

Orphée aux enfers

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Plot

Music teacher and violinist Orpheus and his wife Eurydice are unhappily married. Both hate each other limitlessly, cheat on each other, and Eurydice would rather die than stay married to Orpheus. Unfortunately, they cannot just separate, as both are prisoners of watchful Public Opinion. However, after Eurydice is killed and transported to the underworld by her lover Aristaeus, who is the god of the underworld Pluto, the Public Opinion forces Orpheus to ascend to Mount Olympus to claim her back from the god Jupiter. Arriving there, they encounter a team of over-drenched, sex fixated, and bored gods. Each one complains about her or his unfulfilled fate, and Juno, the wife of Jupiter, throws at him one jealous scene after the other. When God Mercury arrives with the message that Pluto has returned to the underworld with a beautiful woman named Eurydice, Jupiter rejoices and cites Pluto to Olympus. However, as Pluto denies his kidnapping and refuses to give Eurydice back, Jupiter decides to investigate the underworld issue more closely. The entire Gods' crowd follows him into Pluto's Underworld Kingdom. In the meantime, Eurydice, who now regrets her love adventure, wants to return to her husband.

Yet, this proves to be difficult, also because she is heavily guarded by a drunken servant of Pluto John Styx, who woos and bores her with memories of his better times as Prince of Arcadia. The Eurydice at first cannot be found, as Pluto hides her well. Jupiter, however, does not give up. Jupiter turns into a fly and uncovers Euridice. He spins around her, reveals himself to be the supreme god, promises to set her free, and takes to Olympus to be his jolly Bacchante. Eurydice is overjoyed and celebrates her new life at the infernal feast organized by Pluto. The revelers are once again disturbed by the Orpheus and Public Opinion, who again demand Eurydice back. After a tearful "Ah, I have lost her!" sung by Orpheus, Jupiter gives up: Eurydice is to return with her husband back to earth. But, with one condition. Under no circumstances may he, on the way up, look back at her; otherwise, he will lose Eurydice forever. Shortly before the exit, Jupiter unexpectedly throws a lightning bolt, and the frightened Orpheus looks back. Eurydice disappears and becomes the eternal companion of Jupiter.