

# BEYOND THE SHADOWS

THE ETERNAL STRUGGLE  
BETWEEN LIFE, DEATH  
AND LOVE



FINAL BACHELOR EXAM OF  
ALEJANDRO BARRIENTOS-RUPÉREZ

# ENSEMBLE

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# STORYTELLER

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# PROGRAMME

## HENRY PURCELL (? - 1695)

from “Celestial Music did the Gods Inspire (Z 322)

*When Orpheus sang all Nature did rejoice*

## CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI (1567 - 1643)

from “Schezi Musicali” (SV 251)

*Zefiro torna, e di sosa i accenti*

## JOSÉ MARÍN (1619 - 1699)

from “Tonos Humanos”

*Ojos pues me desdeñáis*

## TOMÁS LUÍS DE VICTORIA (1548 - 1611)

from “Feria Sexta in Parasceñe”

*O vos omnes*

## CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI (1567 - 1643)

from “L’Orfeo Fabola in Musica” (SV 318)

*Possente Spirto*

## JEAN PHILIPPE RAMEAU (1683 - 1764)

from “Dardanus”

*Lieux funestes*

## GEORGE FRIDERIC HÄNDEL (1685 - 1759)

from “Jephtha”

*Waft Her, Angels, Through the Skies*

## CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI (1567 - 1743)

from “L’Orfeo Fabola in Musica” (SV 318)

*Vanne Orfeo felice a pieno*



# MYTH & REDEMPTION

Dido and Aeneas, Romeo and Juliet, Acis and Galatea, Tristan and Isolde... these are just a few examples of love born from mythology or literature, which have been transformed into operas, cantatas, symphonic poems, and many other artistic expressions. But there is one story that, perhaps more than any other, has deeply moved composers throughout the ages: the fable of Orpheus and Eurydice. This evening, we will delve into this love story that has inspired generations of composers to explore the full range of human emotions—from the sweetness of hope to the bitterness of loss.

Perhaps it is precisely this emotional depth, along with the story's profound connection to the very essence of music, its enduring message, or the transformative power of art, that has made it so compelling. Whatever the reason, this tale of love and loss will serve as the guiding thread of the concert you are about to experience. Thanks to the creative genius of numerous Renaissance and Baroque composers, we will immerse ourselves in this myth through music and the spoken word.

Our musical journey begins with '*Celestial Music Did the Gods Inspire*' (Z. 322), a mythological cantata by **Henry Purcell** (1659–1695), one of England's most celebrated composers. Known for his opera *Dido and Aeneas*, over a hundred songs, and his distinctive fusion of Italian, French, and English styles, Purcell brought exceptional sensitivity to vocal and dramatic expression. Composed in 1689 for a school performance commissioned by Professor Maidwell, this work reflects the elegance of the English Baroque. At its heart lies '*When Orpheus sang, all Nature did rejoice*', a passage that exalts Orpheus and affirms music's divine power to harmonise both nature and spirit. Tonight's performance features a version adapted from the original score.

After this exploration of Orpheus through Purcell's lens, we turn to the world of **Claudio Monteverdi** (1567–1643) with '*Zefiro torna e di soavi accenti*', one of his most celebrated works from the '*Scherzi Musicali*' (1632). Here, the return of spring is portrayed with vibrant energy, contrasting with the sorrow of the lovelorn protagonist. The piece artfully blends the freshness of nature with inner melancholy, using the *ciaccona* form—a repeated bass line over which vocal lines unfold with elegance and emotional depth. Monteverdi, a pioneer of modern musical language, strikes a balance between emotion and form that anticipates many later Baroque expressions.

From early 17th-century Italy, we move to Baroque Spain with '*Ojos, pues me desdeñáis*', one of the '*Tonos Humanos*' by **José Marín** (1619–1699). Intimate and expressive, the piece gives voice to a scorned lover through irony, defiance, and resignation, all shaped by a refined, ornamented melody. Marín, whose life straddled the sacred and the profane, brought striking emotional depth to his secular songs. Here, the heartbreak in his music mirrors the moment Orpheus learns of Eurydice's death—when love is silenced by loss, and grief begins its descent.

The pain expressed in romantic rejection transforms into spiritual lament in ‘O vos omnes’ by **Tomás Luis de Victoria** (1548–1611), one of the great masters of the Spanish Renaissance. This motet, part of the *Tenebrae Responsories* (1585), invites listeners to contemplate suffering from a sacred perspective. Its restrained and moving polyphonic writing turns the biblical text into a collective plea, filled with emotional intensity that transcends its liturgical setting. At this point in the programme, human love and its loss intertwine with the idea of spiritual redemption—mirroring the solemn moment in the myth when Eurydice is laid to rest, and Orpheus, engulfed by grief, stands powerless before death. It is a funeral not only of a beloved, but of the future he dreamed of, now cloaked in silence and mourning.

We return to Monteverdi, this time with one of the most iconic moments from his opera ‘*L’Orfeo, favola in musica*’ (1607): the aria ‘*Possente spirto*’. In it, Orpheus attempts to persuade the infernal ferryman Charon to let him cross into the underworld. Monteverdi displays his full dramatic genius here: the protagonist’s voice becomes an instrument of seduction and supplication, supported by a rich instrumental texture that alternates between introspection and fervent passion. It is a masterful example of how music can serve as a persuasive language and a vehicle for hope.

That hope is threatened by tragic fate in ‘*Lieux funestes*’, one of the darkest arias from ‘*Dardanus*’ (1739) by **Jean-Philippe Rameau** (1683–1764). In this passage, the protagonist faces a desolate landscape that reflects his inner desolation. Rameau, a brilliant orchestrator and master of musical architecture, crafts a somber, almost motionless atmosphere in which time seems suspended. This moment in the programme echoes the turning point in the myth when Orpheus, succumbing to doubt, looks back—and Eurydice vanishes forever. It is the instant when love and beauty are undone by fate, leaving behind only silence and irreparable loss.

In contrast, the following piece offers a vision of comfort and transcendence—echoing the final chapter of Orpheus’s journey, when he accepts Apollo’s offer to ascend to Heaven. There, he finds not a bodily reunion with Eurydice, but a spiritual consolation: her eternal presence among the stars. ‘*Waft her, Angels, through the skies*’, the final aria from ‘*Jephtha*’ (1751) by **Georg Frideric Händel** (1685–1759), mirrors this moment with a father’s farewell to his daughter, expressed as a tender and resigned prayer. Deeply moving, the music lifts the spirit toward the divine, transforming tragedy into quiet faith. Handel achieves a sublime balance between human sorrow and spiritual elevation, inviting us to meet loss not with despair, but with hope.

The concert closes with a final return to Monteverdi’s ‘*L’Orfeo*’, with the concluding chorus ‘*Vanne Orfeo, felice a pieno*’, in which the gods welcome the protagonist into the celestial realm. Having lost everything, Orpheus attains a symbolic redemption—not through earthly love, but through his devotion to music. It is a closing that reminds us that, though pain and loss are inevitable, art holds the power to transform, to redeem, and to transcend.

# TEXTS

## WHEN ORPHEUS SANG ALL NATURE DID REJOICE

When Orpheus sang, all nature did rejoice,  
The hills and oaks bow'd down to hear his voice;  
At their musician's feet the lions lay,  
And list'ning tigers did forget their prey;  
His soft'ning lyre did cruel Pluto move;  
His music prov'd of greater pow'r than Jove.



## ZEFIRO TORNA, E DI SOAVI ACCENTI

Zefiro torda, e di soavi accenti  
l'aer fa grato e'il piè discioglie a l'onde  
e, mormorando tra le verdi fronde,  
fa danzar al bel suon su'l prato i fiori.

*Zephyr returns, and with sweet accents  
enchants the air and ruffles the waves,  
and murmuring among the green leaves,  
makes the flowers dance to his sweet sound.*

Inghirlandato il crin Fillide e Clori  
note temprando amor care e gioconde;  
e da monti e da valli ime e profonde  
raddoppian l'armonia gli antri canori.

*With garlanded hair, Phyllis and Chloris sing  
love-songs, dear and joyful to them,  
and through the mountains and valleys, high  
and low, the echoing caves redouble their  
music.*

Sorge più vaga in ciel l'aurora, e'l sole,  
sparge più luci d'or; più puro argento  
fregia di Teti il bel ceruleo manto.

*Dawn rises more glorious in the sky,  
And the sun pours down the brightest gold,  
embellishing with purer silver the sky-blue  
mantle of Thetis.*

Sol io, per selve abbandonate e sole,  
L'ardor di due begli occhi e'l mio  
tormento,  
come vuol mia ventura, hor piango hor  
canto.

*Alone I wander through lonely and deserted  
woods; of the ardour of two lovely eyes,  
and of my torment, as my fortune decrees,  
I by turns weep and sing.*

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## OJOS PUES ME DESDEÑÁIS

Ojos, pues me desdeñáis,  
No, me miréis,  
pues no quiero que logréis,  
el ver como me matáis.

Çese el çeño y el rigor,  
ojos, mirad que es locura  
arriesgar buestra hermosura  
por hazerme un disfavor,  
si no os corrige el temor  
de la gala que os quitais,  
No me miréis  
pues no quiero que logréis,  
el ver como me matáis.

Y si el mostraros severos,  
es no más que por matarme  
podéis la pena escusarme,  
pues moriré de no veros;  
pero si no é de veros  
que de mí os compadezcáis.  
No me miréis  
pues no quiero que logréis,  
el ver como me matáis.

*Eyes that despise me,  
do not look at me,  
for I do not want you  
to see how you kill me.*

*Let the frowns and severity end;  
eyes, look what folly it is  
to risk your beauty  
to displease me;  
if fear does not keep you  
from losing your loveliness,  
do not look at me,  
for I do not want you  
to see how you kill me.*

*And if your show of severity  
is just to kill me,  
you can spare yourself the trouble,  
for I shall die of not seeing you;  
but if I may not see you,  
have pity on me.  
Do not look at me,  
for I do not want you  
to see how you kill me.*

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## O VOS OMNES

O vos omnes qui transitis per viam,  
attendite et videte:  
Si est dolor similis sicut dolor meus.  
Attendite, universi populi, et videte  
dolorem meum.  
Si est dolor similis sicut dolor meus.

*O all ye that pass by the way,  
attend and see:  
If there be any sorrow like to my sorrow.  
Attend, all ye people, and see  
my sorrow:  
If there be any sorrow like to my sorrow.*



## POSSENTE SPIRTO

Possente spirito, e formidabil nume,  
Senza cui far passaggio a l'altra riva  
Alma da corpo sciolta invan presume,

Non vivo io, no, che poi di vita è priva  
Mia cara sposa, il cor non è più meco,  
E senza cor com'esser può ch'io viva?

A lei volt'ho il cammin per l'aer cieco,  
A l'inferno non già, ch'ovunque stassi  
Tanta bellezza il paradiso ha seco.

Orfeo son io, che d'Euridice i passi  
Segue per queste tenebrose arene,  
Ove già mai per uom mortal non vassi.

O de le luci mie luci serene,  
S'un vostro sguardo può tornarmi in vita,  
Ahi, chi nega il conforto a le mie pene?

Sol tu, nobile Dio, puoi darmi aita,  
Né temer dei, ché sopra un'aurea cetra  
Sol di corde soavi armo le dita.  
Contra fui rigid'alma in van s'impetra.

*O mighty spirit, and formidable god,  
Without whom crossing to the other shore  
a soul, freed from the body, vainly presumes.*

*I do not live, no, for my dear wife is dead,  
my heart is no longer with me,  
and without a heart, how can I live?*

*I turn my path to her through the dark air,  
not to hell, for wherever she stands,  
so much beauty she carries with her to  
paradise.*

*I am Orpheus, who follows Eurydice's steps  
through these dark fields,  
where no mortal man has ever trod.*

*O serene lights of my eyes,  
if a glance from you can return me to life,  
Ah, who denies me comfort for my pains?*

*Only you, noble God, can aid me,  
Do not fear, for on my golden lyre  
I strike only sweet strings with my fingers.  
Against which the merciless soul tries in vain  
to resist.*

## LIEUX FUNESTES

Lieux funestes où tout respire la honte  
et la douleur,

Du désespoir, sombre et cruel empire,  
L'horreur que votre aspect m'inspire  
Est le moindre des maux qui déchirent  
mon cœur.

L'objet de tant d'amour, la beauté  
qui m'engage,

Le sceptre que je perds, ce prix de mes  
travaux,

Tout va de mon rival devenir le partage,  
Tandis que dans les fers, je n'ai que mon  
courage,

Qui suffit à peine à mes maux.

*Horrible place where everything speaks of  
shame and pain,*

*Dark and cruel empire of despair,*

*My horror at your sight*

*Is the least of the ills that rack my heart.*

*The object of such love, the beauty  
to which I am attached,*

*The sceptre that I lose, the reward of my  
labours,*

*Everything will become my rival's share,  
While in these fetters, I am left with but my  
courage*

*Which is hardly enough to help me bear my  
ills.*



## WAFTHER, ANGLES, THROUGH THE SKIES

Waft her, angels, through the skies,  
Far above yon azure plain;  
Glorious there, like you, to rise,  
There, like you, for ever reign.

## VANNE ORFEO FELICE A PIENO

Vanne Orfeo, felice a pieno,  
A goder celeste onore,  
Là 've ben non mai vien meno,  
Là 've mai non fu dolore,  
Mentr'altari, incensi e voti  
Noi t'offriam lieti e devoti.

Così va chi non s'arretra  
Al chiamar di nume eterno,  
Così grazia in Ciel impetra  
Chi qua giù provò l'Inferno;  
E chi semina fra doglie  
D'ogni grazia il frutto coglie.

*Go, Orpheus, fully happy,  
To enjoy heavenly honor,  
Where goodness never fades,  
Where sorrow has never been,  
While we offer you altars, incense, and vows,  
Joyful and devout.*

*Such is the path of one who does not retreat  
When called by the eternal god;  
Such grace in Heaven is granted  
To those who have known Hell on Earth;  
And whoever sows in sorrow  
Shall reap the fruit of every grace.*



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