play is a fresh look at a timeless love story.”

This production sees displacement (from the body as home, another person as home) as central to Eurydice’s journey. It explores the search for connection and asks questions about what the true language of connection is (music, written communication, action and gesture, etc.). It will be staged in the round, and utilise multimedia projections and music.

Content Warnings

- Implied sexual harassment
- Death

Characters

Eurydice	Female-presenting
Her Father	Open casting
Orpheus	Open casting, must be able to sing
A Nasty Interesting Man/Lord of the Underworld	Male-presenting
A Chorus of Stones: Big Stone Little Stone Loud Stone	Open casting, Must be open to movement work.

Eurydice

Eurydice is open to the world and a lover of stories. She is a little too young and a little too in love with Orpheus.

Her Father

Eurydice's father, burdened with memory of language and his daughter, reaches across the divide between life and death, but must eventually learn to let go.

Orpheus

Orpheus lives in his head. He loves music and he loves Eurydice, but he falls short expressing the latter. He is a little too young and a little too in love with Eurydice.

A Nasty Interesting Man/Lord of the Underworld

At once sleazy and uncannily infantile, he lures Eurydice into the Underworld. Imagine a large toddler-like man in an oversized suit.

A Chorus of Stones: Big Stone, Little Stone, Loud Stone

The keepers of the Underworld, the stones lack empathy and are sticklers for the rules. "The stones might be played as though they are nasty children at a birthday party."

Audition Procedures

Please book an audition slot here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KS_BvhRAA9D7MNA4G2nEmP08OX1XYY4rf4NsttC_ubM/edit?usp=sharing

First Round

In preparation for your audition, please learn the extract for the character you would like to be considered for. You are not expected to be offbook but you are welcome to be if you'd like. You will be asked to perform the chosen extract, be offered redirection, then asked to perform it again. We will aim to take everyone through the same process but if we are running short on time at any point, please understand that we may have to shorten this process, and it is not any sort of reflection on your performance.

We are also accepting self-tapes. Please submit them by **4pm on the 25th of March** through this form: <https://forms.gle/LD2EfGmfUsdGRPjbA>

Callbacks:

If you are called back for a role, you will be notified via email by the end of the 25th of March. During callbacks, auditionees will be led through a series of short movement and theatremaking exercises that aim to help give us a sense of how you work as an actor in the room. This production will involve movement, but you do not have to have any prior dance experience, all are welcome. Please come dressed in clothes you are comfortable moving and wear comfortable shoes.

We know auditions can be nerve-wracking, and we would like to make this process as welcoming and comfortable as possible so that you feel confident performing at your best. If you are not comfortable with an exercise or anything else at any point, please approach one of us and we will either adapt the exercise or do our best to help you.

Please email our producer, Bea, to let us know of any accessibility requirements you may have, or of any other questions you may have.

Audition Extracts

Eurydice

Orpheus never liked words. He had his music. He would get a funny look on his face and I would say what are you thinking about and he would always be thinking about music.

If we were in a restaurant sometimes Orpheus would look sullen and wouldn't walk to me and I thought people felt sorry for me. I should have realised that women envied me. Their husbands talked too much.

But I wanted to talk to him about my notions. I was working on a new philosophical system. It involved hats.

This is what it is to love an artist: The moon is always rising above your house. The houses of your neighbours look dull and lacking in moonlight. But he is always going away from you. Inside his head there is always something more beautiful.

Orpheus said the mind is a slide ruler. It can fit around anything. Words can mean anything. Show me your body, he said. It only means one thing.

Orpheus

Eurydice!

Before I go down there, I won't practice my music. Some say practice. But practice is a word invented by cowards. The animals don't have a word for practice. A gazelle does not run for practice. He runs because he is scared or he is hungry. A bird doesn't sing for practice. She sings because she's happy or sad. So I say: store it up. The music sounds better in my head than it does in the world. When songs are pressing against my throat,

then, only then, I will go down and sing for the devils and they will cry through their parched throats.

Eurydice, don't kiss a dead man. Their lips look red and tempting but put your tongue in their mouths and it tastes like oatmeal. I know how much you hate oatmeal.

I'm going the way of death.

Here is my plan: Tonight, when I go to bed, I will turn off the light and put a straw in my mouth. When I fall asleep, I will crawl through the straw and my breath will push me like a great wind into the darkness and I will sing your name and I will arrive. I have consulted the almanacs, the footstools, and the architects, and everyone agrees: I found the right note. Wait for me.

Love,
Orpheus

Eurydice's Father

Dear Eurydice,

A letter for you on your wedding day.

There is no choice of any importance in life but the choosing of a beloved. I haven't met Orpheus, but he seems like a serious young man. I understand he's a musician.

(The father thinks - oh, dear.)

If I were to give a speech at your wedding I would start with one or two funny jokes and then I might offer some words of advice. I would say:

Cultivate the arts of dancing and small talk.

Everything in moderation.

Court the companionship and respect of dogs.

...

Continue to give yourself to others because that's the ultimate satisfaction in life - to love, accept, honour and help others.

As for me, this is what it's like being dead: the atmosphere smells. And there are strange high pitched noises - like a tea kettle always boiling over. But it doesn't seem to bother anyone. And, for the most part, there is a pleasant atmosphere and you can work and socialise, much like at

home. I'm working in the business world and it seems that, here, you can better see the far reaching consequences of your actions.

Also, I am one of the few dead people who still remembers how to read and write. That's a secret. If anyone finds out, they might dip me in the River again.

I write you letters. I don't know how to get them to you.

Love,

Your father

A Nasty Interesting Man/The Lord of the Underworld

Eurydice. I'm not interesting, but I'm strong. You could teach me to be interesting. I would listen. Orpheus is too busy listening to his own thoughts. There's music in his head. Try to pluck the music out and it bites you. I'll bet you had an interesting thought today, for instance.

She tilts her head to the side, quizzical.

I bet you're always having them, the way you tilt your head to the side and stare...

She jerks her head back up.

...

Wait. Eurydice. Don't go. I love you.

...

You need to get yourself a real man. A man with broad shoulders like me. Orpheus has long fingers that would tremble to pet a bull or pluck a bee from a hive - ...A man who can put his big arm around your little shoulders as he leads you through the crowd, a man who answers the door at parties...A man with big hands, with big stupid hands like potatoes, a man who can carry a cow in labour.

Chorus (Big Stone, Little Stone, Loud Stone)

Try speaking in the language of stones.

It's a very quiet language.

Like if the pores in your face opened up and wanted to talk.

...

Didn't you already mourn for your father, young lady?

Some things should be left well enough alone.

To mourn twice is excessive.

To mourn three times a sin.

Life is like a good meal.

Only gluttons want more food when they finish their helping.

Learn to be more moderate.

It's weird for a dead person to be morbid.

We don't like to watch it!

We don't like to see it!
It makes me uncomfortable.
Eurydice cries.
Don't cry!
Don't cry!
Learn the art of keeping busy!

...
It is not hard!
We keep busy
and we like it
We're busy busy busy stones
Watch us work
Keeping still
Keeping quiet
It's hard work
to be a stone
No time for crying
No no no!