

***Orpheus* Pre-Show Information**

Orpheus is performed in our Grand Hall. The Grand Hall has step-free access through the entrance and a lift to the Balcony (higher level seating). There is also an accessible toilet located near the Grand Hall.

There is step-free access into the main foyer of our building, and to the Scratch Bar with accessible toilet facilities on the ground floor.

Relaxed performances

Orpheus will have relaxed performances on Wednesday 12 December & Saturday 22 December matinee and BSL interpreted performances on Thursday 20 December and Saturday 22 December matinee.

Our relaxed performances mean you are free to move about, make noise and come and go during the performance.

There is a chill-out space available if you need a quiet moment.

You can also pick up a pair of ear-defenders from one of our Welcome Team if it gets too loud.

You can find out more about our building before your visit by looking at our access page on our website: bac.org.uk/yourvisit/access.

Orpheus is a show within a show. The show tells the story of a theatre company who are based in Paris in the 1930's. Leading the theatre company is Yvette Pépin a fictional songstress and joining her is the famous gypsy jazz musician Django Reinhardt. Together with their troupe of performers they perform a musical version of the Greek myth Orpheus. In the story Orpheus and Eurydice fall in love. Then Eurydice gets bitten by a snake and dies. Orpheus travels into the underworld to

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win her back. Orpheus meets Hades (Lord of the Underworld) who makes a pact with him.



The pact is that he can have Eurydice back if he can walk to the land of the living without looking back. However, Orpheus does look back and he loses Eurydice forever. In this version of the myth Orpheus and Eurydice are reunited at the end.

1. The show space

The show space is a large room with cabaret tables near the stage and raked seating behind the cabaret tables. Audiences are encouraged to eat and drink throughout the performance.



2. The performers

There are 8 performer / musicians. Each performer sings and plays instruments throughout.

Through the show you will meet a character called Yvette Pépin who plays Eurydice, Django Reinhardt who plays Orpheus and several other performers who play lots of different characters including Hades and Persephone - Lord and Queen of the Underworld.

3. The show

At the beginning of the show you meet Yvette Pépin, the host of the evening and her troupe of performers and are introduced to gypsy jazz guitarist Django Reinhardt. Yvette Pépin plays the character of Eurydice and Django Reinhardt plays the character of Orpheus.

Prologue

The company sing a song that details the story of Orpheus and Eurydice. As this happens Yvette and Django mime the story taking on the roles of Orpheus and Eurydice.

Act 1

Orpheus plays his lyre in the forest to the joy of the animals whilst Eurydice dances with her dryads in another part of the wood. Orpheus travels to Paris and is given a golden guitar by Hermes (the winged messenger). Orpheus becomes famous.

Act 2

Eurydice and Orpheus meet, fall in love and get married. After the wedding Eurydice gets bitten by a snake and dies. Orpheus is distraught.

Interval

During the interval, the audience is free to move about and get drinks and food.

Musical Interlude.

During the interval the ensemble play lots of gypsy jazz songs. At times during the performance, Yvette comes into the audience to talk to members of the audience.

When the last song has been sung there is dramatic organ music and we are introduced to the underworld and its inhabitants.

Act 3

Orpheus goes to the underworld to find Eurydice and bring her back. Here he meets Hades (Lord of the underworld) and Persephone (Queen of the Underworld) and pleads for them to give him Eurydice back. They eventually agree but on one condition – that he leaves the underworld without looking back to check if Eurydice is behind him. Orpheus cannot help it – he looks back and loses Eurydice forever.

Epilogue

Orpheus grows old alone and eventually dies and joins Eurydice in the underworld.

4. Lighting

The lighting reflects the mood of each scene ranging from the bright and cheerful to dark and sombre. Each new scene has its own state and sometimes goes down to just a single spotlight.

5. Sound

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There is music all the way through the show. The music is quite loud for audiences sat at the front on the cabaret tables, particularly on the left side of the auditorium due to a drum kit and timpani being located here.

There are no sudden noises but there are a few points in the show when the music is notably louder. These include...

- In the musical interlude during the song 'Belleville' which opens with a loud drumbeat.
- At the beginning of the second half (just after the musical interlude) straight after the interval when a loud organ is played.
- When Cerberus enters as the singing is loud and high pitched here.
- During Orpheus' walk out of the Underworld to the song 'La Decision' which builds to a loud climax before he looks back.