



Eurydice play analysis

Eurydice is a 2003 play by experimental playwright Sarah Ruhl that retells the Classical Greek myth of Orpheus from the perspective of his wife and the play's heroine, Eurydice. Dying too young on her wedding day, Eurydice must travel to the Underworld, where she reunites with her father and struggles to remember her lost love. Maddened by grief, Orpheus travels to the Underworld to find her, only now it is up to Eurydice to decide to go with her husband, or stay with her father. With contemporary characters, ingenious plot twists, and never before seen visual effects, Eurydice offers a fresh look at a timeless love story; and it will be hitting the stage at Pit & Balcony Theatre from February 5-7th and 12-14th. Eurydice made its world premier at Madison Repertory Theatre in 2003 and opened off-Broadway at Second Stage Theatre, running from June through August, 2007. It received several award nominations, including the 2008 Drama League Award and Charles Isherwood, reviewing for The New York Times, called it a "weird & wonderful new play". For Director Brandon Bierlein, who will be bringing this innovative production to the stage of Pit & Balcony, this 'weird & wonderful' nature of Ruhl's script is right up his alley, as she gives directors of her works an open canvas upon which to paint their own visions of this classic Greek myth. Perhaps the most noticeable of Ruhl's changes was that in the original myth, Orpheus succumbs to his desires and looks back at Eurydice; while in Ruhl's version Eurydice; while in Ruhl's version Eurydice calls out to Orpheus (causing him to look back) perhaps in part because of her fear of reentering the world of the living and perhaps as a result of her desire to remain in the land of the dead with her father. For this upcoming P&B Production, the cast consists of Abby Cline as Eurydice, Dexter Brigham as her father, Isaac Wood as Orpheus, Brett Fallis playing the dual roles of 'A Nasty Interesting Man & Lord of the Underworld, Josie Norris as Big Stone, Emma Massey as Little Stone, and Carly Peil as Loud Stone. From Bierlein's perspective, the true narrative running throughout Eurydice is loss - losing a loved one, losing one's self. "The play revolves around the two most important relationships in Eurydice focuses on the journey toward growing up, maturing, learning, experiencing more and growing more from those experiences." "Sarah Ruhl has a very poetic structure to her writing," he continues. "It is relatable to young actors, in large part because of the blunt comedy and lush characters. While the original Greek myth focuses primarily on Orpheus, Ruhl leads us into the world of the infamous heroine. My production of Eurydice will fit in with quirky comedies like Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, and Alice in Wonderland. Visuals, character presentation, and general design elements will all revolve around magical realism, and creating something." "What I truly love about this work is that it can be interpreted into so many new and different things," continues Brandon. "This play isn't so much a drama or a comedy as it is very much a quirky Drama-dy. It has funny moments, yet if you know the ending of Orpheus, it is not necessarily a happy ending. But the play hits on all the key points about love and the different ways and different kinds of love that we have out there for a family member, a spouse, or a child; just as it hits on the key points of loss involved with losing your memory, or l important to her. Orpheus is a Demigod and the Son of Apollo, who is the God of Music and said to be a boastful God, full of himself a bit - kind of like all the good spectacular, and best musicians in our world," smiles Bierlein. "Orpheus takes these same attributes as his father, consequently he is part God and part mortal and has this keen sense of music, so in our play his gift or talent will be for sound mixing with the keen style of a DJ pioneering a different kind of electro-swing music," states Brandon. "What's cool is that Ruhl allows these characters to be portrayed in an open-ended manner, so you can develop the character how you like. Consequently, the 'Lord of the Underworld' also plays the 'Nasty Interesting Man', who is really our serpent. In the original mythology, Eurydice is walking through a field and steps upon a serpent and dies; and the serpent is very much 'Hades' - clearly the Lord of the Underworld. In Ruhl's play, the 'Nasty Interesting Man' is just that - he's a very quirky, off-kilter and peculiar man who comes to lure Eurydice in and cause her death. I don't want to give too much away, because this entire play is very juicy, quirky, different, and filled with unexpected moments." Obviously, for a director with the vision of Bierlein, this directorial latitude presents an incredibly exciting opportunity. million different ways," he enthuses. "I've been following Sarah Ruhl for a long time and also did Eurydice as an undergraduate, so its kind of cool, because who out there can say they had the opportunity to direct this works are nonsensical and hilarious and she is easily one of the most produced contemporary playwrights in the country," continues Brandon. "I was fortunate to see her speak at Western University recently and she talked about writing with no structure, which I thought was fascinating. She does this to allow directors & designers the latitude to create their own structure and fit this seamlessly into the play. Her main influence was drama and the way she writes stage directions is like reading a novel, with speech that is elevated and reads as beautifully as it is presented, which is where things can get tricky." "Reading Sarah Ruhl is almost like reading Shakespeare, so the challenge is to keep this quirky and cool vibe and create a world that you can make sure is relayed to the audience in a manner so they're not struggling with the story, or feel they need to understand everything," notes Brandon. "That's the real challenge, but it's a fun challenge, but it's a fun challenge because she is such a beautiful and classical writer." Bierlein adds that auditions for Eurydice went incredibly well, with 17 actors showing up for seven roles, which was three times the number of actors required to stage the production. "It's not like auditioning for a Hairspray, or a really well known play, and we've got some amazing talent in the cast," reflects Brandon. "A lot of our cast have not been at Pit & Balcony before, plus we have Dexter Bringham on-board, who is the Managing Director at Midland Center for the Arts playing our father, who is not usually that active on other stages throughout the region. As a Director and a P&B Board member, for us to have that open conversation and for him to volunteer his time at a theatre other than where he's employed is very cool for us." "Abby Cline, who plays our Eurydice, literally came out of the woodwork," continues Brandon. "I had her stay to the last moment of auditions; but she had me the moment she read it. She's from the Hemlock/St. Charles area and did some theatre at Heritage and is now teaching at Valley Lutheran and is an outstanding, young powerhouse." "We have five new people on our stage, which is awesome," he continues, "and I'm excited for the challenge. The nice thing about Eurydice is that its also a one-act production that lasts about 75-minutes and because it revolves around water, there are so many visuals of water and technical components that need to be rendered. There is no intermission and no break for the audience, so that's another thing we're trying to keep together - engaging the audience by pulling out all the technical tricks that we can. Indeed, I can say that this will be the first time we'll be breaking into rain on the Pit & Balcony stage." "Tony Serra is doing sets with me, who works as a front of house operations manager at the Midland Center for the Arts, and he is helping me design and build sets with lots of hidden surprises. I don't want to give too much away. We have a stilt walker in the cast that is taking it to it very well; and I will say that we are using every bit of space that we have on the stage." "For example, one of the stage directions says: 'It rains peaches plums and raspberries from the sky'," references Brandon. "Now, we're not going to be throwing fruit from the catwalk, but this is something we can achieve with lighting, so the key with presenting Ruhl is to invent options that reflect these tones and cues." exciting," concludes Brandon. "The challenge is to make it relatable to the audience and also expose them to a different form and structure of theatre, without as much subtext. With this play, you don't necessarily know where you are all the time, and that's okay because its different and exciting - kind of like a dream." "This is very much Alice in Wonderland meets Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind in the theatre, and that is the magic and genius of Sarah Ruhl," he concludes. "I'm very excited to be directing this, because the nature of her writing is so poetic." Pit & Balcony's production of 'Eurydice' by Sarah Ruhl is scheduled for February 5- 7th and February 12-14th. Tickets are available at the Pit & Balcony Box Office, 805 N. Hamilton St., Saginaw, or by phoning 989-754-6587 or visiting their website at www.PitAndBalcony Theatre.com.

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